

1-2014

## JRNL 270.02: Introduction to Reporting

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# JRNL 270

Reporting  
Section 2  
Spring 2014

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of reporting and writing news for print, online and broadcast.

### Successful JRNL 270 students will:

- Develop sound news judgment.
- Learn to write basic news stories with accuracy, clarity, logic and precision.
- Learn to conduct interviews.
- Understand and employ story formats for print, broadcast and online.
- Learn the basics of gathering and editing audio.
- Understand essential ethical principles of journalism.



## CLASS MEETINGS, HOLIDAYS AND FINAL:

The class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:10 to 12:30 p.m. in Don Anderson Hall 009. Classes will not be held from March 31-April 4 (Spring Break). We will cover a couple of out-of-class events. Stay tuned for those announcements. The final exam is scheduled for 8 to 10 a.m. on Monday, May 12, in DAH 000. (No early finals. Do not schedule your flight home before the final.)

## INSTRUCTOR

Professor Dennis Swibold

- Office: Don Anderson Hall 413
- Office hours are 11 to noon Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment.
- Office phone: 243-2230.
- Email: [dennis.swibold@umontana.edu](mailto:dennis.swibold@umontana.edu)

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND READING

*News Writing and Reporting: The Complete Guide for Today's Journalist*. As texts go, this is pretty good. You'll find lots of examples and extra resource both in the book and online. I expect you to keep up with assignments, exercises and handouts on the class's Moodle site. If you're serious about journalism, please buy *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*. There's an online version too.

## WEEKLY 'IN THE NEWS' ASSIGNMENT

Journalists have to be news junkies, and your news diet has to be diverse. So, I'll insist that you follow local, national and international news. You can do that by visiting news web sites, listening to radio news and watching television news. I'll ask you to share what you find

Also, you will have to suggest one enterprise or follow-up story that needs to be done concerning one of the stories.

## CLASS-BY-CLASS TOPICS AND READINGS

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Topic</b>                         | <b>Readings in the text</b> |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Week 1:     | News judgment, generating stories    | Chapter 1, 2,               |
| Week 2:     | Planning stories, reporter's tools   | Chapters 4, 5               |
| Week 3:     | Research, accuracy in language,      | Chapters 7, 8               |
| Week 4:     | Interviewing                         | Chapter 6                   |
| Week 5:     | Leads and story forms                | Chapter 10, 11              |
| Week 6:     | First assignments                    | Chapter 17                  |
| Week 7:     | Writing for Print                    | Chapter 12                  |
| Week 8:     | Writing for Online                   | Chapter 13                  |
| Week 9:     | Diversity, Libel, Privacy and Ethics | Chapter 15, 16              |
| Week 10:    | Gathering and editing sound          | Handouts, online tutorials  |
| Week 11:    | Writing for Broadcast                | Chapter 14                  |
| Week 12:    | Broadcast exercises                  | Handouts                    |
| Week 13:    | Covering a beat, accuracy in numbers | Chapter 18, 9               |
| Week 14:    | Present and critique radio packages  |                             |
| Week 15:    | Review for final                     |                             |
| Week 16:    | Final                                |                             |

## GRADING

|                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Writing and reporting assignments | 60 percent |
| News, style and grammar quizzes   | 10 percent |
| Participation                     | 10 percent |
| Final assessment                  | 20 percent |

Writing assignments will be evaluated for accuracy, news judgment, clarity, completeness, fairness, spelling, grammar and style. Individual grades will reflect a professional standard. The closer a piece of writing is to being publishable, the better the grade.

Misspelled names and other obvious factual mistakes will result in an automatic F for that assignment. At the semester's end, the professor may substitute a better grade for that assignment, but only if the student has avoided repeating such mistakes on subsequent assignments.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Pre-registered students who fail to attend the first class may be dropped. You are expected to attend every class. You can't succeed if you miss critique sessions, lectures and labs. You lose one grade in Participation for every class you miss without a pre-excused absence.

## **DEADLINES and PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionals are under constant pressure to produce high-quality work in a short time. A great story is of little value if it is filed too late to be competitive with other news organizations. Therefore, *deadlines in this class will be strictly enforced*. Unless you make prior arrangements with me, an assignment submitted after the deadline will get an F.

If you can't meet a deadline due to illness or some other emergency, *you must let me know before the deadline*. If you don't, you won't be allowed to make up the work.

## **BUILDING ACCESS**

For after-hours access to the rooms and doors listed below, please complete and submit this form: <http://jour.umt.edu/current-students/Building-access.php/>  
Complete only ONE request per semester. Be sure to select all courses you are taking which pertain to Don Anderson Hall.

Rooms with numeric-keypads: 009, 114, 300F/I, 305 and 306  
GrizCard swipe access: 101 and front door

A door access code will be assigned and provided to you via email, after submitting this form. This request will also activate your GrizCard for the building. All codes will remain active until the last day of the semester. **All requests must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 7.**

## **AUDIO RECORDING EQUIPMENT**

Small teams of students will be responsible for a set of audio recording equipment for the semester. You will manage sharing the gear among your teammates. **You are financially responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged equipment.**

Be careful with all equipment you use. Don't leave any equipment in your car or anywhere it may be stolen. Do not lose your temper and take it out on the equipment. Problems will happen, whether you're at the network level or in college. Everything breaks down eventually. Batteries quit and computers don't always work. Be patient and learn to solve problems.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

I expect your honesty in presenting your own work for this course. Academic misconduct at The University of Montana is subject to an academic penalty ranging from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university. Students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).



**PLAGIARISM**

As defined by "The University of Montana Student Conduct Code" plagiarism is: "Representing another person's original words, ideas, data, notes or other materials as one's own." This is strictly prohibited in this class and any case of plagiarism in this course will be subject to the penalties outlined in the student code of conduct.

**DOUBLE-DIPPING**

You may not submit for this course any assignment that has previously, or will be concurrently, submitted for another class, unless you receive prior approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an F for the assignment and could result in an F for the course.

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

This course is accessible to and usable by otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. Disability Services for Students will assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at [www.umt.edu/dss/](http://www.umt.edu/dss/).