

# **JOUR 304 – Media Writing**

## **Fall 2018**

Class #14798

### **Professor Lisa Loewen**

*Office Hours by Appointment*

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**Class Meetings:** *Monday/Wednesday 2:00-3:15*

### **Course Objectives**

This course emphasizes journalistic writing and critical thinking. Regardless of whether students are in the news and information or strategic communication tracks, it all comes down to coherent and engaging storytelling. Good writers need to use effective sentence construction, and clear and concise wording to get their points across. This class builds on JOUR 300 and JOUR 302, helping students enhance their writing and interviewing skills for the Web, for print and for broadcast; sharpen their judgment in choosing and attributing information, sources and story forms; and appropriately targeting the audience and message for persuasive purposes. Students will also learn Associated Press style, considered the standard in the news and strategic communication industries.

### **Required Books and Sources**

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* – 2018 edition
- Assigned readings and materials on Blackboard (<http://courseware.ku.edu>) – This course is to a considerable degree a "flipped" or hybrid course. You will pull up modules online to prepare you for class. Those modules will include readings, video presentations, exercises and other materials. In class, you may be quizzed, and you will be expected to use what you learned from the module to get right to work.

### **Attendance and Professionalism**

Your attendance in J304 is mandatory. Unexcused absences lower the attendance and professionalism component of your grade. More than two unexcused absences may result in forfeiture of all professionalism points. For an excused absence, you must – at the least – inform your instructor that you will not be able to attend class. If you're sick, email or phone in sick. That is proper professional conduct. Please remember that this class starts promptly.

Inattentiveness in class is grounds for being counted absent. That includes using a computer or phone for anything not related to the class or assigned by the instructor. Some instructors may simply prohibit screens.

Deadlines are crucial. If you submit an assignment late, your instructor will at least penalize the grade significantly and may refuse altogether to accept the work.

## Grading

Each assignment will be graded on its content, organization, grammar and format.

Each assignment also includes a professional component. A student's failure to behave professionally in the completion of an assignment can result in the reduction of the assignment's grade. Grades will be assigned on the basis of what is known as the **publishability standard**:

**A - Outstanding.** This grade is for work of clearly professional caliber (publishable or broadcast ready). The writing is clear and well organized; it requires virtually no editing. The reporting is complete and leaves no significant questions unanswered. The work is turned in by or before deadline, needing no changes before submission to clients or editors. These strategic messages get results, win awards and, when appropriate, feature creative concepts; they are executed with comprehensive research, interesting presentation and nearly flawless writing.

**B - Good.** This grade is for work that could be raised to professional standards without extensive editing. Writing is grammatically correct but may lack the sparkle and fine organization of "A" work. The reporting answers the main questions but may miss the proper emphasis or the best sources. The work is turned in by deadline with little or no prompting and needs minor revisions in such areas as reorganizing, rewriting, reformatting or providing more or better sources. "B" work doesn't necessarily have anything wrong, but it could be better, often with a stronger topic, a more artistic presentation, better information or improved writing. "B" work demonstrates basic broadcast or print style.

**C - Adequate.** This grade is for work that indicates a problem in at least one area, such as grammar, diplomacy or strategy. It does not measure up to professional quality but could be saved by revision. Work is incomplete by deadline and/or needs more than minor revision before submission to a client or supervisor. These messages have weak ideas, concepts or presentation. They draw attention because they don't quite do the job. In summary, the work is an adequate first draft but isn't yet ready to show a client or supervisor.

**D - Unacceptable performance.** This grade is for work that is clearly unacceptable even in a classroom setting. The writing is confused and/or ungrammatical. The reporting is flawed and may contain major factual errors and/or omissions or may show little concept of basic strategic judgment. Work may miss the deadline.

**F - Failing.** This grade is for work that is not completed in a professional, timely way. For whatever reason, it has the appearance that the student did not take the assignment seriously. Such performance is often the result of personal or time-management problems that extend beyond a lack of skills or understanding of the research, writing or production processes.

