

Syllabus for
JRN 207—Newswriting II
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2017

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course develops convergent newsgathering skills and journalistic values across all forms of media while helping the student gain a more advanced understanding of the forms, processes and thinking required to gather and present compelling news content.

Prerequisites: JRN 107, JRN 108 and typing ability.

Course fee: \$20.

II. COURSE GOALS

Today's mass news media are diverse but depend heavily upon a common core of ethics, skills, attitudes, and understanding of principles. This course emphasizes developing the journalistic skill of factual storytelling as a basic form foundational to reporting and writing for all news media including newspaper, magazine, broadcast news writing, radio narrative and reporting, visual media and internet media. The course explores a variety of techniques for information gathering, writing, interviewing, audio and visual scripting and technical forms for storytelling across converged media. Grounded in the fundamentals of good news writing, students will also learn about journalistic ethics, writing for a diverse population, and mastering the mechanics of communicating through different media.

The goal of this advanced newswriting course is to prepare students to be proficient at evaluating information and crafting well-written stories. This course embraces these objectives while also offering a fresh and realistic view of the news industry in the 21st century—giving students the new set of tools that they'll need to succeed in the convergent environment.

This course seeks to help students do the following:

- A. Comprehend reporters' social roles and responsibilities by verbal, visual, oral and written discussion as outlined in leading textbooks along with other commentary from Wall Street Journal, the Associated Press, Pew Institute, Society of Professional Journalists, Poynter Institute and other journalistic organizations.
- B. Perform to the level of a professional reporter in developing additional listening and comprehension skills, attendance skills (as measured by class/lab attendance and class discussion), the comprehension and memorization of industry terms and procedures, and mastering the basics of technical skills required for multimedia reporting.
- C. Integrate multi-media story telling elements into assignments as instructed and produce professional quality work product for all media constructs using the tools and techniques learned in the course.
- D. Integrate the above goals via well-written, stylistically acceptable, well-reported news stories and progress reports that indicate appropriate development and interest.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Discuss cogently what news is, making reference to specific concepts and terms authorities use in attempting to define news.
- B. Explain how news is gathered and organized for dissemination in and through news media in advanced written and digital forms.
- C. Define and act upon best industry practices of evaluating and developing advanced human sources for fair, balanced and ethical storytelling.
- D. Analyze and evaluate collections of factual information and opinion for its news value.
- E. Perform newswriting assignments in accordance with professional standards.
- F. Adapt news stories written for convergent media to advanced forms and style requirements.
- G. Discuss cogently from a Christian perspective constraints to news reporting and writing, including laws, professional codes, rules, regulations, publisher's policies, and ethical restraints.

IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Materials:

(1) René J. Cappon (2005) Associated Press Guide to News Writing: The Resource for Professional Journalists 3rd Edition" ISBN: 978-0768919790

(2) Lieb, Thom (2009) All the News: Writing and Reporting for Convergent Media Pierson Education ISBN-978-0131345058

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. University Policies and Procedures
 - 1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
 - 2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
 - 3. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments." Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - a. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;

- b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
 - c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
 - d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
 - e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.
By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.
4. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
 5. Students are to be in compliance with university, school, and departmental policies regarding the Whole Person Assessment requirements. Students should consult the Whole Person Assessment handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' major.
 - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting an artifact is a zero for that assignment. All written assignments must be submitted via D2L drop box and printed copy given to professor on due date for project.
 - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

1. **Attendance**—At Oral Roberts University, students are expected to attend all classes. Understanding that there are sometimes unavoidable circumstances that prevent perfect attendance, each student is allowed to miss class the number of times per week a class meets. This allowance is for illness, personal business, and personal emergency. Students may consider these personal days or sick leave. If a student has absences in excess of this number, the earned grade for the course will be reduced one letter grade for each hour's absence above those allowed. A student missing class due to illness must take an unexcused absence. Extended illnesses are handled on an individual basis and require a doctor's excuse.
2. **Administratively Excused Absences**—Students who must miss class for University sponsored activities must follow these procedures:
 - a. Inform the professor before the event.
 - b. Arrange to complete missed work before the next time class meets.
 - c. Not commit to class performances (oral reports, speeches, television tapings, group presentations, etc.) on a date the student will be gone. Makeup work is not permitted if the student voluntarily commits to a performance on the date of an administratively excused absence.
 - d. Present an excuse, signed by the Dean of Arts and Cultural Studies, the day the student returns.
3. **Tardies**—Tardies are an inconvenience to the other class members and the professor, and they prevent the late student from obtaining maximum value from the class. Therefore, tardies are calculated in the attendance provision for this course. Three tardies will begin counting as an absence and are included in the absences when determining the course grade. It is to the student's advantage to make sure that the professor is informed immediately following the close of the class that the student was

