

JOUR 304 – Media Writing Spring 2019 Syllabus

Your course description

This class builds on JOUR 300 and JOUR 302, helping you enhance your writing and interviewing skills for the web, for print and for broadcast; sharpen your judgment in choosing and attributing information, sources and story forms; and appropriately target the audience and message for persuasive purposes.

Your instructor(s)

Pat Gaston
John Broholm
Chuck Marsh

Nyan Lynn
Jackie Liu
Kerry Benson

Your specific lab instructor will provide needed contact information and any details you need to know about your instructor's expectations beyond the common syllabus.

Your texts and tools



Associated Press Stylebook (make it the 2017 or 2018 edition)

Assigned readings and materials on Blackboard: This course has elements that involve online modules 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 in classwork.

Your course goals

This course emphasizes mass-communication writing and the critical thinking that goes with it, regardless of whether you are in the news or strategic communication track.

You will learn:

- clear, coherent and engaging storytelling.
- the purpose of various types of strategic communication.
- audience identification, including multicultural and diverse audiences.
- how the medium used influences the form each message takes.
- effective sentence construction, and clear, correct, concise wording.
- effective writing structure, use of transitions and accurate attribution.
- Associated Press style, considered the standard in the news and strategic communication industries.

Your coursework

Much of the work in this class will be hands-on, as writing is a skill developed through practice. Because this class has hybrid elements, it is imperative that you keep up with the online material. Homework assignments, in-class exercises and quizzes will reinforce and measure what we cover.

Deadlines are important in the work world and so are strictly enforced in this class. Late or missed work will not receive credit. No exceptions. Zeroes kill your grade, so stay frosty. You are responsible for budgeting your time and meeting deadlines.

Homework and online assignments: These are due by class time on the date noted by your instructor. If you do not turn in a homework assignment on time, you get zero credit for it. No exceptions. Assignments submitted through Blackboard must be in **.doc** or **.pdf** format – if we can't read it, we can't grade it, and you get a zero.



In-class exercises: We will do exercises in class to practice specific skills. Some are graded and some are not. If you are not in class, you may not make up the exercises you miss.

Your grades

Your final grade will be determined according to this breakdown, unless specifically addressed by your lab instructor.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93+	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	59-

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
In-class exercises and quizzes	200
News releases	100
Story plan	25
Speech/event and rewrite	100
Backgrounder/bio	25
Social media content	50
SRD and creative brief	125
Broadcast scripts	75
Final project (issue/trend story)	200
Engagement and professionalism	100

If you need a certain grade to maintain a scholarship, to graduate, to keep your parents from disowning you or to achieve a desired grade point average, it is your responsibility to **earn** that grade; it is not our responsibility to give it to you.

There is no extra credit. Don't ask. Really, don't. Just show up and do your work.



Each assignment will be graded on its content, organization, grammar/mechanics and format, and also includes a professional component. Your grade is based on what's known as the **publishability standard:**

Just because you spent a lot of time on it doesn't mean it's "A" work. Seriously. We could spend a ton of time doing Euclidean geometry, and it might still be sad.

A - Outstanding. This grade is for work at or very close to professional level (client- or publish-ready). The writing is clear, correct and well organized; it requires virtually no editing. Reporting is complete and well sourced, and leaves no significant questions unanswered. Strategic messages get results, and, when appropriate, feature creative concepts; they are executed with comprehensive research and interesting presentation. The work is turned in by or before deadline, needing only tiny changes before submission to clients or editors.

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. Reporting answers the main questions but may miss the proper emphasis or the best sources. Strategic messages are clear but may lack creative presentation or professional polish. The work is turned in by deadline with little or no prompting and needs minor revisions in such areas as reorganizing, rewriting, reformatting or sourcing. "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 style.

C - Adequate. This grade is for work that indicates a problem in at least one area, such as grammar, structure, format or strategy. It does not measure up to professional quality but could be saved by revision. Work needs more than minor revision before submission to a client or supervisor because of weak ideas, concepts or writing. It draws attention because it doesn'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, unfocused, poorly structured and/or ungrammatical. The reporting is flawed and may contain major factual errors and/or omissions. Strategic messages may show little concept of basic strategic judgment, format and/or tone.

F - Failing. This grade is for work that is not completed, either not done at all or not done completely in a professional 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.

Your engagement and professionalism

Because you'll be practicing new skills in class, engaged attendance in J304 is mandatory. Absences lower the engagement component of your grade, as well as the in-class work portion. **More than two absences may result in forfeiture of all engagement points.** If you have extenuating circumstances, such as a life-altering illness or a death in the family, you must – at the least – inform your instructor in advance that you will not be able to attend class.

“Engagement” means you come to class on time, prepared and ready to learn. You don’t speak when others are speaking, are not on your phone and put away devices when requested. You do not distract others’ learning processes. You pay attention, take notes, ask questions and participate in class discussion.

“Professionalism” means behavior appropriate to a work environment: You treat others in the classroom with respect, you contribute to group activities, you maintain a professional demeanor.

Students will be graded on their overall professionalism, preparedness and engagement over the course of the semester. Showing up to class unprepared, dozing, playing with your phone or laptop, leaving class for extended periods of time, etc. will negatively affect your grade.

You must be in class to complete in-class assignments; if you miss class, you may not make these up. You will be graded on how fully you engage with your peers and me; preparedness for these assignments; enthusiasm and playing-along-ness (doing the assignment, not being on your phone, etc.); and completion.

Group work and in-class writing may not be announced beforehand, while peer review and conference days are outlined on the course schedule and require that you bring certain materials to class. If you attend every class prepared and ready to write, this category should be an “A.”

