

Communication 320-50 – News writing
Summer 2016 Syllabus

Professor: Dr. Selene G. Phillips
Class Time: Monday, May 9, 2016 to Friday, June 24, 2016
Professor office: Strickler Hall 302
Professor office hours: By appointment
Professor office phone: 502-852-2976
E-mail: selene.phillips@louisville.edu
Communication department: Strickler Hall 310, 502-852-6976

Textbooks and Readings

Required reading:

“News Reporting and Writing,” The Missouri Group, Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly, (eleventh edition), Bedford/St. Martin’s

“The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual” (latest edition), The Associated Press

Recommended reading:

“America’s Best Newspaper Writing,” Roy Peter Clark and Christopher Scanlan, (second edition), Bedford/St. Martin’s

Course Description

Students will study and practice writing and reporting techniques for routine news events. Students will become familiar with the elements of news, journalism, story organization, and writing news leads. Much of the focus will be on hard news and feature journalism. This course fits with the mission of the University of Louisville’s Department of Communication by assisting students in developing specific competencies related to writing and communicating to a specific audience. It will also prepare students for positions and careers in the field of communication. This course fulfills a requirement for a Bachelor of Science degree in communication, and it serves as a 300-level elective for a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication.

Course Goals

This course will provide students with an opportunity to understand established news values and the elements of writing for the media. Students will work on writing skills needed to prepare news stories and press releases and expand upon and exercise knowledge that may be used in a variety of mass communication professions. Specific goals are to:

- Learn journalistic writing skills;
- Practice news gathering, interviewing, and writing skills;
- Exercise good news judgment;
- Learn differences between writing for print, broadcast, and online journalism;
- Understand journalism rights, ethics, and responsibilities; and
- Become a critical news media consumer.

The ultimate goal is to better equip students to think critically about news and to prepare them for a position or career in communication.

Course Policies

Course Conduct

To facilitate the learning process, the professor will act as an editor and publisher and the student a reporter or news writer. This gives students working knowledge about how news rooms operate. Unless specified, students are responsible for all material in the texts. Quizzes may be given to assess preparation. Critical thinking and creativity are valued. Students are expected to maintain collegial behavior. During any online discussions, students may disagree with each other or the professor but must demonstrate professional behavior and respect the integrity of fellow classmates and the professor. Sexual harassment and discrimination is unacceptable and unlawful conduct that will not be tolerated in the educational environment. If activities or actions disturb your ability to learn, please bring it to my attention so I may assist in providing the best learning environment possible.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment, but if needed, you are welcome to arrange to speak to me over the phone. When available, I will be happy to call you.

Communication

Blackboard will be used to support the classroom experience throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to obtain a valid ULink account. Grades appear on Blackboard as soon as items are graded. Check Blackboard to ensure that the proper grade was recorded. Students need to notify the professor as soon as possible if there are any discrepancies in the recorded grade. If there is an error or you are upset about a grade, please notify me within 24 hours after the grade has been assigned. If you wait until the end of the summer session to discuss the problem, I am unable to assist you in the same manner than if we work on things immediately.

Performance and grade information is confidential. Professors are discouraged from transmitting sensitive information through media in which the identity of the recipient cannot be verified, such as e-mail or telephone. Please be prepared, if requested, to provide identification.

E-mail

The best way to get in touch with me is e-mail. I will do my best to respond as soon as possible, but I do not always look at e-mail on weekends. If you have a problem, you need to plan ahead. E-mail correspondence must be written in a professional manner. Students must type "Com 320-50" in the subject heading of the e-mail message and sign their full name to all e-mail correspondence to receive a response. E-mails are sent to students via Blackboard to your University-provided e-mail account.

Accommodations and Special Needs

Students with special needs or with disabilities needing reasonable modifications to satisfy course criteria should communicate those needs with the professor as soon as possible to identify and plan accommodations. Students need to supply documentation from the Disability Resource Center or another resource that will assist in planning accommodations. Students may be asked to contact the Disability Resource Center to determine academic and testing accommodations at 852-6938. Students with personal or family problems are encouraged to seek counseling, at no charge, at the UofL Personal Counseling Center at 852-6585.