tardy and not absent. It is not the professor's responsibility to stop the class to mark the student late; the student is the one responsible to convey that information following that class. Students should not expect to be credible the following class session concerning a late arrival on a previous day.

4. **Late Work**—The student is responsible for obtaining class assignments and material covered during an absence. All work must be completed as scheduled. An absence is not an excuse for turning in late work or for being unprepared with assignments for the class following the absence. If late work is accepted, a substantial penalty will be assessed.
 5. **Literacy**—The Communication, Arts, and Media Department does not accept for credit any written assignment that contains more than an average of three grammatical and/or typographical errors per page.
 6. **Whole Person Assessment**—Refer to the Communication, Arts, and Media WPA handbook for policies at <http://oru.edu> by clicking on **Current Students**, > **Resources**, then **Whole Person Assessment** (via pop up window). Use the **Handbooks** link on the left and then **Communication, Arts, and Media WPA Handbook**. The direct link: http://www.oru.edu/current_students/my_academics/resources/whole_person_assessment/documents/comm_arts.pdf.
- C. Course policies and Procedures
1. Evaluation Procedures
 - a. Grade is scored from mid-term and final exams, quizzes, assigned activities, writing assignments and weekly projects.
 - b. Students need to read a daily newspaper and/or news magazine and follow Internet news sources to keep up with current news events. Students should also watch local, national and international broadcast news programs, view film documentaries, listen to narrative stories and interviews on NPR (National Public Radio), listen to radio news talk shows, watch TV news talk shows, and read/watch true news stories on mediums such as National Geographic, PBS (and Frontline) and the History Channel. Students should be prepared to discuss in class and write about current events in class.
 2. Assignments
 - a. Projects
 - (1) Practical news gathering/news writing exercises are assigned in the lectures.
 - (2) Each exercise is valued according to its difficulty.
 - (3) Some will require the gathering of live information from sources, while others will require in depth research.
 - (4) There are writing/producing assignments every week during the semester.
 - b. Quizzes
 - (1) Pop quizzes and exercises are given from time to time and cover textbook readings, lecture material, current news topics from national and local news media (as outlined by the instructor), technical definitions, and news writing style rules.
 - (2) Pop quizzes and in class exercises cannot be made up.
 - c. Deadlines
 - (1) All practical exercises assigned to be done in class or out of class must be turned in by deadline(s) given in advance.

