**J o u r n a l i s m 1 2 0**

**W r i t i n g a c r o s s**

**t h e m e d i a**

Syllabus for Fall 2015

**Instructor: Peter Larsen**

**E-mail:** Larsenpete@hotmail.com

**Office hours:** 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays or you can e-mail me or set up an appointment

**Office location:** LA-4 Room 206-F

**Class time:** Tuesday/Thursday, 6 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.

**Classroom:** LA-4 Room 102

**Course description**

Hands-on course that introduces students to the basic skills and writing techniques they will need to succeed in print, broadcast and online media, and as public relations professionals. While new communication technologies are changing the way we create and consume news and interact with each other, the fundamentals of traditional journalism remain the same. This course provides an introductory overview of methods to adapt time-tested storytelling techniques to fit an expanding landscape of multi-platform media convergence. The focus is on developing the ability to write accurate news stories and meet deadlines. The course includes the study of news sources, reporting and interviewing, introduction to media law and ethics, and the enhanced responsibilities of journalists in a digital age of global communication.

This is the Journalism & Mass Communication department’s introductory skills course. It is a pre-requisite for Journalism 311 and provides a solid foundation for all upper division journalism and public relations classes. A letter grade of “C” or better is needed to successfully pass this course.

**Course goals**

This course is designed to help students learn to write clear, concise and accurate news stories for a variety of media. The skills taught in this course are the foundation for success in all forms of journalism, with a special focus on the new media.

Students will be introduced to the techniques and requirements of professional news writing through the application of material from the textbook and companion website, from the Associated Press stylebook and handouts prepared by your instructor. You will become familiar with basic journalistic objectivity, knowledgeable about the ethics and practices of news writing and informed about libel law restraints. Along the way, you will learn the requirements of effective story organization, and the skills involved in writing to deadlines.

The ability to report accurately and write well comes from study and from practice. So a major share of this semester will be devoted to hands-on writing exercises. Skills developed in this course will help you to critically evaluate your work and that of others for accuracy, fairness, diversity, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

**Course outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

* Recognize the difference between news and entertainment and know how to determine the newsworthiness of specific story elements.
* Critically evaluate the differences between print, broadcast and online news media, and the relationship of all of them to the public relations profession.
* Organize and write effective news stories by working with the five W’s (*who, what, when where, why*) and also, the *how*, *what’s next*? and *so what*? of good news stories.
* Write concise news ledes that are logical, relevant, useful, interesting and easy to read.
* Work with the AP stylebook to detect errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, and find the best ways to correct them.
* Demonstrate the effective use of quotes and source attribution in news writing.
* Respect deadlines and work under deadline pressure.
* Understand the importance of accuracy, integrity, objectivity and fairness in the news process.
* Make informed news judgments based on legal and ethical considerations.
* Recognize the role of diversity in the practice of journalism and the importance of including multiple viewpoints in every story, whenever possible.

**Required texts and reading materials**

Bring these textbooks to EVERY class:

Tim Harrower, *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism*, 3nd edition.

*The Associated Press stylebook and briefing on media law*, current edition, preferably spiral-bound (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing).

[www.mhhe.com/harrower2e](http://www.mhhe.com/harrower2e): This is the companion website to our textbook. It offers workbook exercises, interactive quizzes, grammar quizzes, web links and key newsroom vocabulary terms. Used with the textbook, this material is the foundation for our lectures and labs – and a good study guide for quizzes and exams.

**Recommended reading**

Online edition of the Los Angeles Times ([www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com)), the Orange County Register ([www.ocregister.com](http://www.ocregister.com)) the Wall Street Journal ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com)) and the Press Telegram ([www.presstelegram.com](http://www.presstelegram.com)). Two other website that are great to follow are [www.laobserved.com](http://www.laobserved.com) and [www.jimromenesko.com](http://www.jimromenesko.com)

**Deadlines**

Journalism is a deadline-driven business. This class will simulate a professional environment. Therefore, **no late work, no makeup work and no makeup quizzes or tests** without an excused absence.

**Rules of writing**

Grammar, spelling, punctuation, style and typographical errors will heavily affect the grading of papers and examinations. Errors in these areas can take huge amounts of points off grades for written assignments and tests. Please do not write in shorthand or text-messaging style. Write as if your work was being published. **Errors in fact or in spelling will result in a zero on the assignment.**

**Learning assessment and grading criteria**

**Weekly quizzes** (10 point each/100 points total): Every week you will have a quiz covering current events and / or AP style.

**Lab exercises** (20 points each/200 points total): Almost every class, you will have writing exercises. Almost all of your writing will be done in class, but some can be done at home.

**Associated Press/News of the Day presentations** (5 points each): You are responsible for a 3 to 5-minute presentation of the News of the Day as reported by a newspaper of your choosing, one time during the semester. Additionally, you are responsible for presenting a letter(s) of the alphabet from the AP stylebook to the class.

**Midterm and final** (250 points each): The contents of both exams will be objective (multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blanks) and subjective (copy editing and writing). The final is a comprehensive exam. These exams must be taken on the scheduled date.

**Class participation** (100 points): Come prepared to participate in class discussions. Your participation is so important to me that significant course credit will be attached to your relevant, thoughtful comments during our meetings. I mean, how can you build award-winning writing portfolios if you’re not here? You are expected to be in class on time. Attendance will be taken every day. Arriving late and/or leaving early will result in your being considered absent. You are allowed two absences or late arrivals. After that, you will lose two points from your final grade every time you are absent or arrive late. Part of your class participation grade will come from how well you teach the rest of the class AP style.

