Course Syllabus

Editing in the Converged Newsroom
MCM 301.001
Spring 2020

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Office: Boynton 302
Office Hours: 2-4 p.m. Tuesday and by appointment
Department: Mass Communication
Class Meeting Time and Place: 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday in Boynton 210

Course Description: Techniques of news editing, evaluation and processing of news with emphasis on grammar, AP style and headline writing. Prerequisite: MCM 205 or the equivalent with a grade of C.

Justification for Credit Hours Awarded: MCM 301, “Editing in the Converged Newsroom” (3 credits), typically meets twice each week (Tuesday/Thursday) in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks and also meets for a 2-hour final exam. Students have significant workbook assignments along with exercises written by the instructor and are expected to take 3 one-hour exams, weekly quizzes based on The Associated Press Stylebook and a final covering the entire semester’s work. These activities average a minimum 6 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

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 the 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. Students will learn how to improve their skills to become better writers by editing copy for various media.
2. Students will review and learn basic grammatical terms.
3. Students will learn *The Associated Press Stylebook*, which is important in newspaper and magazine work, PR and other journalism-related areas.
4. Students will review and learn basic mathematical skills essential to copy editing.
5. Students will learn how to write headlines.

**Texts and Materials:**


**Course Requirements:** Requirements include three one-hour examinations, style quizzes and a comprehensive final examination.

**Major exams and the final** will cover material discussed in class along with assigned sections in *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Most questions will be in exercise format.

**Grading Policy:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three major exams</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Attendance Policy:**

1. No distinction is made between excused and unexcused absences. Any student who misses 25% of the class will have his/her grade lowered one letter; 35%, two letters; 45%, three letters, etc.
2. Any student who does not have his/her workbook with completed exercises will be counted absent. Obviously, if you haven’t done the assignments, you cannot participate.
3. Three tardies count as one absence. (Please see me the period you are late if you believe your tardy should be excused.) If you come in 15 minutes or later after the class has begun, you are absent.

Considerations:

1. Major exams and the final will cover material discussed in class along with assigned sections in *The Associated Press Stylebook*.
2. Exams, excluding the final, will be returned. Students having questions should see their instructor as quickly as possible.
3. I do not email grades on give them out on the telephone.

**Course Calendar:** 301 is mainly a participation class with a few lectures. In class, we primarily do exercises. Because it is impossible to tell how many we will complete in any given period, it is important for students to stay ahead.

--About 60% of the semester will be devoted to grammar/style/usage.
--About 20% of the course will be devoted to headlines, primarily learning headline terminology and writing headlines.
--About 5% of the semester will be devoted to math.
--About 15% of the semester will be devoted to miscellaneous editing problems. Examples of these problems are listed in #1, *Student Learning Outcomes*.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):** 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 (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

Withheld Grades Semester Policy (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.

Students with Disabilities: To obtain disability accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and 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 http://www.sfasu.edu/disability_services/.

Additional Considerations:

1. Early tests (major exams, final) will not be given.
2. No one is exempt from the final.
3. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Please check with another student in the class. See me if you missed a handout, homework assignment, etc.
4. Students are expected to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen. Such behavior as whispering, talking, reading, studying material for
another class, etc., will not be tolerated. The above are grounds for dismissal. **Students also are expected to remain in their seats throughout the period unless there is a dire emergency, which should be explained at the end of the period. Leaving the classroom, returning and not explaining why will result in an absence for that period.**

5. Texting (text messaging) during class is crude, rude and socially unacceptable. Anyone caught doing this will be asked to leave and possibly will be dropped from the class. The same holds true for sending and checking e-mails.

6. Cell phones—or anything that looks like a phone, for that matter—should be clearly placed out of sight, especially during tests. If a student is caught with a cell phone on his/her desk, she/he will be asked to leave the classroom. If this should occur during a test, he/she will receive a zero on the test. Please turn off all cell phones.

7. Course feedback (returned tests) is provided throughout the semester.

8. Makeup exams are given only to students who have acceptable excuses. ("Acceptable" is defined by the instructor.) One makeup exam will be given at the end of the semester and will cover the entire semester’s work.

9. Children are not welcome in this class, which in no way functions as a day-care center. Anyone who brings a child to class will be asked to leave with the child. On the other hand, dogs and cats are very, very welcome, though, alas, university policy does not permit them to attend.
STYLE QUIZZES

1. Style quizzes are given at the beginning of each designated period. Therefore, it is very important to arrive on time. Generally, each quiz, with the exception of the comprehensive, takes about 10 minutes. So, if someone arrives 15 minutes late, he/she has missed the quiz. If someone arrives 8 minutes late, she/he has 2 minutes to do the quiz.

2. The maximum time given to do the comprehensive style quiz is 30 minutes.

3. Makeup are not given for missed style quizzes, no matter what the excuse. At the end of the semester, the lowest three style scores will be dropped. The comprehensive quiz counts thrice. For example, if someone makes 90 on the comprehensive, 90 is recorded three times.

4. If a quiz (or major exam, for that matter!) has been misgraded (or if you have a question), please see your instructor as quickly as possible.
**STYLE QUIZZES**

Note: Quizzes will be based on the 2019 edition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>SECTION(S)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>B, C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>D, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>F, G, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>I, J, K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td>L, M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>N, O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>P, Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>R, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>T, U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>V, W, X, Y, Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
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</tbody>
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If you take all of the above tests, your three lowest grades will be dropped at the end of the semester.
Please study appropriate sections, "Sports" and "Food," for each style quiz.


For example, for our first style quiz ("A"), you would also study "Sports," pp. 412-414, and "Food," pp. 444-445.