Course Syllabus

MCM 305-090 — Convergence Reporting Fall 2017
Department of Mass Communication

Class hours: 10-10:50 a.m. MW in BO 209 — Lab (MCM 305L-020): 10-10:50 a.m. F in BO 209

Convergence Reporting is an intensive study of methods used in gathering and writing news beyond those considered in MCM 205. Prerequisite: MCM 205.

Instructor: Kasi Dickerson, M.A.
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Office hours by appointment.

RECOMMENDED TEXT AND MATERIALS:
Principles of Convergent Journalism (2nd ed.) by Jeffery S. Wilkison, August E. Grant and Douglas J. Fisher

Associated Press Stylebook (2015 or later)

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES
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. The student will learn to write news stories for both print and online applications, applying professional principals of fairness and balance, and utilizing effective grammar and syntax, including elements of Associated Press style.
2. The student will learn to identify hard and soft news opportunities in campus activities and situations.
3. The student will develop news packages of campus news that incorporate both written and visual components and that are appropriate for a variety of media applications.

GRADING

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<td>Lab exercises/Weekly stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-semester exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final project</td>
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EXAM INFORMATION

The mid-semester exam will cover material discussed in class along with assigned chapters from our textbook.

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.

Final project instructions will be given at a later date.
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; therefore, there will be no make-ups.
e. Please do not ask to begin a lab early.

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.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments will be graded based on both quantity and quality. All writing assignments are expected to provide substantive content and should reflect elements such as timeliness, relevance, innovativeness, style usage, spelling, grammar, general writing, coverage of topic, fairness, accuracy, use of quotes and attribution, reporting abilities, clarity, lively writing, objectivity and story development.

You will lose points for each misspelled word in a news story. Misspelled names also will result in an automatic deduction on the grade for that story. You will be expected to edit your work according to AP style BEFORE you submit the draft in lab.

Deadlines are a major responsibility in the communication industry, and they will be respected in this course. No exceptions.

Mandatory lab is Friday from 10-10:50 a.m. in BO 209. This session permits one-on-one help with your writing. The instructor will be available to help you during each lab period. During the course of the semester, you may use the lab period to plan and write your converged news stories.

JACK JOURNALS

You can't be a good writer if you are not a good reader. This assignment is designed to enhance your news judgement and ability to critique others in the media.

Each week students will be required to turn in a journal entry on the topic the instructor chooses. Submissions will be turned in to dropbox on D2L.

Submissions will be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font and double spaced in Microsoft Word. Entries should be well-written and about a page in length.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Each student is allowed three absences without penalty. For each additional absence, two points will be deducted from your final course average.
2. Three tardies count as one absence. If you come to class 15 minutes or later after class has started, you will be counted absent.
3. If you do not plan to come to class, do not take this course.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
All students are expected to show the instructor and their fellow students the appropriate respect. Although lively discussion is encouraged, please do not make unnecessary noise, do other class work, read or sleep. Listen attentively.

Please put all cell phones on silent and refrain from text messaging during class.
Per University policy, you are not allowed to have food or drink in classrooms. The exception to this is bottled water. Do not bring cups of coffee or any other liquid into the classroom. If any damage results from spilled liquids or food, the student will be responsible for any cleaning or repairs.

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, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what 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 Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Plagiarizing or copying material from another publication or another student without attribution will result in an automatic F for the course. Fabrication of facts and/or quotes in campus news stories also will be cause for a failing course grade. Facts and quotes will be checked periodically with listed sources to verify accuracy. Students are encouraged to review the University policy on plagiarism at http://www.sfasu.edu/upp/pap/academic_affairs/academic_integrity.html

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) 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 are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp Students not complying with SFA’s academic dishonesty regulations will be given a failing grade in this course and may be subject to further disciplinary action.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
To obtain disability-related accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, students may call 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, DS will notify the instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.

NOTE: This course is designated as Writing Enhanced for the purposes of university curriculum requirements.