

RTV 2053
News Writing
Spring 2013 Course Information

Professor: John C. Dailey, Ph.D.
WH 121 - jdailey@ozarks.edu
Web Site: <http://ozarks.cybrdr.com> (soon)
Office Hours: MF 2:00-4:00, W 12:00-1:00, TR 2:30-4:00 and by appointment.
Office Phone: 479-979-1352
Off Campus Phone: 479-274-8918
Classroom / Class Time: WH 210, MWF, 1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This basic course focuses on important principles and skills of newsgathering and news judgment. Students will learn to write basic news stories in broadcast, print and online styles. The class will be taught in a workshop format.

REQUIRED TEXT

Bender, J., Davenport, L., Drager, M. and Fedler, F. (2011). *Reporting for the Media*, (10th ed.).
Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199846412

Companion Web Site: <http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199846412/student/?view=usa>

SUGGESTED TEXT

Associated Press. (2011). *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*.
Basic Books. ISBN: 978-0465021871

Abridged Stylebook: <http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199846412/student/stylebook?view=usa>

COURSE GOALS

To be successful in this course, you must be able...

- To demonstrate knowledge of basic terminology, formats, and style in print, broadcast, & online journalism;
- To demonstrate an ability to assess the news value of information and to make judgments about whether and how to use the information;
- To demonstrate the ability to write news stories for print, broadcast, & online media at a level acceptable for publication or broadcast;
- To demonstrate good work habits, including meeting deadlines, copyediting work, and checking accuracy of information;
- To demonstrate ability to critically assess the work of other students and professional journalists;
- To demonstrate consideration of ethical issues and responsibilities associated with presentation of news;
- To demonstrate knowledge of current events on national and international levels

Through the attainment of these course goals, you will have demonstrated growth toward achieving these university Intended Student Outcomes (ISO's).

- #1 Students will communicate effectively;**
- #2 Students will think critically.**

Final Examination

The final examination for this class is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 8 from 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. No exceptions will be made to this schedule**, so make travel and other plans accordingly. If you have four exams on that day, contact the Provost.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

Although there will be some lecture, this is NOT a lecture course. The class will be taught in workshop style, which means you will have frequent, although relatively brief, homework assignments. You are expected to complete the work by the next class period and to be ready to participate in a workshop in which you will be asked to analyze and provide feedback on the work of professional journalists. On assignments other than the official assessments, when your work shows weaknesses, you will be given the option of rewriting it one time to improve your grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

A variety of tools will be used to help you achieve the goals outlined above.

- **Writing/reporting exercises** – You will be doing frequent exercises to develop your skills in writing and newsgathering. Some exercises will focus on a particular skill, while others will be more open-ended and will require you to consolidate many skills (including news judgment and/or ethical considerations). Most writing assignments will be given as homework; however, some will be given at the beginning of class and must be completed by the end of class.
- **Critique sessions** – An important part of learning to write is receiving and using feedback on your work. Some class sessions will be used to look at the work of members of the class (usually anonymously). Emphasis during these sessions will not be on evaluation, but on skill development.
- **Exams** – At midterm & during finals week you will be tested on your ability to perform certain skills.
- **News Quizzes** – As an incentive to remain current on national/international events, brief quizzes over news events will be given once per week. Items for the quizzes will be taken from national news broadcasts, web pages for the major networks, and the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette website. News quiz items will be major news stories, not trivial or feature stories. Although an occasional story concerning celebrities or sports may be included, most questions will focus on political, economic, or social issues and science/technology news.

Expectations

- **Deadlines** – I expect you to complete all assignments on time. Since an important part of work in media fields is meeting deadlines, late work will not be accepted unless you contact me in advance with a legitimate, documented reason (for example, serious illness would be an acceptable excuse; having work due in another class would not). Time management is an important skill for success in the communication field.
- **Accuracy and Proofreading** – I expect you to type all stories and scripts in proper format, to double-check your facts, and to proofread stories carefully before turning them in. You should refer to your broadcast and print stylebooks for formats and style-related issues. You are also advised to bring a grammar handbook and/or dictionary to class with you. You may use a spell-check program, but remember these programs don't catch all mistakes. Any story with more than five grammatical or spelling errors will fail; any story with two factual errors will fail.
- **Attendance** – I expect you to be in class on time. Excessive absences will result in the lowering of your grade. Because illness, emergency, or University-sanctioned activities can sometimes cause you to miss class, absences may be excused if you discuss the problem (in advance if possible) with the instructor. If you cannot reach me, leave a message with the division office (979-1233). The decision about whether or not to excuse an absence rests with the instructor. Excessive absences (more than three) will result in an academic alert.
- **Academic Integrity** – I expect you to do your own work for this class. You may consult with others and you may refer to models or examples from the texts or class, but you must individually prepare and create your own work for grading. For more information, refer to the section on academic integrity in the *Talon* student handbook. Violations of academic integrity are serious offenses. If you are caught using someone else's work as your own or helping someone else to cheat, you may receive a zero for that assignment and I will notify the Provost and the BCG division chair. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating a second time, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course and I will notify the Provost.