Deadlines

Meeting deadlines in journalism is critical. You are required to turn in assignments on the day and time they are due. This will be explained on the rubric as well as in class. For most assignments, this means turning in a stapled hard copy as well as turning in an electronic version into SafeAssign on Blackboard. Turning in a paper even a few minutes late will be marked as being late. In a newsroom, being late is an expensive error and may cost one his or her job. In the unfortunate case of an emergency, it is the students' responsibility to notify the professor as soon as reasonably possible to make other arrangements.

Assignments

Assignments must be completed and turned in on time. There will be no make-up work. The major writing assignment, the local feature story, is only accepted late with a valid University excuse; however, for each day the paper is late, 10 percent will be deducted from your grade. If a paper is a few minutes late, this is counted as the first late day and will result in a 10 percent deduction.

Poor writing will seriously hurt your grade. I highly recommended students use the resources at the virtual Writing Center before submitting their papers. It may be found at: <http://louisville.edu/writingcenter/virtual-writing-center.html>

I am happy to pre-review portions of your paper; however, students must provide the draft within a framework that allows me ample time to check the work. I cannot look at a dozen papers the day before the paper is due. Please keep this in mind if you want me to assist you with your work.

Much of your instruction from me will come from the time I spend individually assisting you with your stories and editing your papers. In some ways, you may consider this a class focused on improving your individual writing abilities; however, please do not hesitate to ask others to also look over your work.

Turning in a previously published story is unacceptable. Written work must be submitted in a professionally typed Associated Press format, double-spaced with 1.5 inch margins using 12 point Times font and black ink. Papers must also be stapled together with previous drafts attached in order behind the latest version. If there are too many papers for a staple, then a clip must be used. Please be advised that you should continually backup your work. It is not a good idea to rely on one backup. Papers must be identified single-spaced in the upper left hand corner:

Jane Doe (Your Name)
Com 320-50, Dr. Phillips
Feature Story Draft (Name of Assignment)
June 10, 2016 (Date)

Papers must be submitted via SafeAssign. Students are welcome to submit drafts of their stories ahead of time to look for problems and/or make sure they have not plagiarized. You will not receive any credit for papers that are not submitted to SafeAssign.

Reporting assignments require students to act as a reporter and gather facts for a story. Students must identify themselves when conducting interviews. Tell interviewees that you are a journalism student and that your work may be published. The primary focus will be writing for print media.

Please do not count on the fact that you think you can catch up at the end of the semester or talk the professor into allowing you to do an extra paper or assignment. If at any time you feel that you are behind and do not understand something, notify me as soon as possible. It never

works to wait until the last minute, just before an exam, or at the end of the semester if you have been experiencing trouble. By that time, it is too late. If you are concerned about your grade, you should immediately take time to communicate with me.

Rubrics will be provided. The local feature story is expected to be 2,400 words long. Since we are doing a news story, perfection is expected even though news stories often have typos. That is one thing that makes news writing difficult.

Tests

If a student has a legitimate University excuse for missing an exam, a multiple page essay exam *and* a cumulative exam may be given. Students with a legitimate emergency must provide valid documentation BEFORE you are allowed to make up an exam. If there is a medical emergency, please contact me as soon as possible so arrangements may be made. You must have valid documentation before any extension will be considered. A legitimate emergency is the death of an immediate family member or a student's own personal medical emergency. You will be asked to produce valid documentation, or you will not be able to make up the exam. In the case of an emergency, it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor as soon as possible. For example, if you are extremely ill, you need to ask a friend, relative, or care giver to call or e-mail the professor and/or the communication department. It is unacceptable to notify the professor a few days after the emergency has occurred.

