

COMM 0071 - NEWSWRITING AND REPORTING TECHNIQUES

Catalog Description

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: An introduction to gathering, synthesizing/organizing and writing news in journalistic style across multiple platforms. Students will report and write based on their original interviews, research, and storytelling to produce news stories. Experiences may include covering speeches, meetings and other events, writing under deadline and use of diversity and AP Style guides. Includes the role of journalists in democracies and relevant legal and ethical issues in reporting news for communities. (C-ID JOUR 110) (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Explain how media influences your identity, focusing on how self was developed and is continually evolving.
- CSLO #2: Apply key concepts to the analysis of communicative phenomena.
- CSLO #3: Produce and defend artifacts to explain underlying social justice issues.

Effective Term

Fall 2024

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Define and carry out newsgathering strategies in context
2. Craft interview questions and conduct interviews
3. Write basic leads
4. Write basic news articles using the inverted pyramid
5. Write long form stories and/or other complex formats
6. Write articles under deadline
7. Apply diversity and Associated Press style to stories
8. Edit own and others' articles for proper spelling, grammar, current diversity, and AP Style

9. Define writing differences for different platforms

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Behavioral Sciences
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
 - Example: Students will pitch ideas for stories that apply news values in context. They will listen to each others pitches and offer suggestions to make them stronger through framing, research, and potential interview sources. Students will be evaluated based on critical thinking and development of pitches; attentive listening, and constructive, collaborative feedback to peers.
- Objective Examinations
 - Example: In both online and face-to-face instruction, students will take multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer tests on LMS to assess understanding of key concepts and skills. Sample questions on a multiple choice quiz could include: 1. How are states written in AP style? 2. How many people must be named in a photo's cutline when the image has multiple people? 3. When gender has not been confirmed by the reporter, what pronoun should be used in the article? 4. What images are journalists able to use that they don't make themselves?
- Projects
 - Example: Students will write an 800-word feature story in which they draw on an interview with a campus or community member, documentary descriptive writing, and research to contextualize the interview. Each element of the long form story will be scaffolded through a smaller assignment in which students learn how to do the writing and/or reporting technique.
- Reports
 - Example: Students will write short journalistic stories based in their reporting for various platforms. These may take shape as a written script for a podcast, social media micro-stories, web-based articles with headers and hyperlinks, photo-essays with journalistic detail through the captions. In each story, attention will be paid to elements such as headlines, leads, nut-graphs, and style conventions appropriate to the form.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. The instructor will lecture on the ethics and practice of news writing and reporting and screen sequences from a journalistic podcast or

film to contextualize discussion. They will introduce the Society for Professional Journalist's (SPJ) "Code of Ethics" and apply them to scenarios. The instructor will invite student participation in whole class discussion and as small groups in which they are asked to raise ethical issues journalists should consider in the scenarios presented in the media examples. Students will put these on white boards or jam boards and discuss how their decisions adhere to the SPJ's code.

- The instructor will utilize a PowerPoint lecture to instruct the class in how to prepare for and conduct an interview, video and audio examples from Story Corp and other sources will be used to illustrate discussion, then students will be partnered to practice applying interview techniques in class.

Distance Learning

- The instructor will post lectures and other assigned course materials such as video exemplars on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Students will read and screen content, in addition to reading assigned course reading, and then write posts to the discussion board and reply to their peers. Discussion board assignments will be evaluated based on a rubric that assesses critical thinking, understanding of course material such as the role of journalists in democracies and communities, and college level writing.
- The instructor will lecture through a written document and/or a PowerPoint, and/or an audio/video modality to explain key concepts from the reading under focus such as the ethics and practice of news writing and reporting. Students will be instructed to screen a film or listen to a podcast such as the 1619 project to illustrate discussion. Podcast, films, online news and feature story exemplars will be embedded in the written lecture or PowerPoint or located elsewhere on the LMS course site with a permalink through Sierra College's Kanopy collection or Films-on-Demand, or through a similar streaming tool provided by the Library.
- Students will be organized in small group discussions of 3-4 on LMS to workshop writing and reporting techniques such as interviewing. In relation to writing, they will share drafts and give each other feedback to perfect the work. In relation to interviews, they will tell their group members who they plan to interview, the research they have done, and the questions they have written. Each group member will provide feedback to their peers to improve their questions.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

- In your text, read "The Internet and Other Tools of the Trade." (a.) As you read consider the following question: How has the internet changed journalism? Focus especially on how news is obtained and delivered to the public. (b.) In a small group, list 5 advantages and 5 disadvantages of the increased use of the internet in journalism today. Be sure to include reasons why each item is either an advantage or disadvantage, and be prepared to present your findings to the class.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

- Find out when your city council is holding its next meeting. Prepare to cover it. (a.) List the sources you would consult to prepare for this meeting. (b.) Write down in note form what you have gathered from those sources that will be useful in covering the event and the content of the meeting. (c.) Attend the meeting, and decide upon the focus of your news story. (d.) Write a 750-word story on the city council's meeting for the local section of a digital and/or print newspaper.

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- Be Credible: Information Literacy for Journalism, Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing Students
 - Author: Peter Bobkowski and Karna Younger
 - Publisher: PressBooks
 - Publication Date: 2018
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER: CC BY-NC-4.0 International License
- The Responsible Journalist: An Introduction to News Reporting and Writing
 - Author: Jennie Dear and Faron Scott
 - Publisher: Oxford
 - Publication Date: 2014
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- Writing for Electronic Media
 - Author: Brian Champagne
 - Publisher: PressBooks
 - Publication Date: 2017
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER: CC BY-NC-SA
- Introduction to Narrative Journalism: Real Stories, Artfully Told
 - Author: Jeffrey Grospe
 - Publisher: PressBooks, OER
 - Publication Date: 2021
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER: CC-BY-NC
- Writing Fabulous Features
 - Author: Nikole Craft
 - Publisher: PressBooks
 - Publication Date: 2019
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?: No
 - OER Link:
 - OER: CC-BY-NC
- Associated Press Style Guide
 - Author: Associated Press
 - Publisher: AP
 - Publication Date: 2023
 - Text Edition: Most recent
 - Classic Textbook?: No

- OER Link:
- OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.

OER for Social Media, Podcasting, Entrepreneurial Journalism, MoJo (mobile phone) produced, Performance for Webcast/Broadcast, are available in a Journalism Canvas shell for Sierra faculty.