

Delta College
News Writing English 116 Winter 2011

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Tim Harrower, author of our textbook *Inside Reporting*, begins a note about his latest edition by writing, "This is not your father's journalism textbook. " I'd like to add to that by telling you, **this is not last year's English 116 class.**

A lot has happened in the newspaper business since I last taught this class, in fact almost everything has changed – the size of the staffs, delivery methods, reader preferences, the size of the audience, the way newspapers are financed and on and on.

But one thing has not changed and that will be the primary focus of our class this semester – the principles of solid journalism. What do readers expect of you as a journalist? How can you develop professionalism and maintain it in a business that is constantly changing and threatened by influences that value entertainment over information? How can you adapt to changing technology without compromising standards?

I am confident the newspaper business will change even more during this semester and we will keep our agenda fluid enough to address these changes. In the meantime, we have to begin somewhere.

Consider this your first day on the job. You have been hired to work at a mid-size city newspaper like *the Saginaw News, Bay City Times or Midland Daily News*. Your classmates are your co-workers. I am your editor.

You will learn by reading and doing. You also will learn from professionals from the area's newspapers, magazines and online publications. Your text will be your resource guide but actual experience will be your real teacher.

What will you learn?

How to get information

How to get organized

How to write for maximum impact and interest

How to professionally handle criticism and even rejection

Newsroom buzz words

Associated Press newspaper style

How to be persistent

How to work under pressure

Text and materials

Inside Reporting, second edition by Tim Harrower

Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual

Course pack

You must read a daily newspaper (paper copy or online) and bring copies of stories to class each session

You must watch a daily newscast

Purchase and bring to class –

Flash drive for your stories

Pocket folder

Approach

You must come to class prepared for each session. This includes reading the text, taking notes, completing each assignment using AP style, and bringing professional newspaper stories to class.

Class sessions will include individual work, group work and one-on-one conferences with the instructor.

Generally, one class a week will meet in the computer lab where there is no eating or drinking allowed. Eat your lunch before or after class. Also, make sure you arrive on time and leave only at the end of the class.

Assignments

All assignments must be typewritten in AP newspaper style. This will be explained in class. No assignments will be accepted hand-written. Remember the class is a working newsroom with professional standards.

Attendance

I may **drop** you from the class if you miss, for any **reason, in excess of 2/15 of the classes**. This is a policy of the English Division. In other words, if you are absent **four times or more** you will be dropped. This could have an impact on your financial aid status as a full-time student.

Deadlines

You are expected to meet all deadlines since this is an important part of your job. Therefore, **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON**. If for some reason you cannot attend class, you must bring your assignment to my S 30 office prior to class, send it with another student to class, e mail it to me or fax it to me. In-class assignments cannot be made up. Contact me at 686-9151 if you have an

emergency situation and we will make arrangements to get your assignment to me on time.

Grades

If you show up in the newsroom and satisfactorily complete your assignments, you will keep your job and receive a C grade. Repeated absences or poor performance will put you on probation with the boss and get you a D grade or even cause you to be fired with a F grade. Raises and promotions (As and Bs) are awarded to reporters who excel on the job.

There will be an opportunity to earn about 900 points this semester. Computerized grade reports will be handed out every two weeks. You can inquire about your grade at any time during the semester.

Spelling and grammar are important. Therefore, you will be marked down for spelling and obvious grammatical errors. Use of incorrect style is considered a spelling error.

Facts are even more important. Any factual errors (including the spelling of a name or place, wrong title, inaccurate quote, etc.) will cost you one grade level. Accuracy is essential to good news writing.

**** Keep all of your graded work this semester in case there is a question about any of your assignments.**

Grading Scale

100-93 A	79-77C+	62-60 D-
92-09 A-	76-73 C	59 and below F
89-87 B+	72-70 C-	
86-83 B	69-67 D	
82-80 B-	66-63 D	

You must pass this class with a C in order to advance to English 217 which is Advanced Reporting.

Exams

The mid-term exam will include objective questions and some short essay questions. It also will require you to write short stories or parts of stories. The final exam will require you to participate in a group interview and use the information to write a story in class.

Quizzes

Students will be quizzed on textbook material including newspaper style. Most of the time, quizzes will be announced.

Electronic considerations

If you want to contact me by e mail, you must use your Delta e mail address. If you use another address and I do not receive your assignment because it has gone to my spam mail, it will be considered late and will not be accepted. If you are sending me a document via e mail, either paste it into the e mail message or save it as a **doc or docx file**.

I expect you to print out your assignments and hand them to me in class. Don't wait until the last minute to print your documents at Delta. Sometimes you can't open your documents from home once you get to campus. For better results, save your files in the rich text format (.rtf). To do this, choose the "save as" option and select rtf. You should also e mail your document to yourself at your Delta account. That way you will have a back up.

If you want me to e-mail you your grade or other information about your performance in this class, remember that **there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with computer systems and networks used to conduct college business. For your protection, do not share your e mail account or password with anyone. Review the college's access and usage guidelines at www3.delta.edu/AIG.asp**

In part, the guidelines state:

You should not assume that anything received, sent or stored on any of these systems is private. The College generally, and system administrators specifically, will respect the privacy of users. However, these systems are not provided or intended for sending or receiving private or confidential communications. If material is stored electronically rather than in paper files, it must be just as accessible to others who need access to those files as any paper file would be. In addition, system administrators have access to all mail and user access requests and will monitor them as necessary to assure efficient performance and appropriate use. If access discloses improper or illegal use, it may be reported and penalized. Legal process, including requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act, may also compel disclosure.

Emergencies

If you cannot attend class, you must notify me through voice mail at 686-9151 or e mail at jbramm@delta.edu prior to the class meeting to let me know how I should expect your assignment. You cannot bring your assignment to the next class period and expect me to accept it. Remember the NO LATE WORK POLICY.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that affects your academic performance, and need an academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services in D 102 or call Mike Cooper, disability services director at 686-9322.

Dec. 17, 2010