Academic misconduct

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you’ll fail the course, and you may be dismissed from the J-School.

We strictly follow the code of Academic Misconduct detailed in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. University policies covering academic misconduct are spelled out in the current Student Handbook, which is available free in Room 213 of Strong Hall.

Here’s some clarification:

If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes on paper or on electronic devices, and nonverbal communication, such as coughing or kicking. Copying an answer from someone else’s work is also cheating.

Plagiarism is stealing. It is taking someone else's ideas, thoughts or words and presenting them as your own original work.

This includes taking ideas from written sources, broadcast sources, online sources or work done by another student. Copying and pasting material directly from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own – that is, without quotation marks and proper attribution – is plagiarism.

You will often need to incorporate another person's ideas, reporting or words into the stories you write, to make a point or to provide background. When you do this, **it is essential that you attribute that information**: Explain where it came from and give credit where credit is due.

It's pretty easy. Don't be a cheater.

Fabrication means that you made up information, sources or quotes. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. **Don't do it. Ever.** No matter how pressed you are for time, it's far better to risk the wrath of your boss than to risk your credibility as a journalist.

Content “recycling”: The expectation in this class is that you’ve come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no “recycling” of your previous interviews, assignments, stories or work from other classes. The Journalism School regards any efforts to recycle material as academic dishonesty.

Weapons Policy

Eligible individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns **must do so in a safe and secure manner in conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#).**

Inclement Weather

The University decides when to cancel or delay classes. KU sends text alerts when classes are canceled.

Disability accommodation

If you have a special need that may affect your learning and for which you wish to request accommodation, contact KU Student Access Services in the Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC), which coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu/>, at the office in Strong Hall Room 22, or by calling (785) 864-4064. Please contact your instructor privately regarding your needs in this course. You will likely need documentation from the AAAC before accommodations are made. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

Journalism School and financial aid policy on classroom attendance

"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."

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication or Falsification

The School of Journalism **does not** tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence or falsification of evidence.

Penalties for engaging in such behavior can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the school.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult your instructor.

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.

"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."

Recording of classroom meetings

Course materials prepared by the instructors, as well as content of all in-class materials presented by the instructors, are their property. **Photography, audio or video recordings, or live-streaming of class meetings without instructor consent is prohibited.** Pursuant to KU's Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures, commercial note-taking is not permitted in JOUR 304. Notes may be taken on in-class and course materials for personal use only. ***Note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is not the same as commercial note-taking and is allowed.*

J-School technology resources

The School of Journalism 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 labs in 105 and 101 Stauffer-Flint are posted outside the labs. Check out cameras or laptops in the Resource Center on the second floor of Stauffer-Flint.

JSchoolTech will again offer workshops and learning opportunities this semester, as well as daily challenges, Adobe Live events and other JBar offerings. Sign up for events here: <http://www.jourtech.dept.ku.edu/events/>

Heather Lawrenz has room for 2-3 more **teams**, so if you would like an in-depth, project-based learning opportunity, contact her. As a refresher, teams meet once a week for an hour. These small groups give students the opportunity to solve multiple client challenges using Adobe software. They learn all the new features and tricks in Creative Cloud and maximize it for ultimate creativity.

Here is the workshop line up for Spring 2019:

XD Basics – Feb. 1, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Power Up Résumé, portfolio, LinkedIn workshop – Feb. 20 Clarkson Gallery, 3-5 p.m.

Making micro-videos for social media – Feb. 22, 10-12

Photoshop Composites – March 1, 10 a.m.-noon

Building Digital Assets – March 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Making gifs and simple animation – April 5, 10 a.m. -noon

Mock it up – April 12, 10-1

(Read descriptions of the workshops here: <https://halawrenz.myportfolio.com/2019-workshops>)

J304 Topics schedule (Spring 2019)

Jan. 23/Week 1: Introduction – Getting started and asking the questions

Summary writing

Jan.30/Week 2: Writing mechanics: grammar, punctuation and style

Style and grammar exercises

Summary writing

Feb. 6/Week 3: What is news?

Information judgment

TIPICUP / newsworthiness

Audience

Summary writing

Feb. 13/Week 4: Clarity and structure

Getting to the point; inverted pyramid

LB and quotes

Writing leads

Summary writing

LBQ exercises

Feb. 20/Week 5: Quotes, attribution and paraphrasing

Choosing and using quotes

Quotes assignment

Summary writing

Story plans

Feb. 27/Week 6: News release writing

News releases

In-class news release LBQ assignment

News release assignment

March 6/Week 7: Speaker/event coverage

Speeches/events unit

In-class speech with LBQ exercise

Speech assignment

Final news release due

March 20/Week 8: SM writing

Understanding PESO

Social media content, including voice books, posts and blogs

Blog exercise

Using Adobe Spark

March 27/Week 9: Backgrounder bio

Backgrounder assignment

Portfolio building with Heather in labs

WordPress

Portfolio assignment

Final speech story due

April 3/Week 10: Broadcast writing

Practice writing scripts for news and ads

Scriptwriting assignment

April 10/Week 11: Strategic research

Business research sites

Determining a target audience

What's the purpose of strategic research?

Receive products for SRD assignment

April 17/Week 12: Creative brief formation (aka SMP)

Applying strategic research

Creative brief assignment

April 24/Week 13: Feature writing + final project

Finding story ideas

More on story plans

Examples of issue/trend stories

Directions/guidelines for the final project

Individual instructors reserve the right to alter this schedule – with notification and within reason – to best serve their labs.