

CO 226 Media Writing

Course Syllabus and Calendar

Section Information

Section 01

M/W 9:30-10:50pm

EC209

Instructor:

Dr. Manuel Lujan Cruz

Email: cruz6043@triton.uog.edu

Office: EC 213B

Office Hours:

Mon/Wed: 12:00-2:30 pm

Friday: 3:35-4:35 pm

Office #: (671) 735-2704

I. Course Description & Student Learning Outcomes

The theory and practice in gathering and presenting news for the print media are covered in this course. Students' work may appear in the Triton's Call. Prerequisite: EN110 placement.

Student Learning Outcomes—By the end of this course, all students will be able to (*PLEASE REFER TO LAST PAGE OF SYLLABUS TO SEE HOW THESE SLOS ARE LINKED WITH PLOS, AND ILOS*):

SLO1: Compose journalistic stories that adhere to professional standards and style.

SLO2. Apply information-gathering strategies for reporting and writing news.

SLO3. Demonstrate proficiency in writing news stories for multiple platforms.

II. Textbook and Supplies

(1) Required Textbooks: (a) Missouri Group. *News Reporting and Writing*. 10th edition or above; (b) The Associated Press: Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law

III. Course Expectations

You are expected to attend class, be punctual, complete all assignments on time; and read and watch the news daily to critically engage and participate in discussions. Today's media practice requires practitioners who not

only know *how* to create media, but *why* they are creating media. Thus, students are highly encouraged to form critical and well-researched perspectives on current events. Much of the class will be spent in discussion with the Instructor and your peers on topics including (but not limited to): gender, race, class, Indigenous sovereignty, and militarization among other issues.

In this course, there are many opportunities to work in groups to complete in-class assignments. You may also have assignments requiring you to attend events online or on-and-off campus outside of class time.

Attendance: You are allowed to miss up to 3 classes without penalty (excused or otherwise). Beyond that, you will be penalized with an additional 1% your final grade per absence. Entering class 20 minutes late will be considered an absence.

IV. Course Delivery

Classes will consist of lectures, in-depth discussion, and activity. There may also be asynchronous online materials to engage with. Weekly assignments will be submitted using Moodle and other digital platforms such as Google Docs.

It is your responsibility to keep up to date with our class notifications on the Announcements board regarding meeting times and course delivery methods.

V. Grading Policy

Assignments are normally due at 11:59 p.m. of the due date. **No late assignments will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with me.** Missed assignments can be made up by pitching and writing an alternative news piece.

If you anticipate missing class for health reasons, you must contact me via email at least 3 hours prior to the start of class. If you anticipate missing class for non-medical reasons (e.g., athletics, non-medical appointments, funerals), you will need to inform me at least 24 hours via email prior to the day you will miss class—in such cases that you have informed me, you will need to complete/submit assignments prior to the day you will miss class, otherwise, you will not earn a grade for any work you failed to submit.

Letter grades: All assignments will count in the computation of your final grade. Not all assignments will receive letter grades, but those that do (typically writing assignments) will be evaluated according to the following standards:

- **A:** Article is factual and has clear wording and sentence structure, as well as cohesive and logical organization. If appropriate to the assignment, the article will also present well-selected quotes, and requires little to no editing.
- **B:** Article comes close to the guidelines for **A** but has occasional lapses that require additional editing.

- **C:** Article lacks cohesive organization or contains weak wording or sentence structure. The article may also contain multiple style and spelling errors which could have been avoided with close reading.
- **D:** Results from major holes in the story, factual errors, poor organization, weak quotes, grammatical errors, excessive style errors, to name a few.

All students are expected to be proficient in grammar, having a proficiency level equivalent to placement in EN-110. In addition, during the first two weeks of the semester, we will review basic grammar rules. Thereafter, **any major assignments that have more than five major grammatical errors will automatically receive a letter grade of F.** Students will be allowed to complete a rewrite (see rewrite policy below—the F grade will be averaged with the grade obtained on the second draft). If you feel you have issues with grammar, please avail of the **Writing Center** for assistance.

Accuracy is an important aspect of writing for the public. Every effort should be made to check and verify factual information. A factual error discovered on an assignment will result in a **grade of F** (or the note, "Redo for credit") and the assignment must be resubmitted for a grade. When an assignment must be redone, the highest grade possible on the revision is a **B+**. An extremely poorly done story can result in an **F** without factual errors.

All assignments for this course are expected to be original work. Plagiarism, or turning in someone else's work as your own, is unacceptable and can result in failure on the assignment and in the course. All work turned in for this course should be done with the expectation that it may be published and disseminated to the university and broader island community. *Sources may be contacted for verification.*

Additional Notes:

Outside sources required for stories should not include friends and family members to avoid conflicts of interest.

