

# COMMUNICATION 3600

## *New Media Reporting*

*Fall 2006, section 1, 3 credits*

Instructor: Rhiannon Bent

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Office hours: MWF 1-2 p.m. and TH 10:30-11:30 a.m. or by appointment

Required Texts: AP Stylebook, Contemporary Editing, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., by Friend, Challenger and McAdams

Helpful Texts: News Reporting and Writing (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) by the Missouri Group, a dictionary

Required supplies: 8 ½ x 11 white printer paper and a method of saving work (disk, drive, etc.)

\*\*Students are also expected to keep up on current events via a newspaper, TV, radio or Internet.

Pre-requisites: Comm 1130, Comm 1610, Engl 2010

Schedule: class T/TH, 1-2:15 p.m., Eccles room 164

Final exam: Tuesday, Dec. 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

### Course Description:

This is an intermediate course designed for students interested in news and information reporting in print, broadcast, corporate and Internet contexts. Curriculum focuses on developing information gathering skills such as interviewing and research, writing and editing for mass audiences in the aforementioned contexts, integrating digital visual elements into media distribution, and presenting before an audience. Students will also understand media law, ethics and cultural sensitivity, political structures and organization. Skills developed in this course include competent writing and editing for mass audiences including writing for press releases, print news, online news, broadcast news, copy editing and critique.

### Course Objectives:

Through regular attendance and active participation you will be able to:

- Practice information gathering skills in interpersonal and technological approaches
- Research media and bibliographies for content and attribution,
- Write headlines for stories in broadcast and integrated releases,
- Write news stories for broadcast and integrated releases
- Discern between and write features, hard and breaking news
- Understand the role and function of an editor in news, copy, and feature reporting for print, broadcast and electronic distribution
- Write with improved grammar and style
- Discern between local, state, national and world story impacts
- Develop cultural sensitivity in the above contexts
- Understand ethical and legal issues in writing and editing new media
- Strengthen public speaking skills

If you are a student with a physical or mental impairment and would like to request accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (652-7516) in Room 201 of the Student Services Center. The Disability Resource Center will determine your eligibility for services based upon complete professional documentation. If you are deemed eligible, the Disability Resource Center will further evaluate the effectiveness of your accommodation requests and will authorize reasonable accommodations that are appropriate for your disability.

\*\*\*PLEASE TURN OFF AND PUT AWAY CELL PHONES IN CLASS.\*\*\*

Cheating and Plagiarism: will not be tolerated. If there is evidence of cheating, you risk failing both the assignment and course. All assignments must be original work.

Attendance: and participation are expected. You are expected to arrive in class on time, remain in class until it is dismissed, and be attentive during class (no reading newspapers, playing online, etc.). If you are unable to attend class, you should notify me in advance and in the case of emergencies or illness, leave me voicemail or e-mail the day of the class missed. I will only allow students who contact me about absences to make up missed work. If you arrive to class the next day and have not called or e-mailed me, it is TOO LATE.

Assignments: must be typed and double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font. Grade deductions will be made for grammatical and spelling errors, so please carefully proofread your work. **Assignments will be due at the beginning of class in their entirety. Late assignments will not be accepted.** E-mailed assignments will not be accepted without the instructor's permission. Quizzes cannot be made up. If you know you will miss class, make accommodations beforehand.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS	MY SCORE	DATE
Story ideas and budget	50		Aug. 29
Multi-media analysis	50		Sept. 5
Media package 1	150		Sept. 12
Peer sketch package 2	100		Sept. 19
Captions and headlines	50		Sept. 26
Dixie Sun re-write	50		Sept. 28
Local news package 3	150		Oct. 10
Feature package 4	150		Oct. 24
Graphics	50		Oct. 31
Press kit	150		Nov. 7
Celeb obit	50		Nov. 16
Application package	150		Nov. 28
Ad campaign and pitch	200		Dec. 5
Quizzes (5 @ 10 pts.)	50		varies
Final exam	200		Dec. 12
TOTAL POINTS	1550		