A = 92.4 and above

A- = 90.0-92.3%

B+ = 88.0-89.9%

B = 83.0-87.9

B- = 80.0-82.9%

C+ = 78.0-79.9%

C = 73.0-77.9%

C- = 70.0-72.9%

D = 60.0-69.9%

F = 59.9 and below

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>
Student profile	5
How To Video	20
Leads	20
Backgrounder	20
Interviews	25
Reaction Story	50
News release	25
Speech/event	50
SRD	75
Creative Brief	25
Social Media	25
Broadcast scripts	50
Profile pitch	5
Profile	50
Final project pitch	5
Final project	150
<u>Assessments</u>	
Grammar and AP Style Quizzes	<u>50</u>
Total	650

## **Weapons Policy**

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns **are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#).**

Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an un-cocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.

## **School Laboratories**

The School provides computer and broadcast laboratories for student use. Adequate laboratory resources are available for students who complete their assignments in a timely manner. The hours for the computer lab in 105 Stauffer-Flint are posted outside the lab. Computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Hours for the Weir Production Laboratory are posted in the Dole Center. Students may sign up for editing time and equipment on a first-come, first-

served basis on the online reservation system at <http://journalism.ku.edu/dole-center>. Sign-up instructions are on the website. Remember, all posted lab times are subject to change. Plan to work Monday through Friday.

### **Inclement Weather**

The University – not your instructor – reserves the right to cancel or delay classes. KU sends text alerts when classes are canceled. To determine whether weather conditions have altered class times, call the KU snow line: (785) 864-7669 (785-864-SNOW).

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special need that may affect your learning, please contact your lab instructor as soon as possible. Please be aware that the Student Access Services coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact your lab instructor privately in regard to this course. Additional information can be found at <http://access.ku.edu>

### **Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification**

**Do not make material or facts up; do not take others' work without due credit – simple as that.** If you do, it will not end well. If you don't understand the following, or you get into a situation where you're not sure, **ask the instructor.**

#### **School of Journalism policy — Adopted 5/7/04**

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

*The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.*

**Plagiarism** - Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

**Fabrication and Falsification** - Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

### **Journalism School Policy on Classroom Attendance:**

"No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

"The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting."

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

"Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid."

### **Copying or Recording**

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's intellectual property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited. On request, the instructor usually will permit students to audiotape lectures on the condition that these audiotapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless the instructor gives explicit permission, recordings of lectures may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

# J304 Schedule Fall 2018

## **WEEK 1** [Required reading: News Value module]

**Monday, Aug. 20**

Course introduction. Writing basics. Why good writing is important no matter your profession. Grammar Assessment.

**Wednesday, Aug. 22**

What is news? Where do we find news ideas? TIPCUP, AP Style. Evaluate a news story for TIPCUP elements. Can news values be found in social media?

**Assignment: Interview a class member for a written profile (Due Monday, Aug. 27)**

## **WEEK 2** <https://spark.adobe.com/page/BXUEGyKt23Wej/> to set up *wordpress account*

**Monday, Aug. 27**

**Student Profile due**

Introduce Online Portfolios

**Wednesday, Aug. 29**

Telling stories with video, sequencing

**Assignment: How To Video (Due Monday, Sept. 10)**

## **WEEK 3:** [Required reading: AP Style module]

**Monday, Sept. 3 LABOR DAY**

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**Wednesday, Sept. 5**

AP Style/In class exercise

## **WEEK 4** [Required reading: Quotes/Attribution; Interviewing Modules]

**Monday, Sept. 10**

**How To Video due**

Backgrounders, Advancing the story, Interviewing and pre-reporting, paraphrase/quotes; attribution