All class assignments should be ones independently produced for the purpose of our class (not for another class; not for another publication).

Faculty Evaluation

The student course and faculty evaluations for courses will be administered at the completion of the semester within CollegeNet. Student participation is essential and appreciated. Student responses are anonymous and cannot be traced back to individual students. You will need your WebAdvisor login credentials to complete the evaluation. If you experience login issues, please refer inquiries to OIT staff to assist at 735-2630/40.

VI. Plagiarism

Exceptional works Academic honesty/Plagiarism

All students are expected to abide by the rules of conduct outlined in the UOG Student Handbook (e.g., do not plagiarize). Violation of the academic honesty portion of this Code will automatically result in a course grade of

“F” and referral to the Dean of CLASS.

Plagiarism occurs when one submits the work of another person as his or her own or does not adequately attribute another’s work (including when one paraphrases materials without sufficiently acknowledging their source). Make sure that all of your assignments and final project are in your own words and cite references where applicable. If you have questions about how to do this, ask. It is considered plagiarism to submit work for a grade that has been submitted elsewhere for credit.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- Turning in someone else’s work as your own.
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit.
- Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks.
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation.
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit.
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not.
- Unattributed use of AI

“Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.” Penalty for plagiarism will be 0 on the assignment/exam, and 15% docked from the final grade. Plagiarism or cheating on examinations/assignments is a serious offense that may result in a zero grade on an assignment, a failing grade in a course, or suspension or expulsion from the University.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statement

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a research tool is allowed, but it must not replace the student's original ideas, creativity, and critical thinking. AI should be used only as a tool to assist in research, and proper attribution must be given to any AI-generated content. All work submitted for grading must be the sole product of the student's endeavors. Any violation of academic integrity will be dealt with accordingly.

Example of attribution language:

“The author generated this text in part with GPT-4o, OpenAI’s large-scale language-generation model. Upon generating draft language, the author reviewed, edited, and revised the language to their own liking and takes ultimate responsibility for the content of this publication.”

VII. Rewrites

Exceptional works (i.e., 5-7 of the best students' works per assignment) will be selected for publication on *Triton's Call*. If your work is selected, you will be given the opportunity to re-write it and resubmit it. Grades for both the first and second drafts will be averaged to obtain a final grade for the given assignment. Extra credit will also be given for such assignments. If your work is selected for publication in the TC online edition, you will receive publication points (up to 1 percent, 1/2 percent per story) toward your final grade. Note that students registered for the CO 385 class are not allowed to "double-dip," meaning they cannot use a story they wrote for CO 226 to meet a TC story requirement, and vice-versa.

VII. Grades (specific instructions for each of these requirements will be provided through the semester):

Major writing projects (completed outside of class)	145 Points
1. Hard News Event Story (150-200 words): 40 Points	
2. Interview Feature Story: Profile (350-400 words, 1 source): 45 Points	
3. Opinion/Editorial (Op-Ed) Article (450-550 words, 2 sources): 60 Points	
Attendance	30 Points
In-class work, which includes (but not limited to):	80 Points
1. Writing and reporting exercises, peer critiques: 55 points	
Critical Conversations Project:	50 Points
Investigative Journalism Article	
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	305 points total

Final Grade Formula: Your final grade percentage = $\frac{\text{Total points you have earned}}{\text{Maximum points possible}} \times 100$

(Maximum points possible)

Percentage and Final Letter Grade Equivalent



A+: 98-100% **B+:** 87-89% **C+:** 77-79%

A: 93-97% **B:** 83-86% **C:** 70-76%

A-: 90-92% **B-:** 80-82% **D:** 60-69%

Note: If a student withdraws in a timely manner, then a **W** is recorded (it can impact the students financial aid if that W takes them below 12 credits). If the professor assigns a **UW** due to non-performance/non-attendance it does become an **F**, but has a greater impact on the student's financial aid than an assigned F grade because it shows non-attendance, no attempt to complete the course.

ADA Accommodation Services

For individuals covered under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), if you are a student with a disability requiring academic accommodation(s), please contact the Student Counseling and Advising Service Disability Support Services Office to discuss your confidential request. A Faculty Notification letter from the Disability Support Services/Student Counseling and Advising Service Accommodation counselor will be provided to me. To register for academic accommodations, please contact or visit Sallie S. Sablan, DSS counselor in the School of Education, office 110, disabilitysupport@triton.uog.edu or telephone/TDD 671-735-2460.

