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### JRNL 170.02: Elements of News Writing

Jule A. Banville

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [jule.banville@umontana.edu](mailto:jule.banville@umontana.edu)

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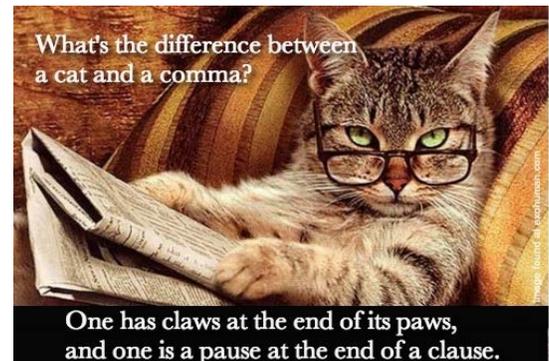
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# JRNL 170-02 – Elements of News Writing – Fall 2015

- Class Times: MWF 2:10-3
- Location: Don Anderson Hall 004
- Instructor: Assistant Professor Jule Banville
- Email: [jule.banville@umontana.edu](mailto:jule.banville@umontana.edu)
- Phone: 243-2237
- Office: DAH 427
- Office Hours: MW 3-4:30 and by appointment

## ABOUT THIS COURSE

Journalistic writing is unlike any other. It has a particular style that emphasizes both clarity and an economy of words. It's active in voice and vivid in detail. And here's something crucial: It's grammatically correct. Successful students in this class will gain a solid grasp of the fundamentals of print/digital news writing. We'll travel from commas to captions, from what makes the news the news to how it's structured into a readable story that follows the accepted rules of journalism. We'll also have fun, because the only way to learn some of this is to have a sense of humor.



**PLEASE NOTE:** Every class will include hands-on work. Quizzes will be frequent. Neither can be made up outside of class unless under extreme circumstances. What this means: ***THIS IS A CLASS THAT REQUIRES YOU TO SHOW UP.*** You will not be successful if you skip.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- ***News Reporting and Writing by the Missouri Group***

Here's the deal: The new 11<sup>th</sup> edition should be available at the Bookstore, possibly listed for other sections of JRNL 170 and also for JRNL 270. There's a cheaper downloadable ebook version for about 60 bucks. Also available and acceptable: the **10<sup>th</sup> edition**, used on Amazon.com for as little as \$1.14 plus \$3.99 shipping. **YOU MUST HAVE THIS BOOK BY THE 2<sup>nd</sup> WEEK OF CLASS.**

- ***The AP Stylebook***

Edition must be no older than 2012. Online editions acceptable but not preferred. If you are logged into a university computer, you can access the online version for free from the Mansfield Library's site at [www.apstylebook.com/umontana.edu](http://www.apstylebook.com/umontana.edu). But just do me a favor and buy the stylebook. We'll all be better for it.

## **OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, you will be better writers than you are right now. You will also:

- Understand what a news story is and is not.
- Learn key areas of the AP Stylebook and how to use it as a resource.
- Show proficiency in grammar, usage and punctuation.
- Know how to identify and write several types of news stories.
- Know and be able to demonstrate in your own stories the basic structure of written journalism, including leads, nut graphs, quotes, supporting facts and kickers.
- Figure out how to use quotes effectively.
- Write captions that go beyond obvious information.

### **Part I: The Basics**

We'll talk about newsworthiness. What makes an event or a person compelling enough for others to care? What are the types of news stories? How are they structured?

We'll also dig deep on grammar and usage. Classes will focus on punctuation, parts of speech, noun/verb agreement, punctuating quotes, proper use of titles, addresses, abbreviations and other basics of AP Style.

Graded assignments will be based on these basics. You'll also write stories and leads based on information I give you in class and in handouts. All assignments will be explained and posted to Moodle, as will all deadlines.

*There will be a midterm exam at a date TBA*

### **Part II**

You will build on the basics to better understand where stories originate, how they're reported and how they should be written. You'll learn how captions, headlines and news tailored to different media work together to draw an audience. You'll explore feature writing, how and why it's different from hard news. You'll get a quick and fun intro to broadcast reporting. We'll also revisit any areas of grammar, usage and style that need work.

Graded assignments will include, but are not limited to:

- Live event coverage: You'll go to and report on an event on campus.
- Speech coverage: You'll attend an on-campus speech and file an on-deadline story.
- Diversity coverage: You'll report on and write a story that reflects news involving protected classes and/or minorities.

*The final exam will cover all aspects of the course. Test date TBA.*

## **GRADING**

Attendance, Participation, In-Class Work: 30 percent

Assignments: 40 percent

Quizzes: 5 percent

Midterm: 10 percent  
Final: 15 percent

Grades are on a scale of 100 percent and use the University of Montana's plus/minus system. The final grade (per requirement) will be given as a letter. *You must receive at least a C-/70 as a final grade for this class to count toward a journalism degree.*

Equivalents to numbered grades are as follows:

- 90 - 100 percent: A
- 80 - 89 percent: B
- 70 - 79 percent: C
- 60 - 69 percent: D
- 50 - 59 percent: F

UM's plus/minus system also makes the following distinctions:

- A+: 97-100
- A: 93-96
- A-: 90-92
- B+: 87-89
- B: 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C: 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D: 63-66
- D-: 60-62
- F: 59 or lower

## **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Attendance: I will take it every day. *The only excused absence is one communicated to AND ACCEPTED BY the instructor via e-mail at least one hour prior to class.* Unexcused absences will factor into the final grade. If you have more than three unexcused absences, you will fail the Attendance/Participation/In-Class portion of your final grade, which counts for 30 percent.
- Missed in-class quizzes and work cannot be made up.
- Participation: Expect to be called on. It's part of your final grade.
- Deadlines: They're not negotiable. At least 10 points will be dropped from the final grade of an assignment for each day it's late, including the day of deadline if an assignment is filed after the posted time. Example: If an assignment is due via email to me by 9 a.m. and arrives in my inbox at 9:15, that's a 10-point deduction.
- Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code: All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the university. All students need to be familiar with [the Student Conduct Code](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php). [http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)

- *DOUBLE-DIPPING*: No element of an assignment for another class can fulfill assignments for this class without *DOCUMENTED ACCEPTANCE* from instructors of all involved courses. Failure to do so will result in failure of that assignment.
- *PLAGIARIASM and ETHICS*: Banish the idea of turning in something written by someone else and presented as your own. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school.

### **Disability-Related Modifications**

Students who experience disability-related barriers should contact [Disability Services](http://www.umt.edu/dss) (<http://www.umt.edu/dss>). If students elect to use approved academic adjustments, they must provide in advance formal notification from Disability Services to the instructor.

### **After-hours Access to Building**

For after-hours access to Don Anderson Hall, please complete and submit the form available in the second-floor office. It's [also available online](#):

<http://jour.umt.edu/undergraduate/support/After%20Hours%20Access.php>

Complete only ONE request per semester. Be sure to select all courses you are taking which pertain to Don Anderson Hall. A keypad 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. Friday, September 4th.