

**News Gathering and Writing I: MW 3:30-4:45 In Person and Zoom/Blackboard  
Fall 2020**

**Sid Balman, Visiting Professor Journalism and Communications**

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**Office Hours: M-Th By Appointment**

**1. Instructional Materials**

- Required Textbook: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law
- Blackboard/Zoom viewings and discussions
- Supplemental reading materials available online or provided by instructor
- Outside research for articles
- Access to Netflix, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

**2. Course Overview**

- This course is designed as an introduction to print, broadcast and Web journalism; and its evolution through history. It is also intended to develop your news writing skills, and to help you discern the differences between the various formats therein: news and opinion.
- By the end of this course you will be an informed consumer of news, understand how to write for all channels, and to understand the foundation of law, ethics and principles that relate to journalism.
- There will be periodic presentations of video depicting both real and fictional situations in journalism: television interviews, Facebook Live, Dramas etc.
- Assignments and tests will be administered in person and on Zoom/Blackboard.

**3. Course Primary Learning Objectives**

- By the conclusion of this course the student should be proficient in:
  - i. Associated Press Style news writing
  - ii. The terms and tools used in journalism and newsroom management
  - iii. Writing news and opinion for print, broadcast and Web
  - iv. Interviewing
  - v. Investigation methods and tools
  - vi. Media Law
  - vii. The principles of ethical journalism

**4. Student Learning Outcomes**

- The successful student will be able to:
  - i. Write in AP style
  - ii. Discern news from fake news
  - iii. Write a news story, a feature story and an editorial in print and broadcast formats

- iv. Write for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other Web-based channels
- v. Understand newsroom management
- vi. Understand media law and principles grounded in the US Constitution, how they have been adjudicated by the courts and how they are applied to everyday journalism

## **5. Course Requirements**

- Students are expected to come to every class having reviewed current international, national and community news of that day. There will be short, unannounced pop quizzes that will be graded and discussed in class.
- Assignments are due on the day indicated in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted without a medical excuse from a doctor or a verified family emergency.
- Final Project
- Participation in class discussion required.
- Students in this class must abide by appropriate online behavior.

## **6. Criteria for Grade Evaluation**

- Each student will be graded on the basis of adherence to the assignment's guidelines in an effective and comprehensive way. Effort and improvement over the course of the term are the two most important criteria for grading.
- Evaluation of writing is subjective, and as such this aspect of the class will be solely at the professor's discretion.
- Quizzes: A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=0-59

## **7. Students with Disabilities:**

- It is Sul Ross State University policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request such accommodation because of a physical, mental or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility, who is located in FH 112 or call Mary Schwartze at 432.837.8203. All requests for special accommodations must be related in writing to the professor prior to the second week of classes.

## **8. Academic Honesty:**

- "The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or

other academic work, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.”  
– Excerpt from the Student Handbook

#### **9. SRSU Library Services**

- The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

**10.** A copy of this syllabus will be posted on the Department of Fine Arts and Communications' web page and on Blackboard.

**See Following Page For Course Calendar/Syllabus**

## Course Calendar/Syllabus

(Subject to Change at Instructor's Discretion)

Date	Assignment Due	Reading/Viewing
Mon, Aug. 24	Introduction. Review the Syllabus. Come to class with the textbook, Associated Press Style Book at bookstore.	
Wed, Aug 26	Review current International, National and Local News	Familiarization with AP Style Book. Discuss What is News.
Mon, Aug. 31	Review Current News. Read Article on News Writing Fundamentals: <a href="https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/news-writing-fundamentals">https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/news-writing-fundamentals</a>	Discuss Forms For Print and Broadcast News Stories
Wed, Sept. 2	Review Current News Write a Hard News Lede and an Anecdotal News Lede About Covid 19 Based on Previous Day's News	Discuss Prepared Ledes
Mon, Sept 7	Review Current News	Video and Discussion on Fake News
Wed, Sept 9	Review Current News	Videos of Live Interviews. Discuss Interviews and use of Quotes. Class Interview Professor.
Mon, Sept. 14	Review Current News Lede and Quotes from Professor Interview	Discuss Story Based on Interview
Wed, Sept 16	Review Current News 400-Word News Story Based on Professor Interview	Read and Discuss Interview Stories
Mon, Sept. 21	Review Current News Read Article on Data and News: <a href="http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2016/editorial-analytics-2016/">http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2016/editorial-analytics-2016/</a>	Analyze Public Opinion Poll
Wed, Sept 23	Review Current News 300-Word News Story on an Opinion Poll	Read and Discuss Stories
Mon, Sept 28	Review Current News Read Article on Media Law	Discuss Media Law

	<a href="https://open.lib.umn.edu/mediaandculture/chapter/15-3-the-law-and-mass-media-messages/">https://open.lib.umn.edu/mediaandculture/chapter/15-3-the-law-and-mass-media-messages/</a>	
Wed, Sept 30	Review Current News Read <b>Full</b> Supreme Court Brief On Landmark Media Case <a href="https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/376/254/#tab-opinion-1944787">https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/376/254/#tab-opinion-1944787</a>	Podcasts on Landmark Media Law Cases
Mon, Oct 5	Review Current News Read Article on Supreme Court Pentagon Papers <a href="https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/first-domino-nixon-and-the-pentagon-papers">https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/first-domino-nixon-and-the-pentagon-papers</a>	Watch the Post
Wed, Oct 7	Review Current News	Watch the Post
Mon, Oct 12	Review Current News Read Article on Investigative Journalism <a href="https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism-defining-the-craft/">https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism-defining-the-craft/</a>	Discuss Investigation Journalism And Tools
Wed, Oct 14	Review Current News Watch Spotlight, available on Netflix	Discuss Spotlight/Other Major Investigations
Mon, Oct 19	Review Current News Bring Two Ideas For an Investigative Story	Discuss Story Ideas
Wed, Oct 21	Review Current News Lede, Outlines and Potential Sources For Investigative Story	Discuss Outlines
Mon, Oct 26	Review Current News Read Article on How to Write an Op-Ed <a href="https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seglin_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf">https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seglin_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf</a>	Discuss Op-Eds
Wed, Oct 28	Review Current News Two Ideas for an Op-Ed On Presidential Election	Discuss Op-Ed Ideas
Mon, Nov 2	Review Current News 400-Word Op-Ed on Presidential Election	Discuss stories and Election
Wed, Nov. 4	Review Current News	Discuss Coverage of Election Results
Mon, Nov. 9	Review Current News Read Article on Social Media Impact on the News <a href="https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolemartin1/2018/11/30/how-social-media-has-changed-how-we-consume-news/#7b9805d83c3c">https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolemartin1/2018/11/30/how-social-media-has-changed-how-we-consume-news/#7b9805d83c3c</a>	Discuss Social Media and the News
Wed, Nov. 11	Review Current News Create a Tweet, Facebook Post and Instagram Post based on current News	Share and Discuss homework and

		what makes effective content for each platform
Mon, Nov. 16	Review Current News Watch The Social Network, available on Netflix	Discuss the Social Network and related issues; analytics and tools
Wed, Nov 18	Review Current News	Guest Lecturer: Max Martinez, social media pioneer: How To Advance Your Content on Social Media.
Mon, Nov. 23	Review Current News	Review the semester. Questions and Comments
Mon, Nov. 30	Review Current News	Discuss Final Project