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JOUR 380.01: News Editing

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JOUR 380 News Editing Fall 2009 Syllabus

MW 09:10 to 10:30 a.m.
DAH 004

Course Instructor

Henriette Löwisch

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Office: DAH 431
Phone: (406) 243-2227
Hours: MW 11:00 a.m.

Course Mission

Editing makes for better stories. If you check your facts; adhere to the rules of grammar and style; un-clutter your copy; sharpen your focus; use words fairly; and pick the right headline; you will not only reach more people, but also be more likely to find a job in journalism.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will:

- Become proficient fact-checkers.
- Learn key areas of the AP Stylebook and how to use it as a resource.
- Research and evaluate sources of reference on the Internet.
- Write headlines, blurbs and captions that attract print and online readers.
- Read newspapers and Web sites critically, with an eye toward copy integrity.
- Discuss issues of language and diversity, and develop sensors for bias in word usage.
- Improve your ability to copy-edit your own and other people's stories on deadline.
- Show improvement on a diagnostic editing test given the first week and the last week of the course.

Required Text

Goldstein, Norm, Ed. The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law. New York: Basic Books, 2007.

Assignments

Each Wednesday, you will be quizzed on assigned chapters of the AP Stylebook. Missing a quiz will result in an "F" for that assignment. In computing your grade, I will drop the quiz with the worst result.

You will also be given homework assignments that will typically be due Mondays at 9:10 a.m. These assignments must be submitted as entries to the class blog at <http://floor500.wordpress.com/>. If you encounter technical difficulties posting to the blog, you'll need to deliver a hard copy (CD or paper) to me by noon on Monday.

Failure to submit an assignment as specified will result in an "F" for that assignment. Exceptions may be made in case of illness or catastrophe. But they'll be rare, and will require you to act professionally (see my remarks on professionalism, below).

A midterm exam modeled on the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund's copy-editing test will be administered Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2009.

The final exam will be administered Monday, Dec. 13, 2009.

Grading Policy

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Quizzes: 25 percent
Assignments: 15 percent
Midterm Exam: 15 percent
Final Exam: 25 percent
Professionalism: 20 percent
Bonus Points: TBA

Attendance

Everyone receives one "free" absence, of which you must notify me in advance. You also must make up for the corresponding assignment or quiz. Missing more than one class will likely result in a lower final grade. Missing one-third of classes will result in a grade of "F".

Professionalism

Students in this class aspire to become media professionals. Every one of you seeks to develop his or her journalistic talents and skills. Just as importantly, you need to polish your act as future professionals. Courtesy, focus, and reliability are key to a media career.

- Speak loudly and clearly.

- Be awake and present. No reporter can afford to doze during a press conference.
- Be on time. Most reporters arrive a few minutes early, so they don't miss anything.
- Silence I-pods, cell phones, and similar devices, and put them out of your reach.
- Don't try to multi-task, for example by reading the newspaper in class.
- Name your sources: Attribute information that you have not verified yourself, and always credit other people when using their work.
- Double-check every name and number: To misspell a name or to get a number wrong will send you out the door of any media organization before you can count to three.
- Submit assignments on or before deadline.
- Let me know ahead of time if you need to miss a class.

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 at http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php

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.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to 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 <http://life.umt.edu/dss>.