



Nichols College

Learn. Lead. Succeed.

Course 346: Journalism Fundamentals

Spring 2019

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Location: Online

Quick Links: <https://nichols.instructure.com/courses/2999>

****Syllabus is subject to change****

Course Description

This course equips students with an understanding of the principles and practice of journalism: How to recognize good stories, gather facts through skillful interviewing and research, develop sources, craft welcoming leads and satisfying endings, and create news and feature articles that inform and engage readers. Rewriting to achieve mastery is particularly emphasized. Students will also analyze the influence of the media's role in the world and the importance of maintaining integrity.

Course Objectives, Learning Outcomes & Assessment Methods

Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment	Related College/Program Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:	Student achievement of these outcomes will be measured by:	These activities fulfill the following:
Personally engage with your own writing and with the ideas of others.	Written assignments, class participation	E4, 3, C1, 4

Develop and maintain a focus throughout an essay.	Written assignments	E4, C1
Develop and support positions.	Written assignments	E4, C1
Develop clear, logical sentences	Written assignments	E4, C1
Demonstrate reading, comprehension, and analytical skills	Written assignments, class participation	E2, C2

English Department Outcomes: E2. Graduates will be able to interpret texts and to analyze the impact of the context in which texts are written. E3. Graduates will be able to incorporate their own interpretive approach in relationship to other theoretical and critical approaches to understanding texts. E4. Graduates will be able to demonstrate effective writing skills, incorporating their own voice, analysis, and creativity.

“A free press can be good or bad, but, most certainly, without freedom a press will never be anything but bad.” ~ Albert Camus

IMPORTANT: ANY REQUIRED PARAGRAPHS THAT DO NOT ARRIVE IN TIME WILL RECEIVE A ZERO FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT. IF YOU ARE NOT IN CLASS THAT DAY, YOUR TYPEWRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS WILL STILL BE DUE BY THE START TIME OF CLASS.

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
January 14	<p>Introduction to the course. What is journalism? Introduction to newspapers – narrowing the question. Getting to know each other through an in-class writing exercise (please bring pen and paper, laptop or some other writing utensils).</p> <p>Short discussion about news. Develop Twitter account.</p>	Read: Chapter 2 , Writing As Craft (Carl Sessions Stepp)
January 21	<p>The 5 W's Leads (lede) Article Checklist</p>	Read: Chapter 5 of Writing for Strategic Communication Industries.

		<p>*Print out "Summary Leads" and circle all the W's in each lead.</p> <p>Writing:</p> <p>*Write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on how the inverted pyramid style works and is important.</p> <p>*Write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on what a lead accomplishes and use, as examples, the single lead sentence for your two stories.</p>
January 28	<p>Ethics</p> <p>Good examples</p> <p>Choosing a Nichols event</p>	<p>Read: Chapter 3 on ethics. Complete a paragraph regarding the importance of ethics in journalism.</p> <p>Find and bring to class two articles you really like.</p> <p>Write a 250-300 word news article due via email at 11:59 FEB. 3 (We will brainstorm in class). Use the link here and choose 1 to write up.</p>
February 4	<p>Writing workshop; story sharing.</p> <p>Fundamentals of less is more</p> <p>Asking interview questions</p> <p>**WRITING YOUR OWN NOTES**</p>	<p>Read: How to Interview and The Art of Interviewing Part I</p> <p>Writing:</p> <p>Write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on the interview you think is best and why.</p>

February 11:	<p>Draft sharing</p> <p>Types of features, structure. Discuss human interest, information, profiles, voice transitions. Decide on features story topic/write questions.</p>	<p>Reading: Chapter 9, Mastering the Feature and Chapter 10, Writing for Clarity.</p> <p>Writing: Draft of article 1 due in class. Please see assignments at the end of the syllabus for further information.</p>
February 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Features on campus and elsewhere *Brainstorming strong story ideas *Planning Interviews *Nuances of solid writing *Celebrity interviewing 	<p>Article 1 on a Nichols sports event or cultural event (750 words) due via email by 11:59 pm on Feb. 24.</p> <p>REQUIRES 3 INTERVIEWS</p> <p>See instructions on page of this syllabus.</p> <p>Complete Grammar Bytes Pre-test and upload picture of final score.</p> <p>Be prepared to interview guest speaker next week to write event article on her.</p>
February 25	<p>Guest Speaker Kim Ring Telegram and Gazette</p>	<p>Read: The Art of The Interview Part II</p> <p>Write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on what you think the most important features of interviewing are, why and how you will accomplish that.</p> <p>Write 10 questions to ask a celebrity of your own choosing in the best order to ask them. Use at least 2 resources to get information for the questions.</p>

