

# English XX: News Writing and Reporting

**Section and Term:** 75-4208, Fall 2020 DE

**Professor:** Taylor Riley

**Email:** [taylor.riley@louisville.edu](mailto:taylor.riley@louisville.edu) **Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** My weekly office hours are virtual, which means I will be online checking emails daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Additionally, you are welcome to reach out to me via email to schedule a one-on-one Zoom meeting.

Journalism is a field of mystery: How do reporters work? What do they write about and how? What goes into investigating, interviews, writing and editing? In this course, students will learn key concepts of the field from an award-winning journalist who has worked in the local, regional, national and international print media industry for a decade. The course offers instruction and practice in writing and editing copy for digital and print publications.

Students will first learn about the First Amendment, press freedoms and libel law and move into techniques used in interviewing, composing, editing and publishing. Students will report on stories in a variety of news beats, including the police, courts and town government, as well as feature stories and breaking news. Students will research story ideas, compose and edit, as well as learn tips and tricks required for publication.

Students will be able to evaluate news sources and other students' writing for libel, plagiarism, objectivity and fairness of coverage. They will produce articles for the course using the ability to determine the most effective and efficient sources of information, including interviewees, electronic databases and public records. Workshopping and free-writing will be required.

## How can I be successful in this online course?

- **Follow the weekly calendars.** I create them to help you stay organized. Log in on Monday to plan your work for the week; most assignments are usually due by Wednesday/Thursday before midnight as well as Sunday before midnight. Anticipate appx. 4-12 hours of work per week for this class. Some weeks will be light; others will be heavier.
- **Check your UofL email daily.** Email is how I will communicate with the whole class, and I may send multiple emails per week. You'll miss important announcements if you don't check your UofL email.

- **Observe deadlines.** It is critical that you adhere to the deadlines I set. In fact, you should ask yourself, “Am I motivated enough to meet these deadlines?” If the answer is “no,” then you should probably switch to a hybrid section.
- **Stay in touch if you have questions or anticipate a roadblock.** I check email regularly.. I understand that something unexpected will likely happen to everyone this semester; I am willing to be flexible as long as you communicate with me.

### Course Materials

Required course material: 2020 AP Stylebook. Other readings to be provided on Blackboard (Bb).

### Grading Scale:

A+	97-100%	B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%
A	93-96%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	63-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%
						F	59%-

### Grade Distribution [points allotted (percentage of total grade)]:

Participation: 100 pts. (25%)

Your engagement grade will be based on your daily news editing assignments, conducting peer reviews responsibly, being prepared and prompt for individual meetings, and participating actively in course activities.

#### Minor Assignments:

News Assignment 1: 100 pts. (25%)

News Assignment 2: 100 pts. (25%)

Final Project: 100 pts. (25%)

Total Points: 400

### Late work policy

If you submit any major assignments (drafts) after their due date, I reserve the right to deduct 5% for each day your assignment is missing. (e.g., Due on Wednesday, submit that Friday = -10%). If you have extenuating circumstances (sickness [mental health concerns included], family concerns, technology challenges, etc.) please reach out to me through e-mail.

### Technology policy

This course is about promoting literacy, and I believe that technology is an important part of today’s literacy. That said, we will be utilizing technology throughout our course. I ask that you

bring laptops or tablets to class so that we may utilize word-processing software. I will also ask that you submit your assignments electronically through blackboard. We may use technology together to learn new things and share our interests.

One final note on technology: if you are having a hard time utilizing technology, or have not obtained word-processing software that you feel comfortable with, please contact me and I will work with you.

### **Attendance policy**

This course will be relevant to your development as a student, and as a participant in your field of choice. The skills you learn here will be relevant. Participation is graded in this course, and counts heavily toward the final grade.

If you are participating in a university-sanctioned event, please forward me the appropriate documentation and speak with me regarding making up work. These include but are not limited to student government congresses, intercollegiate athletic and debate contests, music competitions, academic meetings, and conferences.

If you are struggling with an illness, be it physical or mental, please get in touch with me. Likewise, if there are other extenuating circumstances, I wish to know about them. E-mail me as soon as possible and we will make arrangements so that you are still making progress in the course.

If you miss six or more classes, I will forward your name to Student Success and notify them that you are at risk of failing my course. They will contact you, check in with you, and offer you resources to aid you in achieving academic success.

### **Revision Policy**

All students have the option to revise one paper after receiving a grade with my feedback. The final project and assignments that lead up to it do not qualify under this policy. Should you choose to revise one of your essays and resubmit it for credit, you must notify me of your intentions via email, and I will approve. In order to receive credit for the revised paper. The revision is due two weeks after you've received my feedback and a grade on the original paper. After I review your revised paper, I will assign it a new grade to replace the old one.

