

Journalism, News Writing And Social Media In A Modern Democracy

Fall 2025 T/Th 11-12:15 BAB 305

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Office Hours: M-Th By Appointment

1. Instructional Materials

- Required Textbook: The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law
- Required Reading: Seventh Flag, Available Amazon or any bookstore. Audiobook on audible.
- <https://apnews.com> Review for every class
- 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 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.
- Students are required to remotely attend weekly meeting of the student newspaper, The Skyline, and submit one article per month.
- 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. 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), 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/Assignment
8.26	Introduction. Review the Syllabus. Come to class with the textbook, Associated Press Style Book.	
8.28	Review current International, National and Local News	Familiarization with AP Style Book. Discuss What is News. Watch Clip from The News Room series: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTjMqda19wk
9.2	Review Current News. Read Article on News Writing Fundamentals: https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/news-writing-fundamentals	Discuss Forms For Print and Broadcast News Stories
9.4	Review Current News Write a Hard News Lede and an Anecdotal News Lede. Topic TBD	Discuss Prepared Ledes
9.9	Watch Excerpts From Past Presidential Debates Review Current News	Discuss/Watch Debate Clips Video and Discussion on Fake News https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOowX1CKf-M
9.11	Review Current News	Videos of Live Interviews. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uzJYlbhH54 Discuss Interviews and use of Quotes. Mock news conference 9.11 attack on NYC
9.16	Review Current News	Discuss lede and Quotes from mock news conference
9.18	Review Current News 300-word news story. Topic TBD	Discuss Story Based on Interview
9.23	Review Current News Read Article on Data and News: http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2016/editorial-analytics-2016/	Analyze and Discuss Public Opinion Poll based on an actual survey provided by the Prof.
9.25	No Class?	
9.30	Review Current News	Read and Discuss Stories

	300-Word News Story on an Opinion Poll	
10.2	Review Current News Read Article on Media Law https://open.lib.umn.edu/mediaandculture/chapter/15-3-the-law-and-mass-media-messages/	Discuss Media Law. Review Media Law PPT
10.7	Review Current News Read Full Supreme Court Brief On Landmark Media Case https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/376/254/#tab-opinion-1944787	Podcasts on Landmark Media Law Cases: https://thegroundtruthproject.org/new-groundtruth-podcast-explores-the-life-of-pentagon-papers-whistleblower-daniel-ellsberg/
10.9	Review Current News Read Article on Supreme Court Pentagon Papers https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/first-domino-nixon-and-the-pentagon-papers	Watch The Post: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrXIY6gzTTM
10.1 4	Review Current News Read Article on Investigative Journalism https://gijn.org/investigative-journalism-defining-the-craft/	Finish The Post Discuss Investigation Journalism And Tools. PPT presentation
10.1 6	Review Current News Covering Wars and other disasters Hollywood: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmFYkiUAAA8 Reality:Somalia: Starving Child Sebastian Junger: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MowVYc9rYvc	Read: https://www.donatellalorch.com/articles/green_beret.html
10.2 1	Review Current News Discuss Investigative Journalism	Watch video of Bob Woodward on investigative tips: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVKGUctuoXE
10.2 3	Watch Spotlight. Available on Netflix Finish 10.28	Discuss ideas for an investigative story
10.2 8	Review Current News Read Article on How to Write an Op-Ed	Discuss Op-Eds and examples

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