Behavior Guidelines, Standards and Expectations

1. **Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period.** It is advisable that you be in your seat and ready to **start participating** in class at that time.
2. **Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process.** This communicates preparedness and interest.
3. **Don't use your cell phone. No texting during class. Shut the phone off and check messages after class.**
4. **Don't do any work on a laptop, tablet, e-reader or smartphone that is not related to this class.**
5. **It is fine to bring a drink or a snack to class, as long as it is not distracting.** In conjunction with this, please PICK UP YOUR TRASH when you leave the room.
6. **Your professor expects your full attention for the entire class period.** If you know that you'll need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible so as not to disrupt others. Similarly, if you arrive in class late, just slip in as quietly as possible and take the first available seat you come to.
7. **Do not sleep in class!** Laying your head on the desk or sleeping in class is rude, and it is distracting to others.
8. **Being courteous in class does not mean that you have to agree with everything that is being said.** However, your point will be much more credible if conveyed without rudeness, aggression, or hostility. If you strongly disagree with your professor, it is a good idea to speak with him/her after class.
9. **When you have a question or comment, please raise your hand first as a courtesy to your classmates and the professor.** Remember, your questions are NOT an imposition – they are welcome. Chances are, if you have a question, someone else is thinking the same thing but is too shy to ask it. So, ask questions! You'll learn more, it makes the class more interesting, and you are helping others learn as well.
10. **If an emergency arises that requires an absence from a session, it is your responsibility to get the notes and all other information that was covered in class from a colleague you trust.**

ADA STATEMENT

If any member of the class has a documented disability and needs special accommodations, the instructor will work with the student and the office of Student Support Services or the Jones Learning Center or the Academic Center for Excellence to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure the student a fair opportunity to perform in this class. In order to plan for optimum success, please advise the instructor of the disability and the desired accommodations as soon as possible. Students are strongly encouraged to notify the instructor during the first week of classes. Without ample planning / preparation time, we cannot assure the availability of needed accommodations in a timely manner.

GRADING POLICIES

Points are accumulated throughout the semester, and at the end of the semester the total points earned will divide the total points possible. Assignments will have the following point values:

Graded Exercises	25 pts. each	News Quizzes	5 pts. each
Exams	100 pts. each	Class Participation	100 pts.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A = 100-92.5%	B+ = 89.49%-86.5%	C+ = 79.49%-76.5%	D+ = 69.49%-65.5%
A- = 92.49%-89.5%	B = 86.49%-82.5%	C = 76.49%-71.5%	D = 65.49%-61.5%
F = 59.99% and below	B- = 82.49%-79.5%	C- = 71.49%-69.5%	D- = 61.49%-60.0%

Grade estimates will be given to you at midterm, but you will be able to follow your grade progress online throughout the semester. You are welcome to discuss your grade with me at any time. At the end of the semester, you will receive your final course grade from the Registrar’s Office. In keeping with University policy and concern for your privacy, I will not post grades, nor will I email grade information to you, even if you ask for it.

COURSE SCHEDULE (may be revised to meet the needs of the class...)

Date	Reading - Reporting for the Media	Subject / Activity
Week 1		
January 16		Introduction / Send Hello to jdailey@ozarks.edu
January 18	Preface, Chapter 1	Journalism Today
Week 2		
January 21	Martin Luther King Day	NO CLASS
January 23	Chapter 2	Grammar and Spelling
January 25	Chapter 3	Newswriting Style - News Quiz #1
Week 3		
January 28	Chapter 4	The Language of News
January 30	Chapter 5	Selecting and Reporting the News
February 1		Selecting and Reporting the News - News Quiz #2
Week 4		
February 4	Chapter 6	Libel
February 6		Libel
February 8		Libel - News Quiz #3

Week 5		
February 11	Chapter 6	Privacy
February 13		Newsgathering Issues
February 15	Chapter 7	Ethics - News Quiz #4
Week 6		
February 18	Chapter 8	Basic News Leads
February 20		Basic News Leads
February 22		Basic News Leads - News Quiz #5
Week 7		
February 25	Chapter 9	Alternative Leads
February 27		Alternative Leads
March 1		Alternative Leads - News Quiz #6
Week 8		
March 4	Chapter 10	The Body of a News Story
March 6		The Body of a News Story
March 8		The Body of a News Story - News Quiz #7
Week 9		
March 11	Chapter 11	Quotations
March 13	MIDTERM EXAM	
March 15	MIDTERM RETURNED	
Week 9		
March 18-22	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS
Week 11		
March 25	Chapter 12	Interviews
March 27		AP Quiz #1
March 29	GOOD FRIDAY	NO CLASS
Week 12		
April 1	Chapter 13	Writing for Radio and TV News
April 3		Writing for Radio and TV News
April 5		AP Quiz #2
Week 13		
April 8		Writing for Radio and TV News
April 10	Chapter 14	Writing for Digital Media
April 12		AP Quiz #3
Week 14		
April 15	Chapter 15	Speeches and Meetings
April 17	Chapter 16	Follow-Ups, Roundups, Sidebars & Obituaries
April 19		AP Quiz #4
Week 15		
April 22	Chapter 17	Feature Stories
April 24	Chapter 18	Public Affairs Reporting
April 26		AP Quiz #5
Week 16		
April 29	Chapter 19	Advanced Reporting
May 1	Chapter 20	Journalism and Public Relations
May 3	Final Exam Review	AP Quiz #6
Finals Week	10:30 - Wednesday, May 8th	FINAL EXAM