# JOU 2101-002: Writing for News Media, spring 2020

**Professor:** Dr. Sally Renaud, [*serenaud@eiu.edu*](mailto:serenaud@eiu.edu) • **Office:** 1831 Buzzard Hall, 581-6003

**Hours:** 12:45-2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-3 p.m. Wednesdays and by appointment

**Texts: \****Reporting for the Media*, by John Bender, Michael Drager, Lucinda Davenport and Fred Fedler

**\****The Associated Stylebook and Libel Manual*

**\*Bring these books to every class.**

**Course description:**

This course is an introduction to the study and practice of gathering and writing information for news media. In this course you will learn the elements of news, about news judgment and about reporting the news. You will learn where to find information and then how to convey that information to the public in a journalistic style. In addition, we will study current issues facing the news industry, including diversity, and legal and ethical concerns.

# Course objectives:

At the conclusion of this course, the students will be able to:

-Select information from a set of facts and write a concise summary lead. (CT, WR)

-Organize a story properly, accurately and completely using multiple sources. (CT, WR, RC)

-Use appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling and AP style. (WR)

-Use attribution effectively, including direct and indirect quotes. (CT, WR)

-Write a broadcast story. (CT, WR, RC)

-Write under deadline pressure. (WR)

-Demonstrate the ability to prepare for and conduct an effective interview. (CT, WR)

-Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of legal and ethical issues. (CT)

-Demonstrate the ability to use basic research skills using the Internet, public records and other resources. (CT)

-Demonstrate journalistic decision-making and a sensitivity to diverse cultures and populations. (CT, RC)

-Demonstrate an ability to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts. (QR)

**Grading:**

Your grade in this class is based on several phases of assignments: general daily classwork, in-class story assignments, outside story assignments, a report on an issue facing journalism today and a final exam.

**•1) Deadlines are essential in journalism. Missing a deadline will result in a letter-grade reduction for each day the assignment is late.**

**• 2) To be considered for a grade, all assignments must be typed (unless specified) in 12-point, double-spaced.**

**• 3) As accuracy is paramount, a fact error will result in a one-letter grade reduction.**

**• In-class assignments:**

Each week you will have both current events quizzes and AP style quizzes at the beginning of class. YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO TAKE THE QUIZZES. Those, in addition to a variety of in-class assignments, will make up the total in-class portion of your grade.

**• Outside news stories:**

Each student will be assigned a beat and be required to write three stories that are published in The Daily Eastern News by the deadlines indicated on the course schedule. It is preferable that you do multiple stories and submit the best ones for grades, and well in advance of the deadlines.

Students will work with the editors at the News early and often in order to learn and complete the assignments by the prescribed deadlines. You may work with me on these stories as well, offering drafts for feedback and asking for advice while reporting. **Opinion pieces, reviews and editorials will not be considered for this assignment.**

Submission for a print story: **When you turn in a print story for a grade include 1) a final copy of the story to be graded; 2) a copy of the published story; 3) a one-page self-evaluation of the reporting experience.**

If you prefer to write for the Warbler or *News Watch*, similar requirements and standards will apply. For example, submission for a broadcast story: When you turn in a broadcast story for a grade include 1) a script and video of the story to be graded; 2) a one-page self-evaluation of the reporting experience. See me immediately if you choose this option.

The grades on all stories written for class are based on meeting the assignment’s requirements and the acceptability of the story for publication or broadcast:

**An A story is excellent, and it is publishable with virtually no editing required.**

**A B story is good; it is publishable with some editing.**

**A C story is satisfactory; it is publishable but would need substantial editing.**

**A D story is weak; a major overhaul is needed.**

**An F story is not acceptable for publication.**

**• Issues presentation:**

Later in the spring we will discuss some of the most prevalent issues facing journalism today. One of the objectives of this course is to help you think critically about legal, diversity and ethical issues of the profession. To help begin the discussion of these issues, each student will be asked to study one aspect of the journalism field, summarize his or her findings and report back to the class. Details of the assignment will be given in late September. (50 points written, 10 points verbal)

# Absences and Make-up Work:

# As much of the work for this class is done during the class period, students are expected to be in class on time and remain until dismissed. Students may not make up quizzes or assignments missed for tardiness or for an unexcused absence. If you miss class when an assignment is due, you will receive a 0 for that assignment. You are responsible for all material covered or assigned during class.

**Grade breakdown:**

AP and current event quizzes/

in-class assignments/ in-class stories 500 points (approximation)

Outside story assignments 150 points

Issues presentation 100 points

Final exam 100 points

A – 90-100 percent

B – 80-89 percent

C – 70-79 percent

D – 60-69 percent

F – below 60 percent

# Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is using someone else’s work as your own without proper credit, and it simply is not tolerated. Naturally, in journalistic writing you will use information from other sources, perhaps quotes or information from other publications. That’s great. It shows the reader you have done your research. Just make sure you give credit within the story. Any assignment that uses plagiarized material will be given a 0 grade, and the responsible student will be referred to the appropriate EIU board for discipline. According to university policy, students who plagiarize can be dismissed from EIU.

It is academically dishonest to claim as your own the work of others; to fail to properly identify the work of others when used in your work; cheat on assignments or exams; copy from the exams, quizzes or assignments of other students or knowingly assist another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty. Any violation will earn the student an F for the course and will be reported to the office of Judicial Affairs.

