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Spring 2-1-2017

JRNL 170.01: Elements of News Writing

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Recommended Citation

Gravlee, Sarah, "JRNL 170.01: Elements of News Writing" (2017). *Syllabi*. 5743.

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JRNL 170-01 – Elements of News Writing – Spring 2017

- Class Times: MWF 9-9:50
- Location: Don Anderson Hall 004
- Instructor: Adjunct Professor Sarah Gravlee
- sarah.gravlee@mso.umt.edu:
- Office: DAH 435
- Office Hours: 10-11 a.m. Monday and Wednesday or by appointment

ABOUT THIS COURSE

At a time when fake news and foreign nations are influencing presidential elections, it is more important than ever to have trained, respected journalists. For many, this course will be your introduction into the wonderful world of journalism. I hope to instill the same passion I have for this profession in you.

Before we take on the world, though, we must learn the basics. Journalistic writing is unlike any other. It has a style that emphasizes both clarity and brevity. It's active in voice, vivid in detail, and demands accuracy-- both in grammar and facts.

Successful students in this class will gain a solid grasp of the fundamentals of print/digital news writing. We'll learn about word choice, punctuation and story development. We'll discuss what makes a story and practice crafting information into a story that follows the accepted rules of journalism. We'll also have fun, because news is fun!

SUCCEEDING IN THIS COURSE

You **MUST** be in class. Every class will include hands-on work. Quizzes and graded activities will be frequent. Course work **CANNOT** be made up outside of class unless under extreme circumstances. What this means: **You will not be successful if you skip.**

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *News Reporting and Writing* by the Missouri Group
 - The new 11th 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 10th edition, used on Amazon.com for as little as \$1.14 plus \$3.99 shipping.
 - **YOU MUST HAVE THIS BOOK BY THE 2nd WEEK OF CLASS. (So order it now!)**
- *The AP Stylebook*
 - Edition must be no older than 2012.
 - Online editions acceptable.

- 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.
- But just do me a favor and buy the stylebook. We'll all be better for it.

OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Understand what a news story is (and is not).
- Demonstrate mastery of key areas of the AP Stylebook and know 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.
 - general, event/speech, breaking, deadline, and broadcast to name a few
- Know and be able to demonstrate in your own stories the basic structure of written journalism
 - leads, nut graphs, quotes, supporting facts and kickers.
- Know how to get and use quotes effectively.

GRADING

-Attendance, participation, in-class work: 20 percent

-Writing assignments: 50 percent

-Midterm exam: 15 percent

-Final assessment: 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
- 0 - 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 are 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
- 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.
- PLAGIARISM and ETHICS: Plagiarism is illegal—in life and in this course. Penalties range from failing this class to expulsion from school. Do your own work. Period.

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, 4Jan. 6.

What's ahead: Week by week (Subject to Adjustments)

Week 1: What is news?

Week 2: Leads

Week 3: Beyond the lead

Week 4: Story Pitches and the art of the interview

Week 5: Grammar hammer! - We'll focus on quotes, commas, apostrophes.... It'll be awesome!
(You're working on your stories in the background here.)

Week 6: Sourcing and breaking news (still working on those stories)

Week 7: Stories due and other fun TBA

Week 8: Midterm prep and Midterm

Week 9: Spring Break! Have Fun!

Week 10: Featuring the feature

Week 11: Researching and preparing for speech coverage

Week 12: Covering a Speech *Mark your calendars: You will need to attend the Dean Stone lecture with Nikole Hannah-Jones at **7 p.m. April 12 in the University Center Ballroom.**

Week 13: I'm Ron Burgundy? (a sampling of broadcast news)

Week 14: More awesome stuff TBA

Week 15: Final assessment review