The following are not considered emergencies and are not good reasons to turn in an assignment late or to take an examination late: going on a family vacation or cruise, attending a family get-together, being on hand for a friend or relative's birth, a doctor or dentist appointment, moving a friend, breaking-up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, and hearing bad news. These are all significant events, but your decision to attend them instead of completing a class assignment will have consequences.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Students must turn in their own original assignments and stories. Cheating or plagiarism, the representation of someone else's work as one's own, is justification for failure in the course and a report to the Dean of Students Office according to University regulations. It is unacceptable to submit work to fulfill the requirements of this course if you already submitted or are planning to submit it to fulfill the requirements of another class. Plagiarism is a serious affront to the educational system and will not be tolerated. Any proven plagiarism or other academic misconduct will result in failure of this course and will be reported to the committee on student discipline for further action, including notice in the permanent record, dismissal, or expulsion. I will seek the maximum punishment available according to University regulations. Be aware that a letter concerning the plagiarism incident will be placed in the student's file. Two such letters means expulsion from the University. Plagiarism means:

- Copying someone else's work and claiming it as your own, including but not limited to, work that is accessed in person, from computer files, or from the Internet;
- Paraphrasing someone else's work and claiming it as your own;
- Collaborating excessively with another person and claiming the work solely as your own;
- and
- Cheating on tests.

Cheating in this course includes making up sources or interviews and copying someone else's work. It also means cutting and pasting information from the Internet for your story. It may also

mean paraphrasing information that is not properly attributed. Claiming that you do not understand plagiarism or attribution is not an excuse.

For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog. It is a student's responsibility to understand these policies and the ramifications of any actions. Students are advised to become familiar with academic dishonesty in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities that can be found at the Campus Life web site. Academic dishonesty is in Section Five.

Measuring Tools for Objectives

The measuring tool will be how students apply what they have learned to their writing assignments and exams. Grades are based on the items below.

	Student grade record	
_____ Exam 1 = 20%	Due: Fri., 9:00 p.m. May 20, 2016	worth 20 points
_____ Story Pitch = 5%	Due: Fri., 9:00 p.m. May 27, 2016	worth 5 points
_____ Feature Story Draft = 5%	Due: Fri., 9:00 p.m. June 10, 2016	worth 5 points
_____ Feature Story Final = 45%	Due: Fri., 9:00 p.m. June 17, 2016	worth 45 points
_____ Exam 2 = 25%	Due: Fri., 9:00 p.m. June 24, 2016	worth 25 points

Grading

Assignments will be graded on the basis of their content, organization, accuracy and writing style. Final grades will be earned as follows.

A = Outstanding – 90.0 to 100% or more of the total possible course points. Outstanding means that the student's performance was nearly perfect

B = Superior – 80.0 to 89.9% of the total possible course points. Superior means that the student's performance was above the average or mediocre level

C = Adequate – 70.0 to 79.9% of the total possible course points. Adequate means that the student's performance was average or mediocre

D = Marginally meets minimum standards – 60.0 to 69.9% of the total possible course points. Marginally means that the student's performance was below expectations

F = Unacceptable - less than 59.9% of the total possible course points. Unacceptable means that the student's performance did not meet even the minimal expectations

Students earning a score short of the above scale will not be "given" or "awarded" extra points. For example, if a student earns a score of 89.9, the grade the student earned is a B and that score will be assigned. No pluses or minuses will be assigned.

Syllabus

The professor may adjust the syllabus when necessary to enhance the learning process.

Intellectual Property

Course notes and other original course material, electronic or otherwise, created by faculty are considered intellectual property owned by the faculty member. Consequently, if a student sells this material without the faculty member's permission, the student has improperly and illegally infringed on the faculty member's property rights.

Communication 320-50 – News writing - Summer 2016 Schedule

Other material may be assigned via Blackboard.

Week 1, May 9 - 13

Mon., May 9 to Fri., May 13

Reading: Chapter 1-The Nature of News; Ch. 2-The Changing Media Landscape; Ch. 3-The Emerging Media; Ch. 4-Interviewing; Ch. 5-Handling Quotations & Attributions

Week 2, May 16 - 20

Mon., May 16 to Fri., May 20

Reading: Ch. 6-Gathering & Verifying Information; Ch. 7-Finding the News in News Releases; Ch. 8-Reporting with Numbers; Ch. 9-Inverted Pyramid; Ch. 10-Writing to Be Read

Fri. May 20 – Due: Exam 1, over Chapters 1 – 10 (20 points, 20%)

Last day to withdraw

Week 3, May 23 - 27

Mon., May 23 to Fri., May 27

Reading: Ch. 11-Alternatives to the Inverted Pyramid; Ch. 12-Writing for the Web; Ch. 13-Writing for Radio & Television; Ch. 14-Covering a Beat; Ch. 15-Speeches, News Conferences & Meetings

