

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- A. Department Information
Division: Humanities
Department: English
Course ID: ENGL 020
Course Title: Fundamentals of News Writing
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Prerequisite: Engl 914 or eligibility for Engl 015 as determined by SBVC assessment process.
- B. Catalog Description:
A course in journalistic writing: reporting, feature writing, interpretation, editorial and column writing and critical review of the arts. Emphasis is on the most basic form, the news story. This non-transfer course is taught simultaneously with ENGL 120, a transfer-level course. Assignments differ for the two courses although students participate in the same lectures
- C. Schedule Description:
A course in journalistic writing: reporting, feature writing, interpretation, editorial and column writing and critical review of the arts. Emphasis is on the most basic form, the news story.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

- Upon successful completion of the course the student should be able to:
- A. Write clear, concise articles that exhibit the basic principles of journalism
 - B. Distinguish between reporting and commenting on news
 - C. Distinguish between strictly factual reporting and analytical journalism
 - D. Distinguish between "hard news" and "feature" writing
 - E. Distinguish between defamatory statements and protected speech
 - F. Evaluate news stories and articles for content and style

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

- A. Basic principles of journalism
 - 1. Accuracy
 - 2. Clarity
 - 3. Conciseness
 - 4. Attribution
 - 5. Objectivity
- B. Writing the news story
 - 1. The "lead" paragraph
 - 2. Supporting paragraphs of descending order
- C. Writing the feature story
 - 1. Deciding on focus or "angle"
 - 2. Choosing appropriate scheme of development
- D. Writing analysis
 - 1. Nature of analytical conclusions
 - 2. Importance of supporting evidence
- E. Writing opinion pieces
 - 1. Nature of argumentative conclusions (opinion)
 - 2. Importance of supporting evidence

- F. Familiarity with the changing media
 - 1. The Web
 - 2. Broadcasting
 - 3. Public Information

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Lecture
- B. Reading Assignments
- C. Discussion: Students will be asked to discuss the basic principles of journalism and apply them to various examples.
- D. Workshop: Students will submit their articles for peer review in small groups (3-4 students) or in more traditional classroom sessions with the instructor playing a greater role in directing the discussion.

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Students will review a videotape of a speech or interview on C-SPAN and write a news story about it, applying the basic principles of journalism.
- B. Students will write a review of a film, TV program or play to submit for peer review where it will be evaluated for its use of supporting evidence to draw conclusions.

VII. EVALUATION(S):

- A. Methods of evaluation:
 - 1. Portfolio of work: Students will be graded primarily on the quality of their news stories and articles over the semester.
 - 2. Essay exams: At mid-term and final exam time, students will be tested on their understanding of basic concepts and their ability to apply them. For example, they might be asked to explain whether a harsh editorial about a politician is libelous or not.
 - 3. Quizzes: The instructor has the option of using quizzes to encourage a careful reading of assigned texts and to stimulate discussion about them.
 - 4. Mid-term and final exams
- B. Frequency of evaluation:
 - 1. Students will write stories and articles on a regular throughout the semester. Their portfolio will contain four to six pieces at semester's end.
 - 2. Quizzes will be given on a weekly basis or as needed. Sample test question: Write a straight news story based on the attached interview with Ted Koppel.

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):

News Reporting and Writing, 8th ed. Melvin Mencher. McGraw Hill-College Div., 2000.
The Associated Press Stylebook and Brief on Media Law. Ed. Norm Goldstein. Perseus Publishing, 2002.
Writing and Reporting News. Carol Rich. Thomson/Wadsworth, 2003.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None