

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY
COMM 3302 – Broadcast Newsgathering

FALL 2023
T/TH 2p-3:15p
BAB 304

Bret Scott, Asst. Professor
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Regular Office Hours:
TBD, walk-in basis
All others by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal in this class is to develop both the research and interpersonal skills required to produce broadcast-quality news pieces. The class is structured in the form of an editorial board meeting, where the stories of the day are debated, ranked, and assigned. Other topics covered will include ethics, style, libel and slander, and critical analysis of sources.

The ongoing era of the twenty-four-hour news cycle, coupled with the rise of instantaneous broad-reach social media sites, has led to a media culture that seems obsessed with being the first to report breaking news at the expense of being accurate.

One of the goals of this class is to encourage students to differentiate between “news” and “events.” News has weight. News can change the course of the lives of the audience. War is news. Car crashes and break-ins, while dramatic, are not, generally speaking, news.

Students are expected to keep up with current events, be familiar with both regional and national broadcasts, and contribute fully to each class.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT **Student Learning Outcomes**

This course is designed to meet one or more of the program learning outcomes applied to all Communication majors.

At the end of this course:

- 1: Students will be able to analyze communication content for argument, including identification of major elements, such as claim, warrants, and data.
- 2: Students will be able to effectively construct messages appropriate to audience, purpose, and context; including electronic media technologies.
- 3: Students will be able to apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts to the analysis of communication situations.

PREREQUISITES

NONE

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this class, students will:

- Demonstrate a working vocabulary of broadcast newsgathering terminology
- Identify and justify strategies for contacting and evaluating reliable sources for any story
- Demonstrate beginning mastery of the AP stylebook
- Articulate the importance of a code of ethics as applied to journalistic endeavors.
- Evaluate and critique merit, agenda, and reliability of sources for news stories on a case-by-case basis.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) Terminology / Definitions Quiz
- 2) Mid-Term Paper
- 3) Weekly Rundowns – stories of the week
- 4) Photo Project
- 5) Full participation in class discussion / critique
- 6) Final Exam

Required Textbooks for this class:

The AP Stylebook

Paperback: 536 pages

Publisher: Basic Books; Forty-sixth Edition edition (July 14, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0465062946

ISBN-13: 978-0465062942

Digital subscription to the *New York Times* – student rate

Materials Required:

A Zoom account. They're free.

CLASS DATES: Assignments and Deadlines

Note that these dates and the details of each class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion, as class progress warrants.

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments	Location
1	8/28	Introduction. Review Syllabus, Assignments, and Deadlines. Expected outcomes. Discussion: What is news?	BAB 304
		Intro Editorial Board format. Lecture: Broadcast delivery – outlets, formats, and expectations READING ASSIGNMENT: AP Stylebook, <i>BRIEFING ON MEDIA LAW</i> . READING MUST BE COMPLETED BY FEB 4.	
2	9/5	CRITIQUE: National Broadcast nightly news programs	BAB 304
3	9/12	Screening – <i>All the President's Men</i>	BAB 304
		Discussion: Media Law and Journalist's responsibilities.	BAB 304
		Critique: Local broadcast	BAB 304
4	9/19	Editorial board meeting	BAB 304
5	9/26	Editorial board meeting	BAB 304
6	10/3	QUIZ: Terminology/Definitions Editorial board meeting. Intro Photo Assignment	BAB 304
7	10/10	MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT – Office-hours Individual meetings to be scheduled with instructor.	BAB 304
8	10/17	MIDTERM PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS Editorial board meeting	BAB 304
9	10/24	PHOTO ASSIGNMENTS	BAB 304
10	10/31	PHOTO ASSIGNMENTS DUE – review in class	BAB 304
11	11/7	Interview techniques In-class interviews	BAB 304
12	11/14	In-class interviews. Homework: Record an interview	BAB 304
13	11/21	RESEARCH DAY	BAB 304
14	11/28	Assign final exam stories	BAB 304
15	12/5	Editorial board meeting	BAB 304
16	12/11	FINAL EXAM 12:30pm	BAB 304

GRADING

Assignments are valued as follows:

1) Quiz	5%
2) Midterm Paper	10%
3) Photo Assignment	10%
4) Interview assignment	15%
5) Weekly rundowns	25%
6) Class participation/attendance	10%
7) Final Story	25%

Grading Criteria:

A = Exceptional. Demonstrates mastery of material beyond expectation. Professional quality of work. Highest level of scholarship.

B = Above average. Demonstrates mastery of material. Work is of better-than-expected quality, but not quite professional. High level of scholarship.

C = Average. Demonstrates proficiency with material. Work is of amateur quality. Ordinary level of scholarship.

D = Below Average. Less than proficient with material. Work shows errors, careless mistakes, or is just plain wrong. Poor scholarship.

F – Failure. Material incomplete. Work grossly negligent or incomplete. No evidence of scholarship present.

LATE PAPERS

Deadlines are an inescapable part of responsible, professional, adult life. Late papers will lose a letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

If you discover, *a week or more in advance*, that you have multiple deadlines converging on the same day, you may request a change in deadline> Such a change may be granted at the instructor’s discretion. Once the deadline has passed, it’s too late to ask for exceptions. Manage your time and deadlines wisely.

TARDINESS / ABSENCE POLICY

Attendance is 10% of your grade. That’s the difference between an “A” and a “B”...or an “F” and a “D.”

TARDINESS

Class BEGINS EXACTLY AT THE APPOINTED TIME. It is your responsibility to be prepared to begin BEFORE the class starts.

Three instances of tardiness is equivalent to one absence. See below for the class absence policy.

THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PRESENT AT THE START OF CLASS* – ON THE HOUR. PLAN ACCORDINGLY. ON-TIME is EARLY!

*Exceptions will be made only for those with classes located in RAS whose end time makes on-time arrival impossible.

Punctuality is essential in this business. Tardiness will not be tolerated.

Absence Policy, from the Sul Ross State University 2012-2014 Course Catalogue:

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student will be dropped for excessive absences in remedial courses after nine absences.

An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.