

California Lutheran University

Bachelor's Degree for Professionals

Writing for the Mass Media COMM 231

Winter 2016

Monday, 6-9:30 PM

Woodland Hills Center

Classroom: Room 117

Instructor: Christin Davis, M.A.

Email: cldavi@callutheran.edu

Phone: TBA

Office Hours: By appointment

Drop Date: December 7

Withdraw Date: January 19

Course Description

COMM 231 Writing for the Mass Media (4 units) is an introduction to researching, reporting and writing news and features for various print, audio, visual and electronic media. Skills taught include: research, techniques of interviewing news sources, story structure, consistent/concise writing and editing with clarity and speed as well as accuracy and fairness. Prerequisite: English 111.

Course Materials

Writing & Reporting for the Media, Bender, 11th Edition
(ISBN: 9780190249625)

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law, 2015
(ISBN: 9780465062942)

Course Outcomes

Students who successfully complete COMM 231 should be able to:

- Examine the role of news media in society
- Identify news values and determine the relative value of various sources of information
- Conceive and write a variety of basic mass media pieces using appropriate style for different media under deadline pressure
- Discuss theories that influence news media coverage, such as framing, gatekeeping and the democratic theory of media
- Discuss standards and practices of successful journalism including objectivity, accuracy, privacy issues and ethics

Course Format

Generally, each session will be structured to include lecture and a focus on discussing and practicing writing techniques. In addition to time spent in class, this course requires 13-14 hours of course time delivered via online instructor-led activities.

Participation and Attendance

This course requires regular attendance, participation and respect for deadlines. Formal attendance is not taken, however points for any quiz or homework due *are only available to those who are present*. If you miss class on an article deadline, it is your responsibility to submit the article by email by the start of class time.

Course Assignments/Requirements

Reading

This class is organized around critical thinking, class discussion, and your own writing. To facilitate each, it is vital that you come to class having read and thought about the material for the day.

Homework Assignments

Various exercises will reinforce reporting skills and writing on deadline. These will often be started in class, and are due at the start of the following class session. The assignments will be scored as follows, and your lowest two scores will be dropped.

7-10 Points – it is clear that you read and gave every effort to complete the exercise as a professional journalist would

4-6 Points – it is clear that you did the assignment, but did not think critically about it to complete it as a professional journalist would

1-3 Points – It is not obvious that you did the assignment, nor thought much about it

0 Points – It is obvious that you did not do the assignment

AP Style Quizzes

AP Style exercises will test your ability to use correct style. These quizzes will be open book if you have a print copy of *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* with you. Sharing of books during the quiz will not be permitted. Your lowest score will be dropped.

Articles

Researching, reporting and writing articles will test your competency as a journalist. Each should be directed toward a student audience and appropriate for the student newspaper, *The Echo*.

Flipped Learning Lectures & Discussion Boards

There will be two flipped learning sessions plus related discussion questions. The questions will expect you to respond, as well as to comment on two other posts. All contributions should be thorough—250 words for initial posts with at least one reference, and 100 words for comments. Typically, replies are not as in depth as the original responses, but they should be a kindly-worded constructive response, showing some original thinking, and include your own insight/perspectives. Partial credit will be given for partial thread posts (missing or incomplete comments). No credit will be given for late posts.

Student Workload/Carnegie Hours

The expectation is that a 4-credit course will meet for 50 hours of instructional time and will have about 100 hours of out-of-class work (homework).

- As our 4-credit courses meet for about 36-37 hours in-person, the remaining 13-14 hours of instructional time need to be handled via online instructions (flipped classes, discussion boards, etc.).
- There should be approximately 9 hours of homework per week (of course this may vary depending on the week)

Carnegie Hours Chart

Activity	Instructor-Led Hours		Homework Hours		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	
Required Readings	n/a		5	55	Over 11 weeks, uneven distribution
Homework Assignments	n/a		2	22	
Weekly Classes	3 hr. 20 min.	36 hrs. 40 min.	n/a		11 weeks

Writing and Feedback		5		23	Average, varies by student
Flipped Class Lecture and Discussion Board x 2		8 (4 ea)		n/a	
Total		50		100	

*Note: In this chart the Carnegie Instructional Hours have already been converted to traditional clock hours; these are based on a 60-minute clock hour.