Fri., May 27, 9:00 p.m. – Due: Story Pitch (5 points, 5 %)

Week 4, May 30 – June 3

Mon., May 30 to Fri., June 3

Reading: Ch. 16-Other Types of Local Stories; Ch. 17-Business & Consumer News; Ch. 18-Social Science Reporting; Ch. 19-Investigative Reporting; Ch. 20-Working in Public Relations

Week 5, June 6 - June 10

Mon., June 6 to Fri., June 10

Reading: Ch. 21-Media Law; Ch. 22-Ethics

Fri., June 10 – Due: Draft of Feature Story (5 points, 5%)

Week 6, June 13 – June 17

Mon., June 13 to Fri., June 17

Fri., June 17 – Due: Final Feature Story (45 points + 5 draft points = 50 points, 50%)

Week 7, June 20 - 24

Mon., June 20 to Fri., June 24

Fri., June 24 - Due: Exam 2, over Chapters 11 – 22 (25 points, 25%)

I have included a biography about myself below. You are not required to read it. I always wanted to know more about my professor's professional experience. I would suggest you write a biography about yourself. You may send one to me about yourself. Consider it extra credit if your grade is borderline.

Dr. Selene G. Phillips, Wabigonikewikwe
Biographical Information

Selene G. Phillips, Wabigonikewikwe, is a member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe nation. She is an assistant professor of communication at the University of Louisville, where she teaches journalism, communication, and Native American studies.

As a humanities scholar, Phillips performs as Mary Todd Lincoln and Sacagawea, the Shoshone woman who traveled with Lewis and Clark.

Her Ph.D. is from Purdue University, and her dissertation is about native ways of understanding and interpreting Sacagawea and the Lewis and Clark expedition. She received a master's degree from Indiana University's School of Journalism and an undergraduate degree from Purdue University, with a double major in science and sports movement, as well as radio and television. Her other interests focus on First Amendment issues and communication law.

Her publications include "'Indians on our Warpath: WWII Images of American Indians in *Life Magazine*, 1937 – 1949" in *American Indians and the Media*. "Surviving Cultural Suppression: Sharing and Transferring Ojibwe Identity in Lac du Flambeau" appears in *From Generation to Generation: Maintaining Cultural Identity Over Time*. "What does cancer treatment look like in consumer cancer magazines? An exploratory content analysis of photographs in consumer cancer magazines" was written with Lindsay Della and Steve Sohn and appears in the *Journal of Health Communication*. "Sacagawea: Super Hero, Super Woman, Super Myth," appears in *American Indians and Popular Culture: Media, Sports, and Politics*.

Phillips taught communication law and journalism at Purdue University and at the University of North Dakota, she taught communication law, popular culture, and journalism.

She is a board member of the American Indian Studies Association, the new director of Louisville's Women Who Write, and a Commissioner for U of L's Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality. She served on the Indiana University School of Journalism Alumni Association Board and was a contributing editor to Lafayette's *Community Times*. Phillips co-founded Clean Air Now Lafayette, an environmental organization dedicated to fighting air and noise pollution. She mentored for the UNITY Journalists of Color, Inc. program and served on the Lafayette YWCA board of directors. She served as the president of the American Native Press Archives National Advisory Board at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and on Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon's Native American Council from 1997 to 2003.

Previously she worked as a television news anchor, a radio and television news reporter and producer; a communications specialist for Purdue University's Affirmative Action Office; a business writer and publicist for Purdue University's News Service; and a vocational counselor and job developer for the American Indian Business Association.

Her professional memberships include the National Communication Association; the Society of Professional Journalists; the American Studies Association; the National Communication Association; and the honor society of Phi Kappa Phi. Her awards include Red and Black faculty mentor; the Best of The Bluegrass Faculty Member of the Month from the Kentucky Association of Residence Halls; Appreciation Award from U of L's Office of Multicultural Academic Enrichment Programs; Head Female Dancer from The New Faces of an Ancient People from Penn State University; Appreciation Award from U of L's Office of Multicultural Academic Enrichment Programs; and Excellence in the Practice of the Communication Arts from the Kentucky Communication Association.