



The College of
St. Scholastica

CTA 2214 – Newswriting and Reporting
Sec. #1(CRN # 60208)
Spring 2007

Class Time: MWF 9:15-10:20 a.m., Science 1206

Credits: 4

Instructor: Steve Erickson (sericks1@css.edu)

Office: T4403

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Office Hours: M, W 10:30 – Noon and T R 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
(Other hours by appointment)

Required Text: Telling the Story: The Convergence of Print, Broadcast and Online Media. 3rd Ed. 2007 by Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, and Ranly. Crisis Coverage: An Interactive CD-ROM Journalism Simulation by Bob Bergland and Jeanette Browning, a CD-ROM (included with text).

Also Required: A daily subscription to the *New York Times*. Subscriptions must be arranged through the CSS bookstore during the first week of class. Subscription forms will be handed out in class.

Periodicals/newspapers/radio to read or listened to on a **regular** basis: *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Duluth News-Tribune*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Wall Street Journal*, *US News and World Report*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Minnesota Public Radio (WSCN 100.5 FM)*, and *Wisconsin Public Radio (KUWS 91.3 FM & WHSA 89.9 FM)*, *BBC World Service*, and *CBC "As It Happens"*.

Students must also save daily assignments and stories. A recordable CD or double-sided, high-density 3½" disk are some options. Saving work to your CSS "K" Drive is the safest option.

Webster's New World Dictionary (paperback) and a Thesaurus would be helpful.

Catalog Description

Rewriting wire copy and writing original material under deadline for print and electronic media. Students use computer word processing to develop skills in language usage, style, and structure of the news story. Students will also gather and organize information, conduct interviews, as well as write and edit original news material for print or broadcast. Reporting assignments concentrate on extended news stories, features, and interviews.

Course Objectives

This class is designed to give the student exposure to today's field of converged media in online, print and broadcast media writing. What are the differences between online, newspaper, television, and radio news writing? What are the similarities? These are just two questions the course attempts to answer. Students will learn to take a considerable amount of information and reduce it to an acceptable length for

either print or broadcast, depending on the assignment. Experiences in writing online and for Public Relations will also be provided.

Procedures

Since computers are fixtures in the newsroom, we will write with computers using Microsoft Word. A prerequisite for this course is a familiarity with this software. Typewriting skills are not a prerequisite for this course, but those who cannot type with some proficiency will find themselves at a disadvantage when the deadline approaches!

For those who do not already have one, computer lab personnel will provide a **password** for each student in the class. This password will allow students to access the CSS computer network and World Wide Web (WWW) available throughout the campus.

Students should spend a brief period of time familiarizing themselves with the computers, printer, and the CSS classroom and lab arrangements. If you feel you do not understand how the system works, let the instructor know your concerns. From experience, it seems that a brief review is adequate to cover the essentials of software and lab operations.

Assignments should be turned in on hard copy, though electronic submissions may be occasionally submitted. Make sure an appropriate **assignment name, slug, and date** are included in each submission (see Assignment Format sheet).

Daily discussions of the news (local, national, and international) will be an integral part of the course. Each student will be expected to be prepared, **on a daily basis**, to discuss some news event of the day. The *New York Times* will act as the basis of our discussions, and thus the required subscription. Students will be required to keep a folder in which there should be one article per week clipped out of the hard copy of the *New York Times*. For each story students should make observations and comments on the type of story, story placement in the paper, and how the story is structured and written. Each collected story should be dated with page numbers also indicated. These folders will be collected and evaluated occasionally by the instructor so they must be kept up to date. These folders should be brought to class every day.

Responsibilities-attendance-assignments-guidelines

Since some of the writing will occur in class or on a class day, **attendance is absolutely necessary**. Each missed day will usually mean a missed assignment, which means no grade for that assignment. **More than four unexcused absences will adversely affect the final grade**. Please notify the instructor prior to any planned absences so we can make proper arrangements for missed class work.

Students should keep an additional “clip file” of local, regional, national newspaper and news magazine articles or related material that illustrates good and bad leads, writing styles, etc. We may draw from these examples occasionally in class discussions. This file will not be collected by the instructor.