**Style**: Assignments should be double-spaced with paragraph indents and without extra spacing between paragraphs. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font. Pay attention to spelling, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Any instance of plagiarism, fabrication of sources or other information will be grounds for failure in this course.

**Making the grade**

90% - 100% = A

80% - 89% = B

70% - 79% = C

60% - 69% = D

Below 60% = F

**INSTRUCTOR BIO**

Peter Larsen has been a full-time journalist for many moons. At the Orange County Register, he currently covers pop culture such as TV, music, movies and books. In 18 years total at the Register, he’s also covered government, politics, and general-assignment stories. Earlier in his career he spent seven years at the Los Angeles Daily News, covering Los Angeles City Hall and general assignment news, and the Belleville News-Democrat in Illinois, covering pretty much everything. He graduated from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore. with degrees in English and Communications, and later earned a Masters at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.

**Class schedule (subject to change)**

**Week 1 (Aug. 25/27)**

Welcome/ Introductions/ Course requirements

The weekly quiz. Read chapters 1 and pages 18-25 of Chapter 2 in the Harrower book. A look at the AP stylebook. AP and News of the Day assignments.

**Week 2 (Sept. 1/3)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. Read pages 26-33 of Chapter 2. AP stylebook: Peter will do letter A. Writing assignments during second half of class.

**Week 3 (Sept. 8/10)**

The weekly quiz. News of the Day. Pages 36-49 of Chapter 3. AP stylebook: B-C and D-E.

**Week 4 (Sept. 15/17)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: F-G and H-I. Pages 50-64 of Chapter 3. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 5 (Sept. 22/24)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: J-K and L-M. Pages 84-91 of Chapter 4. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 6 (Sept. 29/Oct. 1)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: N-O and P-Q. Pages 94-103 of Chapter 5. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 7 (Oct. 6/8)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: R-S and T-U. Pages 104-113 of Chapter 5. Writing assignments during the second half of class. Midterm review

**Week 8 (Oct. 13/15)**

Out of class assignment.

TBA

**Week 9 (Oct. 20/22)**

One day: Midterm exam.

The other: TBA

**Week 10 (Oct. 27/29)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: V-Z. Pages 116-129 of Chapter 6. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 11 (Nov. 3/5)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. AP stylebook: Food. Pages 130-137 of Chapter 6. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 12 (Nov. 10/12)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. Pages 140-147 of Chapter 7. AP stylebook: Sports. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 13 (Nov. 17/19)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. Pages 148-155 of Chapter 7. AP stylebook: best of A-L. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 14 (Nov. 24/26)**

**THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Week 15: (Dec. 1/3)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. Chapters 9 and 10. AP stylebook: best of M-Z. Writing assignments during the second half of class.

**Week 16 (Dec. 8)**

News of the Day. The weekly quiz. Chapter 8. Final review.

**Final exam: Dec. 15: 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.**

**Department of Journalism & Mass Communication**

**Policies on Grading, Conduct of Classes, Drops, Absences and Cheating**

Grading: The grading policies and practices in this class are explained elsewhere in the syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to read them and to seek clarification if necessary. The student should be fully aware of what is required for success in the course, such as group participation, writing, speaking, completing assigned readings, etc.

Seat in Class: An enrolled student may lose his/her seat in class if he/she misses the first class meeting without notifying the instructor. At the instructor’s discretion, a student who attends the first class but not subsequent classes may also be dropped from the course.

Withdrawal from Class: Students may withdraw from a class from the third to the 12th week for “serious and compelling reasons.” Normally these are defined as anything of import that is beyond the control of the student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, death or serious illness in a student’s immediate family or a documented change in a student’s work schedule. Poor performance, tardiness and unexcused absences are not considered a serious or compelling reason beyond the student’s control for purposes of withdrawal.

Absences from Class: Grades in a course may be adversely affected by absences, and students should seek clarification from the instructor regarding the course absence policy. Make-ups usually are granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; (3) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities [2002-03 Catalog, p. 75]. These and any other requests for an excused absence must be documented.

CSULB Cheating/Plagiarism/Fabrication Policy: CSULB takes issues of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you use any deceptive or dishonest method to complete an assignment, take an exam, or gain credit in a course in any other way, or if you help someone else to do so, you are guilty of cheating. If you use someone else’s ideas or work and represent it as your own without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism. This does not apply if the ideas are recognized as common knowledge, or if you can show that you honestly developed the ideas through your own work. Any instructor can show you the correct ways of citing your sources, and you should use quotation marks, footnotes or endnotes and bibliographic references to give credit to your sources according to the format recommended by your instructor.

Responses, Penalties and Student Rights: Students should consult the appropriate sections of the Catalog for examples of cheating, fabrication and plagiarism, and instructor and/or CSULB response options in such circumstances. The Catalog also outlines student rights. Any instance of academic dishonesty may result in your immediate expulsion from the class with a grade of “F” and/or other sanctions, as the instructor deems appropriate.

**The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).**

ACEJMC has established educational requirements and standards and provides a process of voluntary program review by professionals and educators, awarding accredited status to programs that meet its standards. Through this process, the Council assures students, parents, journalism and mass communications professionals, and the public that accredited programs meet rigorous standards for professional education.

Accreditation by ACEJMC is an assurance of quality in professional education in journalism and mass communications. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, appropriate resources and facilities, and a competent faculty.

ACEJMC lists 12 professional values and competencies that must be part of the education of all journalism, public relations, and mass communication students. Therefore, our graduates who major in journalism and public relations should be able to do the following:

• understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;

• demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;

• demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;

• demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;

• understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;

• demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;

• think critically, creatively and independently;

• conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;

• write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

• critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

• apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;

• apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.