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JRNL 270.01: Reporting

Ray Fanning

University of Montana - Missoula, ray.fanning@umontana.edu

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JRNL 270/Reporting

Spring 2016/Section 01 (Subject to change)

Instructor: Ray Fanning, Associate Professor, School of Journalism, Radio-Television Department.

Office: Don Anderson Hall 405

Office hours: 8:30-10:30 a.m., Mondays and Wednesdays, or by appointment.

Office phone: 243-4747.

E-mail: ray.fanning@umontana.edu



Class Meets:

Tuesday and Thursday from 9:40- 11:00 a.m., in Don Anderson Hall 009

Course Objectives:

Building on what you've learned in JRNL 170, this course will further introduce you to the skills required to report news stories and features for an online audience. We'll bolster your news writing and enhance your news judgment. We'll help you identify, research and pitch potential news stories; find and interview credible sources; and write, edit and post your own stories, photos and audio files to a class website. .

Learning Outcomes:

Successful students will demonstrate their understanding of the importance of truth, accuracy and fairness in reporting. They will also develop an understanding of the importance of free speech and or the need to report for a diverse audience.

In addition, they will enhance and demonstrate their ability to:

- Think critically and independently.
- Research and evaluate information.
- Critically evaluate and tailor their work to the appropriate audience or format.
- Write with precision and clarity.
- Apply basic numerical concepts.
- Produce news on deadline.

University Writing Assessment:

Because this is an approved lower-division writing course, all students will write stories appropriate for a given audience and purpose. They will form and express ideas in writing, use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts, revise written work based on helpful feedback, apply journalistic writing conventions (AP style, story forms for different platforms) and demonstrate appropriate English usage.

This course requires an electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university's writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be

assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the following writing learning outcomes. This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Here's the [rubric](#) that will be used to assess your assignment.

How We'll Work

We'll learn by doing, and I'll gauge your progress with frequent exercises and quizzes that will prepare you for the course's major writing assignments. Each class will feature an exercise or quiz that builds on previous class discussions, so it is crucial that you attend every class and stay abreast of the news by reading the Missoulian online, the Kaimin online and national or international news sites like the New York Times, CNN, BBC, CNN, the Huffington Post and others.

After the first week or so, you'll be doing real stories, based on assignments from me or from your ideas that I've approved in advance. We'll do some team reporting, but you'll be working individually on most assignments.

Attendance and Deadline Policy

You will not be allowed to make up any exercise, quiz or writing assignment that you miss due to an unexcused absence, and you can't get an excused absence without prior permission from the instructor. Acceptable excuses include confirmed illnesses, a death in your immediate family or a university excused absence.

Assignments turned in after deadline will receive a grade of 0. Your average can't survive more than a couple of those. This is a professional school, and professionals show up and hit deadlines. Even so, I realize that stories can fall apart for reasons beyond a reporter's control (the story changes, sources bail, etc.) If that seems to be happening, you must tell me about ***before*** the deadline so we shift to a different story. I won't have sympathy for excuses that come after deadline.

Writing Assignments

This course will feature nine writing assignments, at least four of which will be subject to revision. The assignments are:

- ***Story based on coverage of a video press conference.*** Goal: To brush up your news judgment, note taking and news writing. In the writing, we're looking for accuracy, clarity, and news style. We'll have you tweet a lead too.
- ***Preview story about an impending event.**** Goal: To improve your skills at online searching necessary to finding good background about an individual, organization or issue. As always, we'll assess your news judgment and writing.
- ***Story about a live event.*** Goal: To show you how to report accurately and interestingly on deadline. You'll get to use the context you gathered in the previous assignment.
- ***Basic police story from an affidavit.**** Goal: To introduce you report precisely on a specialized beat, one that requires you to translate legal language and avoid legal and ethical pitfalls.

- **A pitch*** Goal: To introduce you to the art of persuading an editor to publish a story, in this case a profile. To do that, you'll need to do some pre-reporting to find the story's premise and what makes it interesting. You'll also have to find human and documentary sources.
- **A profile (with photo)*** Goal: To improve your skills as an interviewer and storyteller in a longer story. Here's a chance to do long-form writing and take photos to accompany it.
- **Radio feature package** (script, audio and photo) Goal: To build on your skills in producing an audio story. You'll pitch a story and then gather audio interviews and natural sound, write a script, and edit the audio package for broadcasts.
- **Diversity/numbers story** – Goal: You'll write a trend story for an online or broadcast audience that requires an understanding of the importance of diversity and basic numerical concepts.
- **Issue coverage** Goal: To learn collaborate in producing an online package, featuring text, audio and photos on a newsworthy aspect of a local controversy.