In addition, because Eastern Illinois University is committed to the learning process and academic integrity that is defined in the Student Conduct Code (1.1), to encourage original and authentic written work, any written assignment created in this course may be submitted for review to Turnitin.com and will become a searchable document within the Turnitin-protected and restricted use database.

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

# Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**The Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 1302 Ninth Street Hall.

# Electronic Writing Portfolio

This course qualifies as a writing-centered course in the EWP program. An assignment from this class may be submitted to your Electronic Writing Portfolio to fulfill part of your graduation requirement if it meets the campuswide EWP requirements. Please see your adviser for more information on how to select and submit your writing. Information is available online at [www.eiu.edu/~assess](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess).

# Department Assessment

As the department continues to assess what you are learning, we will be contributing several assessment instruments to its overall assessment, including a math test, a style test and a writing sample, even if you are not a journalism major. I will tell you then how to submit it electronically when the time comes.

**Course schedule**

Week 1, Jan. 14, 16:  Format and style of news writing for various media. What is news? Beat system. AP style

         Chapters 1 and skim16; AP, A

Week 2, Jan. 21, 23: Word usage, grammar, punctuation, spelling. Researching

         Chapters 3 and 5; AP, A

Week 3, Jan. 28, 30: News writing style: Using simple sentences and words, writing clearly, remaining objective, being sensitive to gender, racial and ethnic issues. Writing leads: the Five W’s, sentence structure

         Chapter 4 and 7; AP, B

Week 4, Feb. 4, 6: More leads; guidelines for writing effective leads

         AP, C-D

Week 5, Feb. 11, 13: More leads: delayed leads; body of a news story.

         Chapters 9 and 10; AP, E-F

Week 6, Feb. 18, 20: Interviewing skills; researching

         Chapter 11 and 12; AP, G-I

Week 7, Feb. 25, 27:Interviewing continued; quotations and transitions

         Chapter 11 and 12; AP, J-L

**Story One due 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28**

Week 8, March 3, 5: Writing obituaries

         Chapter 16, again, AP, M-O

Week 9, March 10, 12: Obituaries continued; narrative style

         AP, Numerals

SPRING BREAK, March 17 and 19

Week 10, March 24, 26: Writing for the eye versus writing for the ear;

broadcast writing

         Chapter 13, AP, P-R

**Story Two due 4:30 p.m. Friday, March 27**

Week 11, March 31, April 2: Covering meetings and speeches

         Chapter 15; AP, S-U

**MANDATORY NIGHT CLASS: 6:30 p.m. April 7 in City Council chambers. Details to follow.**

Week 12, April 7, No class April 9: Press releases

         Chapter 20, AP, V-Z

**Story Three due 4:30 p.m. Friday, April 10**

Week 13, April 14, 16: Issues presentations: law, ethics, diversity, etc.

Chapters 6 and 7

Week 14, April 21, 23: Covering accidents, Chapter 15

Week 15, April 28, 30: Writing assessment

**Final: 2:45 to 4:45 Tuesday, May 5.**

**JOU 2101: Issues presentation** (100 points)

One of the objectives of this class is to help students to think critically about legal, diversity and ethical issues of the profession. In an effort to think about these issues within the journalism industry, students will be asked to study one aspect of the journalism field, summarize their findings in a written report and present them to the class for class discussion. You will start by reading **the section in your book on the topic**. Most are in the chapters on law and ethics.

The following is a list of topics; however, you may choose one of your own with my approval.

Women in the media (status, salaries, coverage of, etc.)

Minorities in the media (status, salaries, coverage of, etc.)

Conflict of Interest

Censorship (self censorship or by management)

Maintaining objectivity

Libel issues

Invading privacy

Ombudsmen or Public Editor

Dealing with tragedy

Plagiarism in Journalism

Photo ethics (Visuals)

Practicing deceit

Naming names

Requirements:

1. Read **the section in your book on the topic**. Most are in the chapters on law and ethics. Then synopsize what you read in a 250-word overview, **with complete citations**.
2. Find two articles from within the past 24 months about your topic. Good sources are the *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Quill*, the *American Journalism Review*, *Editor and Publisher*, **the Poynter Institute (**[www.Poynter.org](http://www.Poynter.org)**), The Maynard Institute (**[www.mije.org](http://www.mije.org)**), the Society of Professional Journalists (**[www.spj.org](http://www.spj.org)**),** *Advertising Age*, articles by Howard Kurtz in the Washington Post, etc. Also, an excellent source list for journalism magazines online can be found at bailiwick.lib.uiowa.edu/journalism/Jmagazines.html. You may use online articles, but them must come from reputable journalism periodicals or chapters. Write short summaries of each article. **Include complete citations.**
3. Write your own analysis of the situation **in essay form**. What advice should we heed based on your findings from our text and the articles? Why should we worry or be proud of this? Why is it important? Use your book and your articles as examples. **Include complete citations.**
4. Present the issue to the class. Do not read your paper. Instead, talk about the issue based on what you have learned and about how it affects both journalism and how readers’ and viewers’ perceptions of how we do our jobs. Plan on speaking no longer than10 minutes to provide the class with a brief overview of the main issues as well as any current examples. **Due April 21**