

JOU 3101 -- News Reporting

Spring 2004

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Master Lecturer (really)

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NOTE: I live in St. Petersburg, but I am in Gainesville Tuesday through Thursday.

OFFICE HOURS: Formal (black-tie-optional) hours will be posted, but the best times to see me will be before and after lecture on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. I have a reporting lab Wednesday afternoon. I'll be around after those for a while. You can get me at the office, or contact me in person or at home. (Honest, I don't mind. Just don't call too late. It annoys my wife.)

WORD TO THE WISE: It's **not** a good idea to try to talk to me in the hour or so before lecture or lab. I am scary if I'm not prepared, and I rarely am.

OBJECTIVES: To provide instruction in news gathering and writing, give attention to news policies that affect the reporter and to problems of human interest and readability and instill habits of accuracy and responsibility in handling the news. In other words, we will work on your reporting and writing skills. Prerequisites: MMC 2100 with at least a C; typing ability.

READING: Required: *News Reporting and Writing*, Mencher, 2002, Ninth Edition. You can get by with the old one—2000, eighth edition—but the reading assignments and test material will be based on the newer book. *AP Stylebook*, (this will be your news-writing bible). Any late-1990s to present will do, but the later editions 2002-on have some good stuff on the Internet and terms. A daily newspaper. Strongly recommended: *When Words Collide*, Kessler-McDonald. You might also consider a workbook, *Interactive Newswriting*, Weston-Griffith, 2001. Many students find it helpful.

LECTURE: Attendance is expected. The material will help you with your writing. Pay attention and take notes. Who knows? You may learn something that helps you improve your writing. Tests are listed. Pop quizzes on current events are not. (Note: **These quizzes are NOT extra credit.**) Makeup tests will be given only for **documented** catastrophes beyond your control. Quizzes cannot be made up.

GRADING: Three tests and about a dozen quizzes on current events will make up the lecture grade. **Your course grade is 25 percent lecture and 75 percent lab.** An A indicates superior performance; B, highly competent, above-average work; C, average; D, below average; E, unsatisfactory. Final grades are calculated by each lab section, following the scale of 90-100, A; 80-89, B; etc. Tell the instructor if you do not want your grades posted.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: I will try to stick with the course outline. However, I am about as dependable as the Gator special teams. Changes are probable and will be announced.

(More)

PERFORMANCE: Test results will be posted on WEB CT. You can check your test answers against the key during my office hours.

You are encouraged to read ahead. The more information you can absorb early in the course, the better your work will be. Since you are expected to start reporting and writing stories the first day of class, this can be especially helpful. Sections on news gathering, interviewing, leads, story organization, grammar/punctuation and features will be particularly helpful. Use a dictionary and the stylebook.

CAUTION: JOU 3101 is a *professional* course. The rules may be different than those of lower-division courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you can do the work acceptably in a limited time. Grades on stories can be lowered as the result of reporters misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. **Do NOT tell sources you are working for the Alligator or any other publication—unless you are.** Dress appropriately for your interviews.

Lab grades are based upon the quality of your reporting, writing and editing. You must do well on all three. Volunteers in 1088 Weimer Hall and in-lab coaches will help you with reporting and writing. You are evaluated for your stories. This means you have to use your time efficiently. Your effort is rewarded for its results, the same as it would be on the job.

*******WARNING*******

Do your own reporting and writing. Plagiarism—including using material from news releases and information gathered from the Internet without attributing the source in your story—can result in serious consequences. Lab instructors will provide procedures for documenting and attributing background for stories.

If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, **ASK**.

Good luck and be careful out there.

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member and may not be taped without permission from the lecturer and may not be used for any commercial purpose. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct Code.