**Assignment: Backgrounder (Due Monday, Sept. 17)**

**Assignment: Interviews (Due Wednesday, Sept. 19)**

**Wednesday, Sept. 12**

No Class

## **WEEK 5** [Required reading: Inverted Pyramid module]

**Monday, Sept. 17**

**Backgrounder due**

Lead, bridge, quote format

**Assignment: Leads (Due Wednesday, Sept. 19)**

**Wednesday, Sept. 19**

**Leads due**

Inverted Pyramid

**Interviews due**

**Assignment: Reaction story (Due Wednesday, Sept. 26)**

## **WEEK 6** [Required reading: Speeches and Events]

**Monday, Sept. 24**

Determining newsworthiness in presentations, story plans, in-class research on speakers and topics. Choose a newsworthy event between now and Oct. 12 to cover.

**Assignment: Cover your approved speech/presentation/event that occurs before Oct. 12 and write an inverted-pyramid story summarizing both the speaker's main point and audience reaction. (Due via email within 24 hours of event.)**

**Wednesday, Sept. 26**

Review: developing leads, quotes and attribution, inverted pyramid

**Reaction Story due**

## **WEEK 7** [Required reading: News Release and SRD Modules]

**Monday, Oct. 1**

News Releases, what are they and why they are still relevant  
In class exercise

**Wednesday, Oct. 3**

Strategic Research Document: Discuss importance of understanding product and audience. Students select a product to research and promote to a specific target audience.

**Assignment: SRD (Partner) (Due Monday, Oct. 22)**

## **WEEK 8**

**Monday, Oct. 8**

Work day on SRD

**Wednesday, Oct. 10**

Creative Brief: How to distill the information from the SRD into a strategic message

**Assignment: Creative Brief Presentation (Due Monday, Oct. 22)**

**Friday, Oct. 12**

**Final deadline for Event Story  
Rewrite on Reaction Story due**

## **WEEK 9** [Required reading: Social Media module]

**Monday, Oct. 15**

Fall Break—No Class

**Wednesday, Oct. 17**

Social media: Students explore how Facebook, Twitter and other social media are used to transmit persuasive messages.

**Assignment: Students write two FB/Instagram posts and two tweets about the product they researched for the Creative Brief (Due Monday, Oct. 22)**

## **WEEK 10** [Required reading: Broadcast Writing]

**Monday, Oct. 22**

Creative Brief Presentations

**SRD, Creative Brief and Social Media Posts due**

**Wednesday, Oct. 24**

Writing for broadcast. VO, hit and run writing. In class practice.

**Assignment: Write two VO scripts from a fact sheet (Due Monday, Oct. 29)**

## **WEEK 11**

**Monday, Oct. 29**

Promotional Material: Advertisements, PSAs

**VO Scripts due**

**Wednesday, Oct. 31**

Infographics

**Rewrite on Speech/Event Story due**

## **WEEK 12** [Required reading: Profile module]

**Monday, Nov. 5**

Feature Writing: Discuss the profile and its place in journalism and business.

**Assignment: Find someone about whom you can write a newsworthy and interesting story. Write a story plan. (Due Monday, Nov. 12)**

**Wednesday, Nov. 7**

Introduce Final Project

**Assignment: Final Project Story Pitch. (Monday, Nov. 19)**

## **WEEK 13**

**Monday, Nov. 12**

Pitch profile stories in class

**Profile Story Plan due**

**Assignment: Write a profile that includes quotes from your subject and quotes from at least one other source. (Due Monday, Nov. 26)**

**Wednesday, Nov. 14**

Work on profiles

## **WEEK 14**

**Monday, Nov. 19**

Pitch Final Projects in class

**Final Project Story Pitch due**

**Wednesday, Nov. 21 *Thanksgiving***

## **WEEK 15**

**Monday, Nov. 26**

Work on final projects.

**Profile Story due**

**Wednesday, Nov. 28**

Work on final projects

## **WEEK 16**

**Monday, Dec. 3**

Work on final projects

**Wednesday, Dec. 5**

**Final Projects Due**