Course Grading

%	Points	Assignment	Notes
12%	70 (10 ea.)	AP Style Quizzes (8)	Your lowest score will be dropped.
22%	130 (10 ea.)	Homework Assignments (15)	Your lowest two scores will be dropped.
50%	300 (News x 2 @ 100 ea. Feature @ 100)	Articles (3)	
16%	100 (50 ea.)	Flipped Learning & Discussion Board	
100%	600	TOTAL	

Because accuracy and deadlines are essential to the media, those requirements will be emphasized in this class. Assignments completed outside of class are due at the beginning of each session and are only accepted in class. Articles are due at the beginning of class on deadline; if you will be late or unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to submit the article by email by the start of class time.

Articles turned in late (after papers are collected at the start of the period) will be graded down one letter. Articles turned in a day late will be graded down a second letter. Articles turned in two days late will result in an F (55 percent).

Articles that are submitted on time will be evaluated on the following criteria: spelling, grammar, AP style, structure, conciseness, readability, completeness and fairness.

A (90 to 100 percent): The story has virtually no style, spelling, grammar or punctuation errors and is practically ready to be published by *The Echo* with little editing. The lead is strong, the point of the story is clear and it is well organized. It contains all the important elements, leaving out information that is off point or redundant.

B (80 to 89 percent): The story has a few style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with minor editing is ready to be published by *The Echo*. The lead is acceptable, main points are explained and the story is well organized. The writing may need to be tighter and some word choices may need to be clearer.

C (70 to 79 percent): The story has some style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with some editing can be published by *The Echo*. The lead may be buried, main points may not be clearly articulated, and the story may have left out one or two important facts or included information not germane.

D (60 to 69 percent): The story has multiple style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors. It does not have a clear lead, main points may be missing and the story is poorly organized and written. The story would have to be substantially reworked in order to be published.

F (<60 percent): The story is inaccurate, late, libelous or plagiarized, or it is of such poor quality that another journalist would be required to re-report and write the piece in order for it to be published.

Course Statements

Course Evaluations Statement

All course evaluations are conducted online. Your feedback is important to us. You will receive an email message reminding you when the website is open for your feedback. The link is:

<http://courseval.callutheran.edu>

Disability Statement

California Lutheran University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations in compliance with ADA of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to students with documented disabilities. If you are a student requesting accommodations for this course, please contact your professor at the beginning of the semester and register with the Disability Support Services Coordinator, Wendy Jimenez, for the facilitation and verification of need. The Disability Support Services Coordinator is located in the Center for Student Success Office at 3259 Pioneer Street, and can be contacted by calling 805.493.3878 or emailing wjimene@callutheran.edu

Statement on Academic Honesty

The educational programs of California Lutheran University are designed and dedicated to achieve academic excellence, honesty and integrity at every level of student life. Part of Cal Lutheran's dedication to academic excellence is our commitment to academic honesty. Students, faculty, staff and administration share the responsibility for maintaining high levels of scholarship on campus. Any behavior or act which might be defined as "deceitful" or "dishonest" will meet with appropriate disciplinary sanctions, including dismissal from the University, suspension, grade F in a course or various forms of academic probation. Policies and procedures regarding academic honesty are contained in the faculty and student handbooks.

Plagiarism, cheating, unethical computer use and facilitation of academic dishonesty are examples of behavior which will result in disciplinary sanctions. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- word for word copying without using quotation marks or presenting the work as yours
- using the ideas or work of others without acknowledgement
- not citing quoted material. Students must cite sources for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge.

Standards of Student Conduct Statements:

- [Student Life Handbook](#)
- [Academic Honesty Statement](#)

University Harassment Policy

Be civil to each other, both on- and offline. For information on the University's **student harassment policy and rights, please go to the following link:**

[Student Life Handbook](#)

Sexual Misconduct

California Lutheran University does not tolerate any degree of sexual misconduct on or off-campus. We encourage you to report if you know of, or have been the victim of, sexual harassment, misconduct, and/or assault. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify Cal Lutheran's Title IX Coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. More information about your options for reporting can be found at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/title-ix/>

Student Resources

Pearson Library

Pearson Library provides access to scholarly books, journals, ebooks, and databases of full text articles from scholarly journals. To begin using these materials, visit the library web page

<http://www.callutheran.edu/library>

There are many ways to contact Pearson Library for research assistance, no matter where you are!