Grading

94-100% A	76-79% C+	60-62% D- (0.4)
90-93% A-	73-75% C	59% and below F (0)
86-89% B+	70-72% C-	
83-85% B	66-69% D+	
80-82% B-	63-65% D	

Accuracy: Nothing is more important than accuracy in media writing. Assignments should be free of major factual errors (misspelled names, incorrect addresses, inaccurate facts). Several grade deductions may be made for serious errors that aren't libelous. **Assignments containing three or more major factual errors will receive an F.** Also important are grammar and spelling. Never rely on Spell Check (it won't distinguish between your and you're, for example) to catch all your errors. Students should carefully proofread all assignments several times to eliminate errors. Assignments will be graded with the following letter grades and points:

A (50)/A- (46): The copy is exceptionally well-written, thorough and free of errors in style and grammar. The lead is clear and concise. The copy is well-organized and contains effective transitions, quotations and descriptions. The copy is ready for publication or broadcast.

B+ (44)/B (42)/B- (40): The copy is well-written, but may contain minor errors in style and grammar. The lead is solid and summarizes the copy. Most of the information is presented clearly with proper style. It requires minimal editing for publication or broadcast.

C+ (38)/ C (36)/ C- (35): The copy is poorly written and shows lack of organization. The copy may have a rambling, vague lead and a poorly-constructed and awkward body. There may be an excess of style and grammar errors. The copy requires a good deal of editing.

D+ (33)/D (32)/D- (30): The copy shows very little organization or purpose. It contains many of the necessary facts, but they are ineffectively presented and a major re-writing effort is needed to make the copy cohesive and meaningful. The copy has too many style and grammar errors. It requires extensive editing and re-writing.

F (0): The copy is libelous, incomplete, confusing, or has major factual errors. Style and grammar errors may be found throughout. Correct writing is either missing or lost completely. It cannot be published or aired.

### Schedule

(subject to change)

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|-----------------|--|
| 1. Aug. 22, 24  | Introduction<br>Brushing up on skills/writing exercises<br>Assignment: story ideas and budgets |
| 2. Aug. 29, 31  | convergence/media differences<br>Assignment: Multi-media analysis                              |
| 3. Sept. 5, 7   | writing for different mediums<br>Assignment: media package 1                                   |
| 4. Sept. 12, 14 | interviewing and information gathering<br>Assignment: peer personality sketch package          |
| 5. Sept. 19, 21 | photos, captions, headlines, chapters 6, 13<br>Assignment: writing captions and headlines      |
| 6. Sept. 26, 28 | layout and design, chapter 15<br>Assignment: Dixie Sun re-write                                |

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| 7. Oct. 3, 5                          | localizing stories, chapters 7, 8<br>Assignment: localizing a national story package |
| 8. Oct. 10<br>Oct. 12                 | law and ethics, chapter 12<br>No class: Semester Break                               |
| 9. Oct. 17, 19                        | features/magazine writing<br>Assignment: feature article                             |
| 10. Oct. 24, 26                       | sidebars and specialty stories<br>Assignment: graphics                               |
| 11. Oct. 31, Nov. 2                   | public relations<br>Assignment: press kit  |
| 12. Nov. 7, 10                        | in-class presentations<br>Assignment: celeb obit                                     |
| 13. Nov. 14<br>Nov. 16                | No class: Career Day<br>jobs and internships   |
| 14. Nov. 21<br>Nov. 23                | Assignment: Application package<br>No class: Thanksgiving Break                      |
| 15. Nov. 28, 30                       | advertising<br>Assignment: ad campaign and pitch                                     |
| 16. Dec. 5, 7                         | in-class presentations<br>review   |
| 17. Tuesday, Dec. 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m. | <b><u>Final exam</u></b>   |

**Important Dates:**

- Aug. 24: last day to add a class without instructor permission
- Sept. 4: no class/Labor Day
- Sept. 20: last day to add a class with instructor permission
- Sept. 27: last day to drop/audit a class
- Oct. 12-13: no class/Semester Break
- Nov. 14: Career Day
- Nov. 17: last day to withdraw from a class
- Nov. 22-24: no class/Thanksgiving Break