

# Writing & Reptg for Newspapers

## COMM-3301

Fall 2020 Section 01 3 Credits 08/12/2020 to 12/05/2020 Modified 07/30/2020

### Description

Basic procedures and techniques for writing and reporting for newspapers. Emphasis on news style and judgment as well as ethical and legal issues.

#### Requisites

Prerequisites:

COMM 1154 Minimum Grade: C and ENGL 1102 Minimum Grade: C

Corequisites:

### Contact Information

#### Instructor: Dr. John Sewell

Email: For this class, please contact me using CourseDen email ONLY.

Phone: 423-741-1474

#### Office Hours

Virtual office hours will be held via phone (423) 741-1474 on Mondays from 10:30 am. until 12:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (noon). You are welcome to call me during those times. Bear in mind, I may be on the phone with another student when you call. If so, leave me a clearly worded voicemail message with your phone number. I am also potentially available at other times BY APPOINTMENT. To schedule virtual office hours BY APPOINTMENT, contact me via CourseDen email.

For this class, contact me using the CourseDen email tool ONLY.

### Meeting Times

Dual modality is in full effect at the University of West Georgia for fall semester. This means there is an opportunity for in-person learning and online learning for classes not listed as fully online.

With dual modality, all course content will be available online for all students to ensure everyone has access to the materials and assignments for these courses. Based on the current plan, you will be assigned to an in-person learning opportunity one day a week for each class, and you will have access to necessary course content online throughout the semester. I encourage you to connect with me to express your concerns about the in-person portion of the course and work with me to determine a viable alternative, if necessary.

Online Content: Course content will appear online in CourseDen twice a week. Learning modules in CourseDen are arranged sequentially. Each week, there will be two learning modules available. Students can access the first learning module of the week from 12 a.m. on Monday night until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday night. The second weekly learning module will be accessible at 12 a.m. on Wednesdays until 11:50 p.m. on Thursday. **IMPORTANT:** Learning modules will be accessible for 48 hour periods. It is your responsibility to make sure you access each learning module during the 48 hour period that it is accessible.

**In-Person Learning Opportunities:** Each student will have the opportunity to attend a weekly, in-person meeting in TLC1111. For social distancing, the class will be broken up into two groups.

**Group 1:** Last names A-M (In-class instruction is offered on **Tuesdays, 8-9:15 a.m.** in TLC1111.)

**Group 2:** Last names N-Z (In-class instruction is offered on **Thursdays, 8-9:15 a.m.** in TLC1111.)

**LEARNING MODULES—SEQUENCE AND LIMITATIONS:** There are two learning modules per week in this class. Each learning module will be open for a 48 hour period within which you can view PowerPoint lectures, take quizzes and/or turn in assignments on deadline.

**IMPORTANT:** This class is sequentially ordered and is best learned over time. Each learning module will be open for a 48 hour period. After the 48 hour period is over, you will no longer have access to the PowerPoint lecture content and/or assignment content (quizzes, deadlines) available during the given learning module. As such, you will only be able to access course content sequentially and in evenly dispersed time increments spanning the semester.

## Materials

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### Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method

**Author:** Rich, C.

**Publisher:** Wadsworth Cengage Learning

**Edition:** 7th

## Outcomes

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

- Accuracy and verification
- Logical thinking
- Precision
- News value
- Ethics

#### Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes

**ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies = 6 x 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS:** 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](#).

#### Values:

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

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Competencies:

7. Think Critically & Creatively
8. Research & Evaluate
9. Write Effectively
10. Self-Evaluate
11. Apply Numbers & Statistics
12. Apply Technology

## Assignments

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**Course Requirements:**

1. Students will be expected to **READ** the assigned text chapters *before* viewing the audiovisual content associated with a given learning module. (For learning module schedule, see Online Learning Schedule posted in Module 1).
2. **2 EXAMS** will cover information from assigned text and class lectures. I will provide you with detailed study instructions as exam time approaches. **Both exams will be administered online.**
3. **Five (5) QUIZZES/IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS** will cover information from materials assigned for a given day and/or test the student's ability to master writing skills for an immediate deadline. **These assignments will be administered online.**
4. **SEMESTER PROJECT** consisting of two news articles (one inverted pyramid style story and one feature—both suitable for publication) will be produced by the student during the semester. I will explain the details of the semester project in the online audiovisual content *and* in documents provided online later in the semester.

**ALL exams and quizzes will be held online in CourseDen.**

**ALL written assignments (semester project pitch, drafts 1 & 2, final edits 1 & 2) are to be turned in online in CourseDen.**

**Grading Scale:**

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 60 and below

**Point Values per assignment/assessment**

Quiz/In-Class Writing Assignment (5)	3 points each (total of 15)
Exams (2)	15 points each (total of 30)
Semester Project Pitch	5 points
First Draft of Semester Project Part 1	5 points
Final Edit Semester Project Part 1	20 points
First Draft of Semester Project Part 2	5 points
<u>Final Edit semester Project Part 2</u>	<u>20 points</u>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Reading and Online AV Content:** For many classes, especially in the first half of the semester, there is assigned reading material. It is especially important that you read the assigned material before viewing the online AV content every given learning module.

**Exams:** There will be two online exams. The exams will combine multiple choice and short essay style questions. I will provide you with detailed study instructions before the exams.

**Quizzes/In-Class Assignments:** There will be two quizzes and three timed writing assignments this semester. The quizzes concern punctuation and grammar. In the writing assignments, students will be presented a factsheet with a bulleted list of factoids. With this information, the student will write an inverted pyramid style news brief that is two or three paragraphs long. These in-class writing assignments are to be completed online in a one hour time limit.

## Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
		Schedules for online learning and in-person learning opportunities are provided in CourseDen Module 1.

## \* Course Policies and Resources

**Missed Quiz/In-Class Assignment Policy:** Students who miss class activities will not be offered the opportunity to take them over. Each learning module is open for a 48 hour period. It is your responsibility to complete the assignments within that 48 hour window.

**Missed Exam Policy:** Exams are mandatory. Make-up exams are allowed only in cases of absence due to unavoidable situations substantiated with documentation. If you miss an exam, contact me *immediately*.

**Semester Project First Drafts:** Students are required to turn in complete first drafts of semester projects part 1 and 2. I will provide a document that specifies the exact requirements of the semester project, including pitch, drafts and final edits. Deadlines for first drafts are absolute. To receive full credit, your first draft must be turned in on time and meet the required word count. Drafts are graded on a pass/fail basis. Full drafts turned in on time receive full credit. Late and/or incomplete drafts receive no credit.

**Semester Project Final Edits:** Deadlines are absolute. Final, publication-ready articles are to be turned in on time as directed on the assignment schedule. A 20% point deduction (4 of 20 possible points) will be made for every day that a final article is turned in late.

## College/School Policies

### Mass Communications Degree Program Learning Outcomes

**ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies:** The Bachelor of Science degree program in Mass Communications is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), and the Department 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 Mass Communications degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies, known as 6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS, that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog \(https://catalog.westga.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=11&poid=1991\)](https://catalog.westga.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=11&poid=1991) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction \(http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/\)](http://www.acejmc.org/policies-process/nine-standards/).

# 6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS

<p><a href="https://www.westga.edu/academics/coss/mass-communications/assets/pics/6x6_MC_Success_Graphic.JPG">6 X 6 MASS COMM SUCCESS</a> (<a href="https://www.westga.edu/academics/coss/mass-communications/assets/pics/6x6_MC_Success_Graphic.JPG">https://www.westga.edu/academics/coss/mass-communications/assets/pics/6x6_MC_Success_Graphic.JPG</a>)</p> <p>(click to view image)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Freedom of Speech &amp; Press</li><li>2. History</li><li>3. Diversity</li><li>4. Global Impact</li><li>5. Theory</li><li>6. Ethics</li><li>7. Think Critically &amp; Creatively</li><li>8. Research &amp; Evaluate</li><li>9. Write Effectively</li><li>10. Self-Evaluate</li><li>11. Apply Numbers &amp; Statistics</li><li>12. Apply Technology</li></ol>
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## Institutional Policies

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### Academic Support

**Accessibility Services:** Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [Accessibility Services \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/accessibility-services.php).

**Center for Academic Success:** The [Center for Academic Success \(http://www.westga.edu/cas/\)](http://www.westga.edu/cas/) provides services, programs, and opportunities to help all undergraduate students succeed academically. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6280 or [cas@westga.edu](mailto:cas@westga.edu).

**University Writing Center:** The [University Writing Center \(https://www.westga.edu/writing/\)](https://www.westga.edu/writing/) assists students with all areas of the writing process. For more information, contact them: 678-839-6513 or [writing@westga.edu](mailto:writing@westga.edu).

### Online Courses

UWG takes students' privacy concerns seriously: technology-enhanced and partially and fully online courses use sites and entities beyond UWG and students have the right to know the privacy policies of these entities. For more information on privacy and accessibility for the most commonly used sites, as well as technology requirements visit the [UWG Online \(https://uwgonline.westga.edu/\)](https://uwgonline.westga.edu/) site.

Students enrolled in online courses can find answers to many of their questions in the [Online/Off-Campus Student Guide \(http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php\)](http://uwgonline.westga.edu/online-student-guide.php).

If a student is experiencing distress and needs help, please see the resources available at the [UWG Cares \(http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/\)](http://www.westga.edu/UWGCares/) site. [Online counseling \(https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/counseling/index.php) is also available for online students.

### Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students

pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook \(https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php\)](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/handbook-code-of-conduct.php).

## UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email.

## Credit Hour Policy

The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

## HB 280 (Campus Carry)

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: [http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional\\_information#](http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information#) ([http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional\\_information](http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information))

You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php> (<https://www.westga.edu/police/campus-carry.php>)

## Mental Health Support

If you or another student find that you are experiencing a mental health issue, free confidential services are available on campus in the [Counseling Center](#). Students who have experienced sexual or domestic violence may receive confidential medical and advocacy services with the Patient Advocates in [Health Services](#). To report a concern anonymously, please go to [UWGcares](#).

## ELL Resources

If you are a student having difficulty with English language skills, and / or U.S. culture is not your home culture, specialized resources are available to help you succeed. Please visit the [E.L.L. resource page](#) for more information.

## COVID-19

**Proctored Exams/Online Instruction:** Students should be aware and plan ahead for the possibility of having to complete all courses and/or exams online or in a proctored environment. This means talking with your instructors about what minimum technical requirements (software and hardware) will be required should your class move online or a student's personal needs

dictate. This also includes making plans for internet access at whatever location participation may occur.

Virtual or in-person proctored exams, if your instructor should require them, may result in an additional cost to the student. Please discuss these details with your instructor or see the information provided here.

**Face Coverings:** Effective July 15, 2020, University System of Georgia institutions, including the University of West Georgia, will require all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use will be in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing.

Face coverings are not required in campus outdoor settings where social distancing requirements are met. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area.

Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons.

**Student FAQs:** For more information about UWG COVID-19 guidance for students visit the [Student FAQ webpage](https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php) (<https://www.westga.edu/student-services/health/coronavirus-info/return-to-campus/students-faq-return-to-campus.php>).