

California Lutheran University

Bachelor's Degree for Professionals

Introduction to Mass Communication Comm 231

Winter 2017: November 21, 2016 – February 16, 2017

Monday, 6-9:30 PM

Woodland Hills Center

Classroom: Room 114

Instructor: Dr. Aaron Heresco (please call me Aaron)

Email: aheresco@callutheran.edu

Phone: 805-493-3429

Office: Woodland Hills #103C

Office Hours: Monday: 4-6 PM

Wednesday: 2-4 PM

If you cannot make these times, let me know and I will find another time that works

Drop Date: December 5, 2016 – Last day to add; last day to drop (without a “W”)

Last day to drop without financial penalty (100% tuition charge for classes dropped after this date)

January 17, 2017 - Last day to withdraw without academic penalty (Responsible for 100% of tuition)

Course Description: Instruction and practice in reporting varied news stories for print and electronic media; a writing-intensive introduction to reporting; techniques of interviewing news sources; story structure, consistent/concise editing style with clarity and speed; and writing with accuracy and fairness. Prerequisite: ENGL 111.

Textbook: Writing for the Mass Media, 9th Edition – By John Stovall

Course Outcomes: Students who successfully complete COMM 231 should be able to:

- Develop story ideas and present them effectively according to media format
- Work under deadline pressure
- Conceive and write a variety of basic mass media pieces including, but not limited to news stories, features, opinion and sports using appropriate style for different media
- Discuss theories that influence news media coverage, such as framing, gatekeeping and the democratic theory of media
- Examine the role of news media in society
- Discuss standards and practices of successful journalism including objectivity, accuracy, privacy issues and ethics
- Identify news values and determine the relative value of various sources of information

Course Structure

Generally, each week will be structured to include a bit of lecture with the majority of the class focusing on discussing, and practicing, media writing techniques. Thinking, talking and writing *about writing* will be a vital aspect of this course. We will be writing frequently and sharing our writing with the class in an effort to understand basic writing principles and improve our writing skills. Writing is an art that is meant to be shared.

Late policy: For most writing scenarios, there is no such thing as late. Either you submit something on time or it does not get printed. For this class, each student has been given one “Get Out of Late Free” coupon. This coupon may be used to “buy” 48 additional hours to submit any assignment (excluding exams and final drafts of papers due during final exam times). Assignments will always be due at the start of class. The coupon buys 48 hours EXACTLY. So, if a paper is due in class on Monday and you use your late coupon, the assignment must be emailed to me by 6 PM on Wednesday. After that time the assignment would not be accepted.

Assignments/Requirements/Course Schedule

Reading / Critical Writing Papers

This class is organized around class discussion and the development of your writing skills. To facilitate each, it is vital that you come to class have read, and thought about, the material for the day. You will need to turn in a critical writing worksheet to a dropbox on Blackboard by noon on Monday before the week’s class. The worksheet will encourage you to think about the readings, write in a particular style, and come to class prepared to talk about the topic for the week. A template form with the questions I will ask you to answer is available on Blackboard – you will need to provide responses for each of the weeks’ readings. Over the course of the semester, there will be 11 weeks of reading, but no assignment is due prior to the first week of class. Each week’s analysis will be worth a maximum of 3 points. The grade breakdown is as follows:

- 3 Points – it is clear to me that you read and thought critically about the readings.
- 2 Points – it is clear that you did the readings, but did not think critically about them
- 1 Point – It is not obvious that you did the readings, nor thought much about them
- 0 Points – It is obvious that you did not do the readings

Participation and Attendance

We each bring a different set of experiences to the classroom. Finding a way to use these experiences to either build new knowledge, or change preconceptions, is a large part of the learning process. This can only happen, however, if people contribute meaningfully to the classroom dialogue. Share your thoughts, show your knowledge, and help apply the concepts we will be discussing to everyday life. Beyond contributing to class, part of the participation process is arriving to class on time and paying attention for the duration. You cannot participate if you do not show up for class. Due to the small number of total classes (we only meet eleven times), you are allotted 1 “free” absence. After that, each additional absence will result in losing

7% points. However, I do understand that school, home, and work responsibilities often overlap, so if you let me know in advance you cannot make it to class, we can work together to devise a make-up plan.

Discussion Leading on Writing

Part of the writing process of considering the writing of others. Whether it is a news article, blog post, or magazine story, examining not just the content but the style of writing can be informative. To that end, each of you will be responsible for leading two short class discussions (5 – 10 minutes) on articles that you think represent both good and bad writing. What makes a particular article “work” for you, for example? Or why did you find another article difficult to read?

Course Grades: There will be 100 possible points in this class. The breakdown is as follows:

Critical Reading Assignments	30 Points
Leading Discussion on Writing	2 x 10 points each
Writing For Print Assignment	10 Points
Writing for the Web Assignment	10 Points
Professional Writing	10 Points
Writing for Advertising	10 Points
Writing for Public Relations	10 Points

Grade Scale

93 – 100	A
90 - 92.9	A-
87 – 89.9	B+
83 - 86.9	B
80 – 82.9	B-
77 – 79.9	C+
70 – 76.9	C
60 – 69.9	D
0 – 59.9	F

Student Workload/Carnegie Hours:

The expectation for this course is that you will spend the equivalent of 4 hours per week in class (an hour is defined as 50 minutes), and you will spend approximately 9 hours per week studying and completing assignments for this course.

Activity	Instructor-Led Hours		Homework Hours		Remarks
	Weekly	Course	Weekly	Course	

Readings of required text			5	55	Over 11 weeks, uneven distribution
Weekly Classes	3 hr. 20 min.	36 hrs. 40 min.			Includes final exam
Writing Presentations		4		5	
Writing and Feedback		10		20	Average, varies by student
Critical Writing Papers			2	20	Average, varies by student
Total		50		100	

** 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 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 located at 3259 Pioneer Street, and can be contacted by calling 805.493.3260 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 CLU'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 dishonest 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/>

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/>

CLU 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 click on the following link for more information

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

Elements on this syllabus are subject to change

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Intro to the Class and Writing Primer

Week 2 – TSIS - They Say

Week 3 – TSIS - I Say

Week 4 – TSIS - Tying it all Together

Week 5 – TSIS Academic Contexts (January 2nd class – material presented through recorded lecture)

Week 6 – Writing for the Media – Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (intro and stylebook)

Week 7 – Writing for the Media - Chapters 4, 5, and 6 (News Writing)

Week 8 – Writing for the Media – Chapter 7, 9 and Web Reading (Multimedia Writing)

Week 9 – Writing for the Media, Chapter 10 (Writing for Advertising)

Week 10 – Writing for the Mass Media – Chapter 11 (Writing for Public Relations)

Week 11 – Professional Writing and Wrap-Up (Writing for Life)