

COMM 3301 WRITING AND REPORTING FOR NEWSPAPERS1

M/W 12:30-1:45 p.m. TLC #1111

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor	Soo Jung Moon
Office / Telephone	Humanities 149 / 678 839 4936
E-mail	MW 2:30- 5:00 p.m.
Office Hours	smoon@westga.edu

You can also schedule an appointment outside of my office hours via email

TEXT

1. Rich, C. (2007). *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method (8th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Local or national newspapers
3. Additional, required reading will be assigned

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course introduces you to the fundamentals of news reporting and writing. You will learn what journalists do and how they do it. The class is designed to prepare you for a career in mass communications.

Students interested in any number of careers in communications must be able to write with care and precision regardless of whether their intended careers are in newspaper/magazine journalism, advertising, public relations, broadcast journalism or photojournalism. Consequently, we will focus on basic news writing.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve (ACEJMC SLO9)

Students will learn how to research, gather information, organize and write news and feature stories for the mass media. The course will emphasize the following aspects of good writing and reporting:

1. Accuracy and Verification
2. Logical Thinking
3. Precise Writing
4. News Value and Ethics

MASS COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: As a unit seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the Department of Mass Communications is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. These include the six (6) values and six (6) competencies listed below. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog](#) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction](#).

6 x 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS

Six Values...

1. Freedom of Speech & Press
2. History
3. Diversity
4. Global Impact
5. Theory
6. Ethics

Six Competencies...

1. Think Critically & Creatively
2. Research & Evaluate
3. Write Effectively
4. Self-Evaluate
5. Apply Numbers & Stats
6. Apply Technology

GRADING POLICY

Mass Communications majors must earn a "C" or better in COMM 2254 to enroll in COMM 4454 - Media Law in a subsequent semester.

Exam	15 points
Journalist/Journalism issue Presentation	5 points
Event news story	12 points
Leads analysis	7 points
Speech News	7 points
Film analysis	4 points
AP quizzes	20 points
Class Exercises & Others	30 points
	Total 100 points

Grading Scale	A = 90-100
	B = 80-89.99
	C = 70-79.99
	D = 60-69.99
	F = below 60 points

If you do not understand something about your grade or have concerns, please contact me within one week of receiving your grade. No grade changes will be considered after this deadline.

Extra Credit

- Full attendance will add **2 points** to your FINAL grade.
- You can receive up to **2 points** added to your FINAL grade for news or feature stories published during the semester (1 point per clip typically). The articles must be a feature story, not a letter to the editor, opinion piece, or entertainment review. Clips are due by the last day of classes. You may publish any assignments you do for this class and receive the extra credit.

Fact errors

Corrections are costly in journalism—they can harm your credibility as well as the credibility of the newspaper or company you're working for. For our lab, an assignment written for your portfolio that contains a fact error will get an F. Common fact errors are found in names, addresses, ages, quotes and narration. **Proofread** your copy before you turn it in.

Grading Criteria

- A Copy is publishable as is. No fact error and copy meets deadline.
- B Copy needs minor editing. No fact error and copy meets deadline.
- C Copy needs close editing. No fact error and copy meets deadline.
- D Copy needs heavy editing. No fact error and copy meets deadline.
- F Copy has fact error(s) and/or misses deadline

ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

NOTE: ALL HANDOUTS ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS ARE PLACED IN THE "ASSIGNMENTS" MODULE.

- **Exam (15 %)**

There will be one exam based on lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings and viewings. Early and make-up exam is administered ONLY in cases of absence due to unavoidable situations substantiated with documentation. Requests for early tests must be made at least one week before the test, and requests for make-up tests must be made within two hours of the test. You need to bring a small green scantron (Form 882-E:100 questions) for the exam.

- **Journalism issue Presentation (5%)**

See the handout "Group presentation" for detailed guidelines about this team project.

- **Leads Analysis (Seven weeks, 25% total)**

See the zip folder "Lead Analysis" for instruction.