Class Schedule

* May be subject to change

[Week#]	Day	Topic	Reading Due
Week of		Assignments in italics are assigned that day. In bold are due that day. Italics & bold indicates assigned & completed same day in class.	
[1] 8/14	Wed	Introduction to course: Course Syllabus	Chapter 1
[2] 8/19	Mon	The Nature of News Chapters 1 & 2 Common Errors of Grammar and Punctuation Appendix 1	Chapter 1
8/21	Wed	Common Errors of Grammar and Punctuation Appendix 1 Writing Exercises in Grammar & Punctuation Hard News Event Story Instructions Distributed	Chapter 1, 2
[3] 8/26	Mon	Common Errors of Grammar and Punctuation, AP Style Appendix 1, Appendix 2 <i>Writing Exercises in AP Style – #1-10</i> (Keep these for the AP Quiz) (12 points)	Chapter 2
8/28	Wed	The Inverted Pyramid: Leads Chapter 9 <i>Exercise: Legendary Leads</i>	Chapter 3
[4] 9/2	Mon	LABOR DAY	Chapter 4
9/4	Wed	Interviews, Quotations and Attributions Interview Feature Story Instructions Distributed	Chapter 4
[5] 9/9	Mon	Writing to Be Read / Gathering Information Chapter 6, Chapter 9	Chapter 6, 9
9/11	Wed	Writing to Be Read / Gathering Information *Hard News Event Story Due: 20 Points	
[6] 9/16	Mon	Beat Reporting Chapter 13	Chapter 13
9/18	Wed	Beat Reporting Chapter 13	Chapter 13
[7] 9/23	Mon	Hard News Event Story One-on-One Meetings	
9/25	Wed	Reporting on Speeches Chapter 15	Chapter 15

		<i>Writing Exercises in Reporting on Speeches</i>	
[8] 9/30	Mon	Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Critical Conversations Project Overview	
10/2	Wed	Applying CDA *Interview Feature Story Due	
10/7	Mon	MID-SEM. BREAK	
10/9	Wed	MID-SEM. BREAK	
[9] 10/14	Mon	Applying CDA	
10/16	Wed	Applying CDA	
[10] 10/21	Mon	Google Maps Travel Article (Part 1)	
10/23	Wed	Google Maps Travel Article (Part 2) Opinion/Editorial Assignment Overview	
[11] 10/28	Mon	Writing for the Web	Chapter 11
10/30	Wed	Writing for the Web (Cont.)	Chapter 11
[12] 11/4	Mon	Public Relations	Chapter 18
11/6	Wed	Public Relations	Chapter 18
[13] 11/11	Mon	VETERANS DAY	
11/13	Wed	Critical Conversations Overview	
[14] 11/18	Mon	Critical Conversations Workshop *Opinion/Editorial Assignment Due: 45 Points	
11/20	Wed	Critical Conversations Workshop	
[15] 11/25	Mon	Critical Conversations Presentation	
11/27	Wed	Critical Conversations Presentation	
[16] 12/2	Mon	1:1 Conferences *Feature Story Due: 60 Points	
12/4	Wed	1:1 Conferences	

Alignment of SLOs with PLOs with ILOs

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

SLO1: Compose journalistic stories that adhere to professional standards and style.

SLO2. Apply information-gathering strategies for reporting and writing news.

SLO3. Demonstrate proficiency in writing news stories for multiple platforms.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

PLO1. Articulate the theories of perception, interaction, and the creation of shared meaning in individual, group, intercultural, mass and digital communication settings;

PLO2. Analyze the effects of media messages and form on the individual and society;

PLO3. Apply basic logic, reasoning, ethics, and interpretation in producing and consuming messages

PLO4. Construct and express a cohesive idea, across multiple platforms, drawn from multiple sources of information that arrives at a rational conclusion expressing a defensible point of view;

PLO5. Utilize contemporary and understand developing communication technologies.

Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

ILO1. Mastery of critical thinking and problem solving

ILO2. Mastery of quantitative analysis

ILO3. Effective oral and written communication

ILO4. Understanding and appreciation of culturally diverse people, ideas and values in a democratic context

ILO5. Responsible use of knowledge, natural resources, and technology

ILO6. An appreciation of the arts and sciences

ILO7. An interest in personal development and lifelong learning.

[Note: In order to conserve paper, and adhere to the *UOG Green Initiative*, tables are not used to convey the following information.]

SLO1-> Aligns with PLO3, PLO4, and PLO5 -> Aligns with ILO1, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO7. Assessed with written projects, written assignments and exercises.

SLO2 -> Aligns with PLO3, PLO4, and PLO5 -> Aligns with ILO1, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO7. Assessed with written projects, written assignments and exercises.

SLO3 -> Aligns with PLO3, PLO4, and PLO5 -> Aligns with ILO1, ILO3, ILO4, ILO5, ILO7. Assessed with written projects, written assignments and exercises.