### **University Resources and Policies**

#### **Writing Center:**

It will become quite clear that writing is a remarkably important part of your educational journey, and a key element of success at the university. So much so, that there is a center expertly designed precisely to help U of L produce better writers. The University Writing Center

is a remarkable place. Its tutors are a motley crew, but the best of the best [I don't actually intend on having that last sentence]. I highly suggest you get used to using this fine resource both by scheduling appoints, here:

Or, by using any of its fantastic online resources: In particular, here are some excellent resources:

<http://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/common-writing-questions-1>

<http://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/common-writing-questions-1/frequently-asked-questions/i2019ve-mostly-written-papers-for-my-english-class-and-am-wondering-if-the-writing-that-i2019ll-be-asked-to-do-in-my-major-non-english-will-be-different>

<http://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/handouts-and-resources>

### **University Disability Policy:**

The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate in and/or complete requirements for this class, contact the Disability Resource Center (Robbins Hall, 852-6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations. Students who have a disability or condition which may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to meet with the instructor to identify, discuss and document any feasible instructional modifications or accommodations. Please inform instructor about circumstances no later than the second week of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability or condition is diagnosed, whichever occurs earliest. For information and auxiliary assistance, contact the Disabilities Resource Center.

### **Title IX/Clery Act Notification:**

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer. For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide (<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>).

### **Right to Make Changes Statement:**

The instructor has the right to make changes to the course schedule/syllabus if necessary. Student questions and concerns about the course schedule/syllabus are welcome, but they should be voiced before the end of the first week of the course.

**Plagiarism Statement:**

The University defines plagiarism as “representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.” Thus, all writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course, unless the instructor stipulates differently. Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask your instructor. If you plagiarize, your instructor reserves the right to assign you a failing grade for the course and your case will be reported to the College of Arts and Sciences.

**Grievance Procedure Statement:**

Students who have questions or concerns about their grades, the class, or an assignment are encouraged to see their instructor as soon as possible. If not satisfied with that discussion, students may see an assistant director of composition: contact Dakoda Smith, Lauren Fusilier, or Brittany Smart; their contact information is available at <http://louisville.edu/english/composition/contact>.

**Composition Program Student Learning Outcomes for English XX:**

TBD

**General Education Written Communication Outcomes (WC)**

Written Communication is the ability to develop and express ideas, opinions, and information in appropriate forms. To fulfill this requirement, students will complete, revise, and share a substantial amount of writing in multiple genres or media. Students who satisfy this requirement will:

TBD

**Assessment of General Education outcomes:**

TBD

**Plagiarism policy**

The university defines plagiarism as “representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise.” All writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course. Pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers.

I see it as my responsibility to help you to learn proper citation practices in your discipline. I understand that the process of learning citation can be messy, and that the boundaries of

paraphrase and summary can be challenging sometimes. That said, I do make distinctions between improper citation practices and plagiarism. In cases of the former, it will impact your grade (as shown on the assignment's rubric). However, I will work with you and help you develop citation skills for your next draft or assignment. If you knowingly plagiarize, I do reserve the right to assign you a failing grade for the course and to report your case to the College of Arts and Sciences.

As a Community of Care, all Cardinals are expected to abide by public health guidelines and regulations as published by the University. For Fall 2020, this includes:

- wearing of cloth/paper masks (covering nose and mouth) when in shared indoor spaces like classrooms, or when appropriate physical distancing cannot be maintained. (Per the code of student conduct- [a student who refuses to follow these guidelines may be asked to leave a classroom](#))
- staying home when sick—any UofL community member experiencing fever, consistent dry cough, or other symptoms of contagious disease should remain at home until symptoms subside or advised that it is safe to return by a medical professional.
- practicing good hygiene and responsibility for one's own surrounding.
  - Cover sneezes and coughs
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water when possible; use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available
  - Wipe down frequently touched surfaces
  - Maintain six feet physical distancing when possible

## Weekly Schedule

(Subject to change)

Week 1:

Course introduction and syllabus review

We will answer the questions: What is news? How do I find news? What is bias?

Week 2:

Editing fundamental and news judgment

This week, we will go over basic AP Style. We will talk about bias in news and the differences between sources.

Week 3:

Editing skills and tools – the editor in the newsroom

What does an editor do? We will go into what the leader, and those under him or her, of the newsroom does on a daily basis.

Week 4:

Focus on grammar: the mechanics of language

This week, we will go into a deep dive of the differences between styles and practice AP style.

Week 5:

A draft will be due and the student will conference with the teacher. First assignment due.

Week 6:

Editing for good writing

We will continue to practice editing and work on lede writing.

Week 7:

Headlines

We'll learn what makes a good headline and practice writing.

Week 8:

Editing stories

This week, we will practice editing local and national stories.

Week 9:

A draft will be due and the student will conference with the teacher. Second assignment due.

Week 10:

Editing for brevity and clarity

We will discuss what makes a good news story and how to write one.

Week 11:

Editing feature stories and those based on polls and surveys

This week, we will focus on features, polls and surveys, editing them to be effective stories.

Week 12:

Editing photos and informational graphics

Why are photos important? How do we edit photos and graphics?

Week 13:

How to lay out the newspaper

We will get into the design of the front page of the newspaper and go over the final assignment.

Week 14:

Workshop week for page design project.

Week 15:

A draft will be due and the student will conference with the teacher. Page design project due.