Required Textbook:

News Reporting and Writing 10th edition, The Missouri Group

We will pay special attention to:

- Appendix 1, 20 Common Errors
- Appendix 2, Wire-Service Style and Summary
- Part Two: Reporting Tools
- Part Three: Storytelling
- Part Four: Writing for Specific Media
- Part Seven: Rights and Responsibilities

Grading Breakdown:

- Participation (exercises, quizzes, discussions): 30 percent
- Writing assignments: 70 percent

I'll base grades on a 100-point scale. Letter grades will not be used in this course, although the final grade (per requirement) will be given as a plus/minus letter grade. The equivalents are as follows:

A:	93-100
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: Below 60

Majors and minors must earn at least a C- in the course to advance to be eligible for courses in the professional program.

Building Access:

For after-hours access to Don Anderson Hall, you will be able to enter the building using the Griz Card swipe at the front door. You will also be given a key code for the door to DAH 009.

For after hours access to Don Anderson Hall, complete and submit this [form](#) online by Friday, February 5 at 5pm.

Students who miss the February deadline will not have after-hours access to Don Anderson Hall for the semester. Complete only one request form per semester – be sure to list all the Journalism courses you are taking. A door code will be assigned and provided to you via email. This request will also activate your Griz Card for the outside door. Codes will remain active until the last day of the semester.

Plagiarism:

As defined by “The University of Montana Student Conduct Code” plagiarism is: “Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or 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.

Academic Honesty:

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](#).

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.

Diversity Initiative:

The School of Journalism has undertaken an initiative to create opportunities for students to tell stories of more varied and diverse groups of people. You will integrate one of these groups into an assignment.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

This course is accessible to and usable by otherwise qualified students with disabilities. If you have any accessibility problems, please let me know. Disability Services for Students will assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the [Disability Services](#) website.

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.

As a group 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 anyplace it could 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.



Week	Date	Class	Assignments	Due Dates
1	1/26	Introduction and Review Common grammar and punctuation errors	Review Chapter 9- Inverted Pyramid and leads for 1/28	
	1/28	Leads review	News conference story Review app 2- AP Style for 2/2	
2	2/2	Workshop news conference story- AP style review	Review chapter 6, Gathering and verifying information for 2/4	News conference story due
	2/4	Preview story Research	Preview of live event story Review chapter 5- quotes and attribution for 2/9	
3	2/9	Workshop preview story Quotation and attribution review	Review chapter 16 through page 358 for 2/11	Preview story due
	2/11	Crime stories	Police affidavit story Review chapter 11, for 2/16	Police story due
4	2/16	Feature stories		Preview rewrite due
	2/18	Pitching a feature story Angles, sources and pre-reporting	Profile pitch	
5	2/23	Writing a live event story	Live event story Review chapter 12, Writing for the web for 2/11	
	2/24	<u>COVER LIVE SPEECH</u>	Vandana Shiva 3pm Gallagher123	8pm Dennison Theatre
	2/25	Reporting online and with social media	Review chapter 10, Writing to be read for 2/16	
6	3/1	Workshop Shiva stories		Shiva story due
	3/3	Workshop profile pitches Editors and reporters	Rework profile pitch	First profile pitch due
7	3/8	Individual meetings on profile pitch	Review chapter 4, Interviewing for 3/10	
	3/10	Interviewing	Review chapter 13, Writing news for radio and television for 3/15	Shiva rewrite due
8	3/15	Review broadcast writing Getting good audio, sound bites and natural sound		
	3/17	Broadcast leads, structure, personalization	POS Diversity story Profile story	Final profile pitch due

Week	Date	Class	Assignments	Due Dates
9	3/22	POS Diversity story		
	3/24	Audio editing		
10	3/29	Audio edit lab	Review chapter 8, reporting with numbers for 3/31	POS Diversity story due
	3/31	Reporting with numbers 0		
11	4/5	Spring Break- no class		
	4/7	Spring Break- no class		
12	4/12	Issue story	Issue story-research Read past coverage	First draft profile story due
	4/14	Issue research		
13	4/19	Present research/assign reporting	Review chapters 21, Media law and 22 Ethics for 4/21	Issue pre-reporting due
	4/21	Ethics and Libel		
14	4/26	Quiz- Print and broadcast style		Final draft profile story due
	4/28	Audio edit lab- Radio profile		Issue story due
15	5/3	Critique radio profile stories Class evaluations		Radio version of profile due (script and mp3)
	5/5	Final Assessment		
16		Finals		