There will be many in-class writing assignments, some outside reading (including a book report on a journalism related book approved by the instructor) and writing, quizzes on the readings, a midterm exam, and a final examination. Both the midterm and final will be based on the required readings and lectures.

Deadlines are extremely important in journalistic endeavors. **Honor the deadline and submit work in a timely fashion or the work will be graded down or totally discounted.**

It is a basic assumption that any work submitted has been **proofread and checked for spelling, punctuation, and form**. Submitted work that shows lack of attention to these errors will be discounted or

returned to the student for correction. Corrections can be made in pencil using appropriate copy editing marks (see Telling the Story pp 346-347), or by totally rewriting/reprinting the copy.

Students will also study and critique the news media on a “crisis” or major news event day. Students will then be expected to write a paper (four to six pages) analyzing and describing the differences between print, online and broadcast coverage of the day's significant **local** news. Of special concern will be which medium best covered a given story, which medium excelled, which faltered, etc. The deadline for this assignment will be found in the course schedule.

To provide additional realistic experience, students are required to travel off-campus to attend and write a story concerning a civic meeting (school board, city council, county board, etc) of the students choice (with approval of instructor). The deadline for this assignment will be found in the course schedule. Students will also be required to research, attend, and write a story based on one of the three CSS Peace and Justice Lecture Series presentations during the current semester.

Students are encouraged and expected to provide material and stories for the *CSS Cable* and *CSS TV News*.

During the semester students may be assigned campus beats. Students will investigate, research, and prepare stories based on these beat assignments.

Grading, Evaluation and Weighting

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Daily writing assignments - count once
- Midterm and final exam – each count three times
- Quizzes - count once
- New York Times* weekly folder – counts once
- Local news analysis paper – count three times
- Book report – count twice
- Civic Meeting Story – counts three times
- Warner Lecture Series story – counts twice
- Crisis Coverage CD Crime Story (Spot News) – counts twice
- Regular/frequent participation in class discussions
- Attendance

Quizzes may be given without prior announcement to encourage students to master assigned reading before coming to class and to emphasize key concepts. A quiz grade counts once.

Daily writing assignments will be required. A grade for one of these assignments counts once.

Tests, including a midterm and a final, are developed from multiple-choice, definition, and short answer questions. Each test grade counts three times (frequent quizzes on text and lecture material may substitute for the mid-term and final exam).

The paper on news coverage/analysis will count three times as will the Civic Meeting Story. A book report (2-3 pages) on a book about journalism or a journalist will also be required and will count twice. The Warner Lecture Series story and Crisis Coverage CD Crime story will also count twice.

Grade Range:

A+ A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D D- F

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

Example

Assignment <u>Grade</u>	Quiz 1 A-	Quiz 2 B+	Exam 1 C	Exam 2 B-	Exam 3 A	Paper A+
Equivalent Score	10	9	5x3=15	7x3=21	11x3=33	12x3=36
Totals	10 + 9 + 15 + 21 + 33 + 36 = 124/14 = 8.857 = 8.9 = B+					

Using this format the student should be able to determine their numerical grade at any point during the semester. However, the student must also take into consideration such issues as class participation and attendance.

Academic Honesty

The instructor endorses and ascribes to the College statement on Academic Honesty as stated in both 2005-2007 College Catalog (p.63) and the 2006-2007 Student Handbook. The instructor also endorses and asks that all students read the final chapter in the text (Ch. 15- Ethics). All work handed in and presented to the instructor during the course of the class should be the sole work of the student. Some discussion, cooperation, and aid between students is expected and encouraged but the final work should be the result of each student's own efforts. Minimal supportive proofreading by others is allowed (though students may make use of the College Writing Center services as needed, T-3111, 723-6657). If there is a question concerning collaboration on any assignment, the student must ask the instructor for clarification. Assignments, which have been previously prepared, presented, for any reason, must be identified to the instructor for approval.

Incomplete grades

An Incomplete (I) grade will only be given in extreme cases. Students must appeal to the instructor before the last week of class for an Incomplete grade. Both the student and the instructor must agree upon a date for completion of the course requirements at the time of the appeal.

Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs should notify Heather Angelle the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities (phone 723-6645 inT-2144) so that accommodations can be arranged.