

9-2009

## JOUR 270.03: Reporting

Clem Work

*University of Montana - Missoula*

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### Recommended Citation

Work, Clem, "JOUR 270.03: Reporting" (2009). *Syllabi*. 1241.  
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Journalism 270 Section 3 Fall Semester 2009 School of Journalism University of Montana	<h2>Reporting</h2> 	Instructor: Clem Work Office: Anderson 428 Class: MWF, 11:10 - 12:00 Room: Anderson 004 Phone: (o) 243-2160 (until 10) (h) 728-2760  clem.work@umontana.edu
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### What this course is about

Journalism 270 is a 3-credit, writing-intensive, practical course in beginning reporting and news writing for **print and broadcast**. You will learn what news is and is not; techniques of newsgathering through observation, research, interviews, sources, events and beats; how to organize and write accurate and relevant news stories that grab and hold readers' attention, and how to spot legal problems such as libel and invasion of privacy. We will discuss journalism ethics throughout the semester.

### Reading

- Required: Harrower, "Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism."
- Required: Papper, "Broadcast News and Writing Stylebook," Fourth Edition
- Please read the *Montana Kaimin* and *The Missoulian* and listen to KUFM news and NPR daily.
- You should own a style treatise, such as Kessler & McDonald, "When Words Collide"; William Zinsser, "On Writing Well," Harper & Row, New York or Strunk & White, "The Elements of Style," Macmillan Pub. Co, New York.
- Get in the habit of reading a national or metropolitan newspaper such as *The New York Times* or *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Seattle Times*, etc. Watch PBS news and news shows such as *60 Minutes* or *CNN*. Listen to NPR. Read national newsmagazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*. You can read these online as well.
- Read lots of good fiction and non-fiction.

### Class schedule

The first half of the semester, which I teach, will be devoted to building print and online reporting skills; the

second half, taught by Sally Mauk, will be devoted to building broadcast audio reporting skills.

### **Assignments**

In-class writing in the journalism computer lab will sharpen your deadline-writing skills. Grammar, usage and style exercises will help you sharpen these important building blocks to a successful journalism career. Fact-finding exercises will help you learn how to ferret out critical information quickly. Quizzes (see below) help you, as an aspiring news professional, to realize the importance of keeping up with the world around you. Out-of-class reporting and writing assignments will become more complex as you become more proficient in newsgathering and news writing.

### **Tests and grading**

There will be unannounced current events and general knowledge quizzes from time to time. There will be no final exam. Grades will be based primarily on your writing and reporting assignments, and also on quizzes, class participation and your faithful attendance. These are my general guidelines for letter grades:

**A** Excellent, superior work with only a few minor problems.

**B** Good work, but as Emeril says, you can kick it up a notch!

**C** Satisfactory, but needs better reporting and/or writing.

**D** Has some serious problems. Not acceptable as is.

**F** You didn't do the assignment, failed to meet the deadline or the assignment has other fatal flaws.

### **Deadlines**

Will be STRICTLY enforced. Assignments handed in late without an approved excuse will receive an F. You must notify me in advance if you cannot meet a deadline. In-class writing exercises will help you get used to handing in good copy on deadline.

### **Same Work for Multiple Classes in J-School**

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.

### **Plagiarism**

All work you turn in must be your own. Cheating, fabrication and fiction will not be tolerated. You will fail this course immediately if you are caught plagiarizing, inventing sources or doctoring quotes. Be sure that you know the UM policy on academic misconduct. (see below)

### **Academic Honesty**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umd.edu/SA/VPSSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

#### **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.umd.edu/dss/](http://www.umd.edu/dss/).

#### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this class, I expect you to be able to successfully:

- Demonstrate good news judgment
- Exhibit strong research, interviewing and other newsgathering skills
- Write accurate, clear, concise, and interesting news stories for print and broadcast in a variety of formats
- Use audio recording equipment and audio editing software
- Understand legal and ethical issues facing reporters

#### **Help!**

Please come see me before or after class if you are having any difficulty in understanding concepts or assignments, if you want to discuss a graded paper, or need help in some other aspect of the class. I will also schedule short one-on-one conferences with each of you about mid-semester.

***"The Journalist is not the axis of anything,  
but rather the echo of everything"***