Course Description

This course is a study of fundamental news gathering and writing in which the students learn the evaluation of news, news gathering problems and techniques, writing leads, organizing stories, and overcoming grammatical and structural problems. Lab work on newspaper staff is required.

Textbook, References and Supplies

Associated Press Stylebook

Supplementary Resources: *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White
Selected handouts from instructor

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course the student will:
1. Write news stories using the inverted pyramid format.
2. Identify basic news values in order to report on newsworthy events and issues.
3. Use basic word processing and publication design software.
4. Conduct interviews with news sources.
5. Use Associated Press style guidelines
6. Formulate copy with correct basic grammar and punctuation.
7. Use heightened observation and critical thinking skills.
8. Develop effective note-taking and interview skills

Student Contributions and Class Policies

Students will be expected to:
1. Function as reporter-writers for the *El Paisano* newspaper and contribute 100 inches of copy over the semester (75 inches to pass course) to receive at least a “B” in the course. This total must include at least five comprehensive stories (8 inches or more) including at least one speech story. Stories that are written, but not published for appropriate reasons will count toward the required inches based on the teacher’s discretion.
2. Work a beat (a program or subject area at MC) to find story ideas.
3. Meet each assigned deadline with typed hard copy.
4. Turn in a stringbook (scrapbook of all published stories) at the end of the semester for teacher evaluation.
5. Complete all assigned exercises for the workbook and turn them in at semester’s end.
6. Follow the beat system and copy flow procedures printed in the attached information sheet.
7. Attend all staff meetings and classes.
8. Sign up for Publications 1129 or 1130, which is a two-hour lab that accompanies the class. You will schedule the time for this lab with the Journalism Lab Instructor to complete story interviews and writing.

**Evaluation of Students**

The semester grade will be based solely on the writing exercises, the story contributions (stringbook), final examination and class participation. Some stories will be assigned non-binding letter grades to indicate student progress. Grades will be determined in the following proportion:

- Stringbooks............................55%
- Exercises................................15%
- Style Quizzes.........................10%
- Final Exam.............................15%
- Class Activity.........................5%

**Course Schedule**

This class meets for 3 lecture hours per week as follows:

**Weeks 1-2**: Orientation, story form and procedures; news-writing style, spelling, grammar review, covering the news and newsrooms. Chap. 1 and Chap 7; self test

**Week 3**: Ingredients of News; news values; handout and Chap 2 (handouts, ex. 2)

**Week 4**: Summary/ single-incident leads; handout and Chap 4 (Ex 1, 3, 4, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25) *Style Quiz 1*

**Week 5**: Interviewing skills; Chap 10 (student interviews and other activities in class)

**Week 6**: Organizing a News Story/ Special leads; Chap. 5, 8 (Ex. 1, 2, 3, 5; chap 5; handout, Student Center) *Style Quiz 2*

**Week 7**: Quotations and Attribution; Chap. 8 (Ex. 7, 9; handout, essence quotes)
Week 8: Journalistic Ethics and Libel; Chap. 26 (handout exercise)

Week 9: Speeches and Press Conferences; Chap. 14 (guest speaker) Style Quiz 3

Week 10: News Releases; Chap. 18 (Ex 1 and 3)

Week 11: Weather and Disasters; Chap. 15 (Ex 3)

Week 12: Obituaries and sports; Chap. 13 and 23 (Ex. 4); Chap. 22; Style Quiz 4

Week 13: Feature stories; Chap 9 (Handouts)

Weeks 14-15: Miscellaneous concerns such as working from documents, numbers and sources; (Handouts)

Week 16: Final and submission of stringbooks, review questions and exercises.

Note: Some classes will be used for El Paisano critique sessions. Several classes will also be used for interviews and actual writing sessions to further enable students to meet lab requirements in a timely fashion.

Copy Flow

The following process will be observed on all stories:
1. Ideas originate in class or in staff meetings. Many of your stories will be assigned and must be written. All students must attend staff meetings as scheduled unless other arrangements are made with the lab instructor.

2. Trek across campus, use phone, or access the Web to interview sources or acquire already compiled information. Always obtain attribution information.

3. Write drafts in lab with assistance of Bob, Karen or one of the student editors. Save drafts according to lab syllabus instructions on disks provided by lab instructor as well as in appropriate file folder on hard disk.

4. Give hard copy to Bob (red pen) and Karen (green pen) for editing and consultation. Log your file names on the clip board in the lab.

5. Write second draft.

6. Give the second draft hard copy to Karen or Bob editor for a second review if major changes were necessary. Provide a copy to student editor for his or her consultation, if desired.
7. Final copies are edited by student editor, who uses much discernment (sometimes to your frustration) to correct style and word flow problems. Sometimes, accuracy becomes an issue as student editors assume (never do it) content mistakes have been made and “over correct” stories.

(Note: This whole process must be completed within 10 days of story assignment. Late stories will lower final grades. Always correct your own style and grammar on first draft. Don’t turn in sloppy material.)

Instructor Information

Name:
Office phone:
Office hours:
Office location:
E-mail address:
Division Secretary: Lula Lee, 141 AFA
Office phone: 685-4624

Note: Students are encouraged to contact the instructor at any time; however, making an appointment will guarantee the instructor’s availability at a specific time.