Media Writing  
MCM 205.091 (class) and MCM 205L.021 (lab)  
FALL 2017

Professor:  Jaclyn Noel Partin  
Email:  partinjn@sfasu.edu  
Phone:  936-715-4120  
Office:  215 E Main Street (CBTx)  
Office Hours:  By appointment only  
Department:  Mass Communication  
Class Location:  Boynton 209  
Class Times:  Tuesday (class) and Thursday (class and lab), 11-12:15

Course Description: Fundamental principles of writing news across platforms of print, broadcast, and online. Writing enhanced. Incidental fee required. Prerequisite: Though the SFA catalog lists no prerequisites, six semester hours of freshman English (writing courses) are strongly recommended.

Text and Materials:
- *Writing and Reporting for the Media* by Bender, Davenport, Drager, and Felder (11th edition). It is important to have the current edition because we will be using the chapter exercises for in-class discussion, homework, and some lab assignments.
- *The Associated Press Stylebook* (2013 or later edition). This is the “Bible” of media writing. You need to own an up-to-date copy as long as you are studying or working in the mass communication field. [http://www.apstylebook.com/sfasu.edu/](http://www.apstylebook.com/sfasu.edu/)
- Instructor-prepared exercises given to students during class.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Demonstrate the ability to write effectively across a variety of platforms appropriate to the discipline.
2. Gather, organize, and analyze discipline-appropriate research and communicate information about it.
3. Understand the role of media in society.
4. Comprehend legal and ethical principles relating to media.
5. Demonstrate the application of media technology, terminology, and techniques.

JOURNALISM CONCENTRATION PLOs:

1. Demonstrate appropriate writing and editing skills across diverse multimedia platforms.
2. Gather, analyze, organize, and synthesize information on contemporary topics to develop a news story.
3. Demonstrate the application of contemporary technology, terminology, and techniques in the news-gathering process.
4. Understand effective visual language and how to apply it to convey messages and enhance the communication process.
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Demonstrate journalistic writing skills across print, broadcast, and online platforms.
2. Understand and utilize research and investigative techniques for news stories across multiple platforms.
3. Demonstrate the ability to utilize contemporary news gathering and writing technology.
4. Demonstrate how to create and present a story simultaneously in print, broadcast, and online platforms.

Course Requirements:

- Lab assignments
- Mid-semester exam
- Final exam

Grading:

- Lab assignments = 60%
- Mid-semester exam = 20%
- Final exam = 20%
- TOTAL = 100%

Attendance Policy

Each student is allowed 2 unexcused absences. For every unexcused absence beyond that, 2 points will be subtracted from your final course average. Absences will be approved for an acceptable excuse as defined by the professor, for approved university activity, etc, and will require documentation discussed and approved by the professor.

Considerations:

1. The mid-semester and final exams will cover material discussed in class along with assigned chapters from our textbook. Exams will be two-part: theory (questions taken from the assigned chapters and class lectures) and application (grammar, AP Style, usage, etc.). It is your responsibility to keep up with textbook reading assignments. We do not have time to cover the entirety of the text in class.
2. Policies regarding lab work:
   a. All assigned work will be completed during lab. You may not finish at home.
   b. Please plan to stay the entire lab period. Treat each lab as you would a test. Portions of some labs may be devoted to lecture.
   c. In completing your lab assignments, you may use notes, books, returned exercises, etc. Please do not talk to one another. If you have questions, ask your instructor.
   d. At the end of the semester, your two lowest lab grades will be dropped (not included in the lab portion of the grade). Therefore, there will be no make-ups.
   e. Please do not ask to begin a lab early.
Additional Lab Information –

3. **BOYNTON LAB SCHEDULE:** The Boynton Lab will be available for weekly use. The lab schedule will be posted by the second week of the semester.

4. **LAB FACILITY, COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS:** Food and/or drinks are not allowed in the lab. Printing unrelated to your registered class (which uses Boynton 202 or 209 Labs) may revoke ALL printing privileges. Printing to the color printer requires approval and must be for specific class assignments. Lab assistants are available for general assistance. If you experience a problem with computer equipment, please note the problem in detail and the computer used, and report this information to the lab assistant.

Refer to the Tentative Assignment Listing in this Syllabus for Course Exercises.

