



RTV101, MULTIMEDIA WRITING
DR. JOHN MARK DEMPSEY
PAC 130
OFFICE PHONE: (903) 886-5345
HOME PHONE: (903) 886-7708
E-MAIL: jm.dempsey@tamuc.edu
OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, 2-4 P.M., THURSDAY, 2-4 P.M.

COURSE INFORMATION

This course introduces students to writing for the mass media. These forms include news stories for print and broadcast, advertising copy for print and broadcast, and writing for public relations.

Almost everything you read, see or hear in the media is written. News, advertisements or commercials, public service announcements (PSAs), entertainment programs (dramas, sitcoms, movies) all must be written. The importance of writing as a basic media skill can't be overemphasized. This course will give you the basic writing tools you will need for a media career. Other courses will provide you with a greater depth of writing skills.

Texts and Supplies

Writing for the Mass Media (8th or 9th edition) by James Glen Stovall.

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (2015 or 2016 edition).

These texts will be helpful to you for many years to come as you continue to progress in your media career.

In order to work and print in the PAC computer lab, you're required to provide one package of regular, white copy paper.

I recommend you save all of your work on your own flash drive or other portable device.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course work

In-class exercises	25 points X 14 = 350 points
E-college exercises	30 X 14 = 450 points
Style quizzes	20 X 10 = 200 points

Tests 1	100 X 1 = 100 points
Test 2	100 X 1 = 100 points
Total	1200 points
A=	1080 points (minimum)
B =	960 points
C =	840 points
D =	720 points
F =	less than 720 points

Attendance bonus: 5% for two or fewer unexcused absences (see “Attendance” below)

Grades will be recorded in the eCollege gradebook. See the “Comments” box for specific comments on assignments, in particular the writing assignments.

In-class and eCollege exercises

We learn best by doing, so you’ll do a lot of writing in this class. Obviously, the “in-class” assignments will be done in class, and I will be available to help you with them. The eCollege exercises will be done online and you will be “on your own” for those. Generally, I expect the “in-class” exercises to be assigned on Wednesdays and the eCollege assignments on Fridays.

This is a writing class. Your work will be judged, therefore, on the quality of your writing. A piece of work receiving an “A” will be:

- On-time.
- Free of spelling, grammatical and style errors (see “Common Grammatical Errors” distributed on the first day and posted my faculty web site and eCollege).
- Written in the proper format and style.
- Written (in most cases) in active voice (subject-verb-object sentence structure). Avoid passive voice.
- Complete in addressing the basic facts that the audience needs: Who, what, when, where? (Sometimes, you may also address “why” and “how.”)
- Accurate in its facts.
- Easily understandable; the reader/listener understands the story after reading it or hearing it the first time.
- Imaginative and creative, as appropriate, in particular for advertising copy.
- All work must be typed, double-spaced, and in readable, 12-point typeface.

These are the typical problems with writing assignments:

Problems with spelling, grammar or punctuation. MORE THAN ONE SPELLING OR GRAMMATICAL ERROR WILL MEAN A GRADE NOT HIGHER THAN 70. BE SURE TO USE SPELL CHECK AND READ COPY **ALoud** TO YOURSELF.

Format and style mistakes. Each type of writing we do has certain format standards, uniform ways of presentation. You'll have examples to go by. If a mistake is indicated, refer to these examples.

Unclear or awkward writing. Sentence structure that is difficult for the reader to comprehend, the announcer to read or the listener to understand. This may include failing to write in active voice. The logical construction of the story is lacking in some way.

Failure to address the basic facts (who, what, when, where).

Length (number of words for print assignments, time for broadcast assignments).

I may return work to you ungraded. In this case, the work contains some major deficiency, and you will have until the next class period to rewrite and resubmit the assignment. If you do not, a MAXIMUM grade of 50 will be recorded (i.e., grades may be lower than 50, but not greater).

If you need help in developing your writing skills, I recommend you visit the A&M-Commerce Writing Center in the Hall of Languages.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>

Style quizzes

Media writing is done according to certain styles, depending on the specific media. The most common style guide is the *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, a required text for this course. On Mondays, we will have a quiz related to the AP Stylebook. You'll need to have the book and bring it to class. If you don't have it, the penalty will be 20% whether someone else allows you to share his/her book or whether you submit it late.

Tests

We will have two tests, tentatively scheduled for Friday, March 10 and Friday, May 5. The test will include true-false, multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Everything presented in class is subject to appear on the test.

Late work

Late work (including tests) will be penalized 20 points unless an excused absence is granted.

Absences

I may drop you from the course if you accumulate four or more unexcused absences (see “excused absences” below) or if at any time you fall more than two assignments behind, without providing documentation for an excused absence.