- (2) To help students appreciate the demands of deadlines in the news media, assignments not submitted by the stated deadline may receive an automatic failing grade.
 - (3) The only exceptions to the deadline policy is from the instructor in case-by-case situations where the circumstances may be such as to allow an exception as sometimes happens in the working news media, or due to emergencies, i.e., death, etc.
 - (4) The general deadline rule is, "Go with what you've got."
4. Other Policies and/or Procedures
- Any examination not taken at the scheduled time due to an excused absence must be made up at a time arranged with or by the instructor. Generally, tests missed for an unexcused absence cannot be made up. The University's \$15.00 late-test fee must be paid in advance.
5. Specific Grading Procedures:
- a. General grading - Will follow professional standards, including research and reporting, quotes, focus, grammar, spelling and punctuation. Grading sheet for stories, photos and multimedia are attached to syllabus. Stories and projects will count for roughly 70 percent of the grade, while the remainder comes from the following:
 - 1. Lecture attendance and lab participation content
 - 2. Mid-term Final exam
 - b. Late papers - In the real world, there are few valid excuses for late assignments and missed deadlines. JRN 205 is a training course and students are expected to be organized.
 - c. Part of what you'll learn in here is time management. You have to give yourself a margin, a cushion, of time during which you'll read over and *edit your own story* before getting it to your instructor—rather than just writing up until the last minute and submitting the project. Begin planning projects in advance, at least a week beforehand. Class time will be given for advanced and individual instruction on projects. Missing sources are no excuse - have backup source(s) planned. This course may require working on two more projects simultaneously (just like in the real world). Deadlines are hard and fast – respect them.
 - d. Bonus points - You can raise your quiz and story grades through various ways. In the past, students have garnered points for publishing photographs, audio or video in professional publications or broadcast media, attending professional panels, participating in some extracurricular journalistic activity, and the like. Additionally, the University offers a wealth of various activities, including speakers and events that will enhance your understanding of the world. You can attempt extra credit, with prior approval from the instructor, for up to five bonus points applied to the assignment of your choice (usually a particularly low grade)
 - e. Story ideas - One of the traits of a great reporter is finding good story ideas, rather than relying on assignments from editors. In this class, we'll help you develop this key aspect of reporting. With each story assignment, you will be required to submit your own unique story ideas for approval. The important thing is for you to begin thinking at all times of good story ideas. Some of the best ideas will come to you when you're not looking for them!
 - f. Multimedia elements - To enhance storytelling ability, **story assignments may incorporate multimedia elements**: photography, graphic elements, audio or video. Digital cameras, audio and video recorders have been reserved for JRN 205. It is your responsibility to reserve the equipment you need prior to the time

you need it. You will be writing and producing for all types and genres of media to ensure that you have a complete array of converged media skills.

Note: Equipment is first come first served.

- g. Protocols - Consistent and prompt attendance and participation are critical in preparation to become a professional. Therefore, class/lab attendance is required.
 - i. Classes will be devoted to discussing and critiquing reporting techniques and journalistic issues, as well as occasional enrichment lectures by visiting professionals and viewing work product from media professionals. Lab sessions allow students to work on stories with guidance from instructor and will track progress made on a particular story or project.
 - ii. Be prepared for the discussion. Classes will not always be lectures in the traditional sense. Students are expected to think, argue, and explore the ideas presented. Discussion is vital to learning.
 - iii. To be considered a serious journalist you must present yourself as such. All in-person interviews should be conducted in appropriate, professional attire. Exhibit professional demeanor while interacting with sources, either on the telephone, in person or by email.
- h. **Copy output** – Weekly stories and/or projects are required during the term. **These assignments are a requirement for passing the course.**
 - i. Each story or written assignment should be written in Associated Press (AP) style unless otherwise instructed (typed, with 1.25-inch margins, 12-point font size) and be the word count specified for the assignment. **Finally, each story must be accompanied with a cover sheet, along with a lead sheet detailing the following (if specified in the assignment instructions):**
 - ii. **Cover Sheet**
 - 1. Student name, Oral Roberts University, class name, Professor: Dr. Linda Royall, assignment name and date.
 - iii. **Lead Sheet**
 - 1. A list of source names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses if applicable.
 - 2. The “budget line” or topical description of the story, i.e., a one-sentence or phrase story abstract.
 - 3. A brief (less than 25 words) description of why this story is news.
 - 4. A list of references/sources (including web sites or other “invisible” sources) used and where in the story (page and paragraph) they are used. **Make hyperlinks live in the body of the story.**
 - 5. Three ideas for follow-up stories or multimedia pieces that relate to the assignment.
 - 6. Budget lines are crucial to a smooth newsroom operation. The slug, or story name, should be descriptive enough that it can be identify your story. That slug (or name) is what you “save as” your story. **For our purposes, slug your stories with your last name and a brief story name, e.g. “SMITH- VA story”.** The budget line should include a description of your story, your name, and the length.
 - 7. All stories are due in class on the days and times stated in class instruction and D2L. **Hard copy stories must be handed in**

personally and links provided for the location of digital stories in a hard copy document, which includes the above story information that is pertinent to the type of assignment.