- **AP Quizzes (10@ 2%, 20% total)**

The quizzes are based on the handout "AP 10 Weeks." The hard copy will be given after the Add/Drop period. The number of the week in the handout is corresponding to the number of quizzes in the Class Schedule. The first AP quiz (AP#1), for instance, is based on the content of Week#1 in the handout. You cannot make up the missed quizzes due to absences or lateness.

- **News Quizzes**

"Informed citizenry" is the core of participatory democracy and the main contribution of mass media to our society. To ensure that students maintain a broad news awareness and develop a world perspective, the instructor will give quizzes based on the week's news. The materials and detailed instructions will be announced in advance.

- **Film Response Paper (5%)**

See the handout "Film."

- **Event News Story (12%)**

See the handout "Event News" for detailed instructions about the final project.

- **Class Exercises and Others (30%)**

All in-class and homework submissions are graded. As the table of grading items indicates, this category counts for almost one-third of your final grade. The scores of each class exercise will be posted at the end of the semester with your final grade. You cannot make up in-class exercises.

Note about Writing Assignments: Your assignments must be typewritten and double-spaced. Use 1-inch margins and 12-pt. type. Put your name and the date at the top of each page. The file name of your story is your capitalized last name and assignment: SMITH Film1 (the first film essay by Smith).

Don't just include phrases. Write in complete sentences; you will be judged on clarity and content, as well as grammar. Use a Spellcheck, but also review your work carefully for errors. The more neatly you layout the information, the more likely we will be able to see you have responded to all the questions and give you full credit.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is necessary to succeed in this course. However, I understand there will be times when it is necessary for you to miss class. **Three absences are allowed**—no difference is made between excused and unexcused. After those three allowed absences, two points will be taken off of your final score for each additional absence, No exceptions. **Students who miss more than seven classes will receive a failing grade (F) for the semester.** Please note how I define an absence: (1) not coming to class; (2) arriving late to class; (3) leaving class early; (4) sleeping, texting, web surfing or doing other non-class related activities during class.

Students (and teachers, too) often learn best from one another, so an open environment is encouraged. Ask questions and help each other. If you miss classes, please check with a classmate. You are required to have the email of the person sitting right next to you now!

Excused absences? Again, no difference is made between excused and unexcused absences

LATE WORK POLICY

This is journalism, and the one thing we value most after truth-telling is meeting deadline. Late assignments and those turned in late will result in a penalty of 20% per day. If you miss in-class activities and have not made arrangements before the day, you will not be given a substitute assignment.

CLASS PARTICIPATION and COMMUNICATION

Preparation	You will need to complete each reading/viewing/listening assignment before the scheduled class session. You need to read carefully and critically, take notes and be prepared to intelligently discuss and apply the material in class discussion and activities.
Handouts	You are responsible for collecting all handouts at the time they are distributed. If you are absent, you have ONE WEEK to collect the materials.
Email	You are encouraged to use CourseDen email for all class-related correspondence. I will try to respond within 24 hours, though messages sent during weekends (or Friday afternoons) may not receive such a prompt response.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The penalties for academic dishonesty range from receiving 0 points on the exam/assignment to receiving an "F" grade in the course.

All the work you do must be your own. Do not present the work of another as if it were your own. Use quotation marks to indicate the exact words of someone else, and cite the source. Cite sources of ideas

that are not your own, even if you did not use their exact words. Summarizing OK – it is considered paraphrasing, but do not just rearrange a sentence or change some of the words. Still, each time a source is paraphrased, a credit for the source needs to be included in the text.

Cheating	Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids.
Fabrication	Falsification or unauthorized invention of any information or citation.
Plagiarism	Representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The following link contains standards about important issues such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the UWG email policy, the university credit hour policy, and the Honor Code. Please review the information carefully at: [UWG Common Language](#).

It contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class.

Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

[END OF SYLLABUS -- WEEKLY SCHEDULE IN SEPARATE DOCUMENT]