Excused absences: The only automatically excused absences are defined below in the University’s official attendance policy (items A-D). However, I understand you have complex lives and I will consider other work-related or family-related excuses. It is helpful if you know that you will miss class to inform me of the reason in advance.

EXCUSES SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN WRITTEN FORM, AND CONTAIN THE SIGNATURE, PHONE NUMBER AND/OR E-MAIL ADDRESS OF AN AUTHORITATIVE PERSON (PHYSICIAN, PARENT, EMPLOYER, ETC.) FRIENDS, ROOMATES, ETC. ARE NOT “AUTHORITATIVE” PERSONS.

Do not abuse this policy. Remember, apart from the defined excused absences below, I will use my discretion in granting an excused absence, which means I may not approve it.

If an illness or other uncontrollable event causes you to miss more than one class in a row, this will be counted as one absence “event.” Be sure to promptly communicate with me in a case such as this. You’re responsible for finding out about any assignments that may have been made.

UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

13.99.99.R0.01 Class Attendance

1. Students are responsible for learning about and complying with the attendance policy stated in the catalog, Student’s Guidebook, and/or faculty syllabus. Faculty members will provide details on requirements and guidelines for attendance in their classes in their course syllabi.

2. Students are responsible for requesting makeup work when they are absent. They will be permitted to make up work for absences which are considered by the faculty member to be excusable. The method of making up work shall be determined by the faculty member.

The student is responsible for providing the faculty member reason(s) for his/her absence. The faculty member then determines the validity of the reason(s) for the absence and whether the student is to be excused for the absence. Faculty members may consider the following reasons for absence as excusable:

- a. Participation in a required/authorized university activity;
- b. Verified illness;
- c. Death in a student's immediate family;

- d. Obligation of student at legal proceedings in fulfilling responsibility as a citizen; and
- e. Others determined by individual faculty to be excusable (e.g. elective University activities, etc.).

Appeals can be made through normal administrative channels.

3. A record of excused and unexcused absences will be maintained by a faculty member for reference since certain financial assistance and other programs may require attendance records.

4. Students who have failed any part of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test are required by the State of Texas to attend remediation. The TASP required students who do not attend remediation courses or tutorial sessions will be withdrawn from the university.

5. When requested by the student, teachers will inform the student who has been absent whether makeup work is allowed and whether absences jeopardize the student's standing in a class.

It is the prerogative of the faculty to drop students from courses in which they have accrued excessive absences as defined in the course syllabus. In such cases, faculty recommend through the department head to the appropriate college dean that a student be dropped from a class. The faculty member will document absences and will make a reasonable effort to communicate with the student prior to recommending a drop. If approved, the college dean will forward the recommendation to the Records Office.

6. Students who wish to drop a course or withdraw from the university are responsible for initiating this action.

7. If a student believes the final grade is unfairly impacted by attendance requirements, an appeal can be made. This appeal process is explained in "Student's Appeal of Instructor's Evaluation" (Procedure A13.06).

Plagiarism: *Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, is unacceptable.* Plagiarism of material is obviously included.

Academic dishonesty subjects you to possible dismissal from the class and referral to the dean of the college. At the least, such an assignment will receive a grade of F and will not be made up.

Definition of plagiarism: "A piece of writing that has been copied from someone else and is presented as being your own work." This is as true of a sentence as it is of an entire paper.

"Sharing" work with another student (presenting another student's writing as your own) is plagiarism. To be clear, each student must do his or her own work.

IT IS PLAGIARISM TO COPY EVEN A SENTENCE FROM SOMEONE ELSE'S WORK – MUCH LESS AN ENTIRE ARTICLE FROM THE INTERNET -- AND PRESENT IT AS YOUR WORK WITHOUT PROPER ATTRIBUTION AND FOOTNOTING.

Most of the time, it is remarkably easy for professors to spot plagiarism. You are much better off doing your own work, both from the standpoint of your grade and what you learn.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Other matters

I maintain the right to make changes as needed, in my judgment, from the stated plans contained in the syllabus for this class. Such changes will be announced to the class.

University Specific Procedures

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS: Early intervention for freshmen is designed to communicate the University's interest in their success and a willingness to participate fully to help students accomplish their academic objectives. The university through faculty advisors and mentors will assist students who may be experiencing difficulty to focus on improvement and course completion. This process will allow students to be knowledgeable about their academic progress early in the semester and will provide faculty and staff with useful data for assisting students and enhancing retention. Grade reports will be mailed by the end of the sixth week of the semester.

Campus Concealed Carry

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to

(<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

In-class exercises	January 16-May 4
E-college exercises	January 16-May 4
Style quizzes	January 16-May 4
Tests (2)	March 9, May 4