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JOUR 270.01: Beginning Reporting

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The University Of Montana

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J270 Reporting

Fall 2000

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to teach you basic reporting and journalistic writing skills.

DEADLINES:

Reporters are constantly under pressure to produce high quality copy in a short time. A news story, no matter how well written, is of no value if it's handed in too late to get in the newspaper, in the magazine, online, or to be broadcast.

Therefore, deadlines in this class will be strictly enforced as part of your professional training. For example, a story due during class on Tuesday must be handed in then. A story turned in after deadline will not be accepted and will result in an "F" for that assignment.

If you are unable to complete an assignment on time, you must consult with me BEFORE the deadline and explain why you think you cannot meet the assignment. You should be aware that some reasons are acceptable; some aren't. I will decide.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Good reporters must be good listeners. To enhance your listening skills, most assignments will be given orally.

Reporters also must be able to change gears quickly and to juggle a number of assignments at once. Although this class will cover basic types of reporting (such as speeches, profiles) the sequence in which they are covered will depend on what's going on around us. As with real reporting jobs, you sometimes might not know from one day to the next what's expected of you.

GRADES:

Grades will be based on classroom participation (Note: You aren't participating if you're not in class.), quizzes, writing assignments, a final exam and my judgment of your overall performance.

Grades on news stories, in general, will be based on the following guidelines:

A -- story is basically publishable as is.

B -- story meets basic expectations of assignment but has some problems with the writing and/or is missing not more than one or two minor elements.

C -- story has problems with writing and is missing a major element and/or a variety of minor elements.

D -- story does not meet basic expectations.

F -- story has three or more misspellings of any word, and/or story misspells a proper name.

Producing publishable articles is the aim of most news story assignments. Rewrites will be required whenever necessary to meet that aim. Sometimes, depending on the assignment, the rewrite grade will cancel the original grade; sometimes the rewrite grade will be averaged with the original grade.

Format: Assignments are to be double-spaced and to follow Associated Press style. Some assignments will be due on paper; others will be accepted through computer lab network.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Writing and Reporting News, 3rd edition, by Carole Rich.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law

The Missoulian

The Montana Kaimin

Supplementary material:

Webster's New World Dictionary

Magazines and newspapers in the Journalism School Library or from other sources, magazines and newspapers online, television and radio newscasts.

You are expected to keep up with local, state, national and international news. There will be a current events quiz every Thursday in class.