- iii. Additionally, please provide an **electronic copy uploaded to the appropriate D2L folder**. Catalog (slug/name) it with your capitalized last name and story number: SMITH VA story

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Basic schedule for each week:

Monday – discuss readings assigned the previous week and progress on previous week’s assignment (due on the following Wednesday). Students are expected to have read required material over the weekend and be familiar enough with it to participate in an interactive class discussion.

Wednesday – lecture on week’s topic and instructions on upcoming assignment and readings. Previous week’s assignments are due.

Friday – presentations and commentary on assignments that were turned in on Wednesday. Students pitch story or project idea for the next week’s assignment.

Tests: Midterm test the Wednesday before spring (or fall) break. Final test as scheduled.

(Week 1&2) - Overview of course: Writing news for converged delivery across a variety of media. Lecture/discussion topics – What is the news? | What is ethical? | Finding the news | Constructing the news | Setting up the story | Is it newsworthy? | Finding the angle

(Week 3) – Constructing news stories | Writing WSJ Nut Graf style vs. Inverted Pyramid
Story 1 Due on Wednesday

(Week 4) – What is journalism? | How to write right | Excellence in journalism | Best practices
Story 2 Due Wednesday

(Week 5 &6) – News analysis | Open government, public access, FOIA; the watchdog role | How government works; courts and the justice system.
Story writing exercise due Wednesday week 5, News analysis report due Wednesday week 6

(Week 6 & 7) – Digging up the dirt | Political reporting | Research reporting | Investigative writing
Political story and comparative analysis assignment due Week 7 on Wednesday/ Mid-term test

(Week 8-9) – OP/Ed | News and Commentary | Interview techniques | Issues coverage | Breaking news reporting | Enterprise reporting | Covering controversy
Investigative/Issue report with audio recorded or video trailer of interviews and/or story highlights due Wednesday week 8 (multimedia project). News and commentary (video OR audio production) with written script/story (multimedia project)

(Week 9-10) – Style and voice | Covering the Arts & writing reviews | Travel Writing | Perspective writing
Breaking news report OR enterprise report prepared for multimedia delivery due Wednesday, week 9. Review or arts coverage piece with photos and graphics due Wednesday week 10

(Week 11-12) – Embedded reporting | historical reporting | narrative reporting | visual reporting
Perspective story due Wednesday, week 11 - Historical piece OR travel piece with photos/graphics due Wednesday week 12

(Week 13-14) – Producing slide narratives and short documentaries | Writing for the web | Social media news reporting.

Slide show/narrative OR short documentary abstract due Wednesday, week 13. Projects due for presentation Wednesday and Friday Week 14

(Week 15) – Course wrap-up | Final test review lecture.

Web writing exercise and Internet multimedia reporting project due. Final Test per schedule

Course Inventory for ORU's Student Learning Outcomes

JRN 205—Newsriting II Spring 2017

This course contributes to the ORU student learning outcomes as indicated below:

Significant Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

Moderate Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

Minimal Contribution – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

No Contribution – Does not address the outcome.

The Student Learning Glossary at <http://ir.oru.edu/doc/glossary.pdf> defines each outcome and each of the proficiencies/capacities.

OUTCOMES & Proficiencies/Capacities		Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
1	Outcome #1 – Spiritually Alive Proficiencies/Capacities				
1A	Biblical knowledge				X
1B	Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit		X		
1C	Evangelistic capability			X	
1D	Ethical behavior	X			
2	Outcome #2 – Intellectually Alert Proficiencies/Capacities				
2A	Critical thinking	X			
2B	Information literacy	X			
2C	Global & historical perspectives	X			
2D	Aesthetic appreciation		X		
2E	Intellectual creativity	X			
3	Outcome #3 – Physically Disciplined Proficiencies/Capacities				
3A	Healthy lifestyle				X
3B	Physically disciplined lifestyle				X
4	Outcome #4 – Socially Adept Proficiencies/Capacities				
4A	Communication skills	X			
4B	Interpersonal skills	X			
4C	Appreciation of cultural & linguistic differences		X		
4D	Responsible citizenship	X			
4E	Leadership capacity		X		