Additional Considerations:

1. Early tests will not be given. Make-up tests will be given only when warranted by extenuating circumstances, which will be considered by the instructor on a case-by-case basis.
2. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. If an exercise or exercises were handed out, please ask me for copies. I will not remind you.
3. Students are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen in class. Whispering, talking, reading, studying material for another class, etc., will be not allowed. Students also are expected to remain in their seats throughout the class period unless there is an emergency.
4. Texting, going online, emailing or using social media during class is rude and will not be tolerated. Please make sure to turn off your cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc. before class begins, and put them away. They should not be on your desk during class.
5. Children are not allowed in either the class or lab.

Communicating with Professor Partin

For communicating to all members of the class, I will use D2L. To communicate with me, I will request and advise that you use my SFA email. I work a separate full time job in the field, so I will not be checking D2L constantly or consistently as a manner of timely response to inquiries. This will keep your emails separate from my other work emails and provide more efficient responses on my part. Email is going to be your best form of communication with me, as the phone number listed is my work number—I work 8-5 Monday through Friday and may be out of the office some during those times. Email I will always receive. I also ask that you include a subject line referencing the topic of your email by assignment or issue so that they are easily organized.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, Policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over which behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may
be referred to the iCare Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Withdrawal Policy

The last day to drop a course without a “WP or WF” varies by semester. Please consult the SFA Academic Calendar should you anticipate needing to drop the course.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Grade Withheld Policy (Semester Grades A-54)

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Academic Integrity (4.1)

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class;
- Falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assignment; and/or
- Helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another;
· Submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from the internet or another source; and,
· Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper or presentation without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at www.sfasu.edu/policies/academicintegrity.asp.

**Weekly Calendar**

I reserve the right to make changes to the calendar at any time I deem necessary. Should I make changes, it is my responsibility as the professor to inform the students. Changes will be posted on D2L. The following calendar is an approximation of our schedule this semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT(S) DUE</th>
<th>READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 8/29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction; Syllabus Review; Assessment Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 8/31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Begin Spotlight</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9/5</td>
<td>Read Chapters 1-2 before class</td>
<td>Finish Spotlight Objectivity Discussion (PP) (HO); Lab #1: Fact vs. Opinion Ch. 1-2 Discussion (PP); Marks (HO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 9/7</td>
<td>Read Chapter 7 before class</td>
<td>Ch. 7 Discussion; Leads &amp; Inverted Pyramid (PP); AP Style (HO) (PP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9/12</td>
<td>Read Chapter 3 before class</td>
<td>Grammar Lesson I-S/V agreement, collective nouns (HO); Ch. 3 Discussion (PP); Editing Marks Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 9/14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lab #2: Editing Marks, Leads &amp; Concise Wording; Lab #2 Slides (PP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9/19</td>
<td>Read Chapter 4 before class</td>
<td>Review Lab #2; Ch. 3-4 Discussion; Grammar Lesson II (HO);</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 9/21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lab #3: Leads; Misplaced Modifiers (PP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 9/26</td>
<td>Read Chapters 5-6 before class</td>
<td>Ch. 5-6 discussion (PP); Grammar Lesson III (HO); AP Style Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 9/28</td>
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<td>Lab #4: Grammar &amp; AP Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/3</td>
<td>Read Chapters 8-9</td>
<td>Ch. 9 Discussion (PP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 10/5</td>
<td>before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/10</td>
<td>Read Chapter 10 before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 10/12</td>
<td>Lab #5: News Story</td>
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<td>T 10/17</td>
<td>Lab #6: Quotations</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 10/19</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam Review; Lab #7: Newswriting Practice; Combo Lab #5-6 Due</td>
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<td>T 10/24</td>
<td>Read Chapter 11 before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 10/26</td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam: (Ch. 1-10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 10/31</td>
<td>Bring pencil and Scantron</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 11/2</td>
<td>Lab #7: Newswriting Practice; Combo Lab #5-6 Due</td>
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<td>T 11/7</td>
<td>Read Chapter 12 before class</td>
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<td>R 11/9</td>
<td>Lab #8: Interview Questions</td>
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<td>T 11/14</td>
<td>Read Chapter 14 before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 11/16</td>
<td>Ch. 19 Discussion; Review Lab #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 11/21</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 11/23</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 11/28</td>
<td>Bring list of interview questions to class</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 11/30</td>
<td>Guest Interview for Lab #12; Ch. 13 Discussion (PP)</td>
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<td>T 12/5</td>
<td>Lab #12/ Writing Assessment B: Live Interview Story</td>
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<td>R 12/7</td>
<td>Read Chapter 20 before class</td>
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<td>R 12/14</td>
<td>Final Exam: Ch. 10-20 <strong>10:30 am-12:30pm</strong> (Note special time.)</td>
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<td>Bring pencil and Scantron</td>
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