- Email Yvonne Wilber (Professionals liaison) at ywilber@callutheran.edu
- General Library email: CLUlibrary@callutheran.edu
- Library main phone: 805.493.3250
- Text us your question: 805.493.3867
- Get more help at: <http://www.callutheran.edu/library/help/>

Cal Lutheran Writing Center

The Writing Center provides 1:1 writing consultations, in-person and online, with trained undergraduate and graduate writing consultants. We welcome all writing-related projects at any stage of the writing process across the diverse disciplines of study at Cal Lutheran. The Writing Center also hosts writing workshops, provides in-class visits, facilitates writing groups, and offers a writer's studio option for longer, sustained projects. Services suit writers of all levels, including traditional undergraduates, graduate students from all fields, all English language learners, and accomplished scholars alike. All members of the Cal Lutheran community with an @callutheran.edu email address are welcome to make use of our services. For more information, please visit at www.callutheran.edu/writing_center or call 805.493.3257. Please schedule appointments online through MyCLU Blackboard with the yellow "The Writing Center" icon in "Tools," or stop by The Writing Center itself, located in the Darling Collaboration Suite of Pearson Library.

Veterans Resources

If you are a veteran, military member, or a family member of a veteran or military member, please refer to Cal Lutheran's Veterans Resources webpage for important information:

<http://www.callutheran.edu/veterans/>. Also, if you are a veteran receiving benefits and you are struggling in a class, you most likely qualify for free tutoring. Please contact the Veterans Coordinator, Jenn Zimmerman, veterans@callutheran.edu or 805.493.3648, for more information.

Help Desk

Students may contact the Help Desk about telephone, network, wireless network, software questions password problems, hardware problems, and general consultation (i.e. you cannot log into your MyCLU portal, or you are having problems with Blackboard). Please email specific details about your problems to helpdesk@callutheran.edu, click on the following link for more information

http://www.callutheran.edu/iss/technology_services/helpdesk.php or call: 805.493.3698

Final Note

This syllabus is subject to change. Every effort will be made to alert students to changes that occur in a timely manner.

Course Schedule

WK	DATE	LECTURE TOPIC	HOMEWORK & READING (Due in next week's session)	DUE IN CLASS (Due today)
			<input type="checkbox"/> READ: Preface, Chapters 1, 2	
1	Nov. 23	Introduction The Role of Journalism in Society Selecting the News	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW01 (ch 2, ex 1, no. 3-6) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapters 3, 4 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Appendix B (Rules for Forming Possessives) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>A Style Guide for News Writers and Editors (aka Style)</i> - abbreviations	
2	Nov. 30	Newswriting Style The Language of News	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW02 (ch 3, ex 2) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW03 (ch 4, ex 2) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapters 7, 5 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - addresses	HW01 AP Quiz 1 (abbreviations)
3	Dec. 7	Basic News Leads News Writing as a Process	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW04 (ch 7, ex 3, no. 6-10) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapter 6	HW02 HW03 AP Quiz 2 (addresses)
4	Dec. 14	Libel, Ethics "Shattered Glass"	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW05 (ch 5, ex 1) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapters 8, 9 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - capitalization	HW04
		<input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE: Flipped Learning Lecture & Discussion Board		
	Dec. 21	<i>Christmas Recess – no class</i>		
	Dec. 28	<i>Christmas Recess – no class</i>		
5	Jan. 4	Alternative Leads The Body of a News Story	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW06 (ch 8, ex 2) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW07 (ch 9, ex 2, no. 1) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapter 10 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - numerals	HW05 AP Quiz 3 (capitalization)
6	Jan. 11	Reporting, Research, Attribution	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW08 (ch 10, ex1) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapter 11 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - punctuation + spelling	NEWS ARTICLE 1 HW06 HW07 AP Quiz 4 (numerals)
		<input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE: Flipped Learning Lecture & Discussion Board		
7	Jan. 18 MLK day class?	Interviewing	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW09 (ch 11, ex 2) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW10 (ch 10, ex 2, no. 1) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW11 (write a paragraph pitch for three feature story ideas) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapter 17, 19 <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - time	HW08 AP Quiz 5 (punctuation + spelling)
8	Jan. 25	Feature Stories	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW12 (ch 17, ex 3) <input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW13 (outline of final story) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>To be provided on Blackboard</i> <input type="checkbox"/> READ: <i>Style</i> - titles	HW09 HW10 HW11 AP Quiz 6 (time)
9	Feb. 1	Editing + Revising	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW14 (peer feature edit) <input type="checkbox"/> READ: Chapters 12, 13	NEWS ARTICLE 2 HW12 HW13 AP Quiz 7 (titles)
10	Feb. 8	Radio, TV, Digital Journalism	<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE: HW15 (ch 12, ex 3)	HW14 AP Quiz 8 (comprehensive)
11	Feb. 15	FINAL		HW15 FEATURE OR INVESTIGATIVE ARTICLE