		Complete grammar quiz on “apostrophes” and upload pic of your score.
March 3	<p>*Interview sharing (what worked, what didn’t, what can be done better?).</p> <p>*Techniques to writing better</p>	<p>Find and bring to class two feature stories you like and write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on the story you believe is best and why.</p> <p>Complete 4 interviews for article 2 and bring your notes to class.</p> <p>Complete grammar quiz on “commas” and upload pic of your score.</p>
March 10	No Class—Online work will be due in lieu of class.	<p>Read: “Quotations” and “Attributions” and “Alternative Leads” “Alternative Leads II”</p> <p>Draft of Article 2 Due in Class.</p>
March 17: no class spring break		
March 24	<p>Draft sharing</p> <p>Alternative leads</p> <p>Writing 10 excellent questions for the person you will be profiling in Article 3.</p>	<p>Article 2: A feature story from Nichols or any community organization that you know (750 words) due via email by March 23 11:59 p.m. Requires at least 4 interviews. See instruction below the syllabus.</p>
March 31	<p>Writing good questions</p> <p>Planning a profile</p> <p>Examples of strong profiles</p> <p>Brainstorming excellent profile ideas</p>	<p>Read “How To Write a Profile” and choose TWO profiles to read from the following:</p> <p>Dylann Roof</p> <p>Gerhard Steidl</p> <p>Missy Elliot</p> <p>Cormac McCarthy</p> <p>Princess Diana</p>

		The Rock Gloria Allred Kelela Matt Nelson Write a 5-6 sentence paragraph on which profile you think is most effective and why. Complete at least 3 interviews of people (no family members please) for article 3 and bring your notes to class.
April 7	Interview sharing Possible leads Make your writing better Professional Conduct and conduct with sources. Code of ethics	Article # 3: A profile of someone other than a family member (750 words) due via email by 11:59 pm on April 20.
April 14	Writing for social media	The State of Journalism Issues in Journalism Today
April 21:	Finding the Truth	Read " Shattered Glass " " Ethics Unwrapped " Read: " Why Writers Lie " " Fake News "
April 28: Writing Portfolio Assessment: Two FINISHED articles need to be in your portfolio.	Advertisements The newsroom Finding a job	Article 4 Final article: 1500 words due via email by 11:59 p.m. on April 20. An article of your choosing at least 4 interviews. CELEBRATION

****Guest speakers yet to be determined****

Textbook and Materials

The only book you are required to purchase is the Associated Press Style Book, which should be a constant companion. We will use Open Educational Resources (OER's). You can also access e-books from the library. If you need help in accessing these resources, please ask me. In addition, I will post PDF's, essays, videos and other materials for you to access on Canvas. If you have a problem access any of the materials, please contact me.

FURTHER READINGS:

Among other responsibilities, journalists need to stay abreast of the news. If they don't have one already, students are encouraged to cultivate a daily news-reading habit. In today's rich news environment there are many ways to do this, from subscribing to a traditional print newspaper to visiting web-based news sites such as CNN.com to downloading mobile apps from AP, Reuters or another news service for smartphone reading.

To encourage students to think critically about reporting and writing, each class will begin with a brief discussion of the day's news. To facilitate the discussion, the class will maintain a Twitter feed that will include links to stories of interest. Students will contribute to this list and should check it regularly. We will develop this account during the first week.

Films To Watch: "All The President's Men"

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Graded exercises will count 10% of your grade

Articles 1,2,3 will each count 15%

Article 4 will count 20%

The portfolio will count 10%

Class participation including written paragraphs will count at 15%

Each paper is due at the start of the designated class. Articles that are late lose 1/3 of a grade for each class that they are late. Articles requiring a draft will lose 1/3 of a grade if the draft is not done in time for the assigned class, even if the student is not present.

PORTFOLIOS:

At the end of the course, each student will hand in a portfolio of work done in class. This portfolio, plus a written self-evaluation, will determine a large portion of your grade. (The rest of your grade will be determined by such factors as attendance and class participation.) You should hand in your last, best version of each article, unless you are trying to demonstrate significant improvement between drafts. In any case, if you rewrite an article 25 times, it is not necessary to hand in all 25 versions of it, just the first and last will do. If you get an article published, be sure to include a copy of the "clip." (Clip is short for clipping, it simply means that you cut the article out of the publication. When you offer to work for an editor, she will probably ask to see your published clips.) The self-evaluation is very important, so invest some time and thought in it. Also include copies of your story memos. Finally, Al and John would like to keep these portfolios for their records, so don't include originals unless you won't need them back — photocopies or printouts are sufficient. Portfolios don't have to be fancy, either — just staple the pages together and put them in a folder or an envelope. This can be used for your own personal portfolio when looking for jobs as well.

Homework:

You will be expected to do all the readings for the day they are due. Missed readings will mean less class participation on your part, which will mean a lower grade in that part of the course.

Attendance Policy: This class really depends on your presence. You can miss a total of three classes, with or without an excuse. Any missed classes after those three will cost you a 1/3 grade deduction from your final grade. Please reserve absences for emergencies or illness. If something unexpected arises, please contact me.

Writing and reporting cannot be done without each other. You are expected to act responsibly, with manners and with class toward everyone, inside and outside of the classroom. Part of a good reporter is being objective with others you will begin to practice this with how you conduct yourself daily with others.

The heart of a writing workshop is peer critique — you learn by receiving comments on your own work and by offering comments about your classmates' writing. You are expected to participate as a full member of the class by presenting your own assignments on time and by providing thoughtful and constructive criticisms of your classmates' ideas and articles. Since the goal is for everyone in class to advance as a writer, comments will be respectful and pertinent.

ABOUT WORKFLOW AND RESOURCES:

The difficulty in journalism arises from the fact that a journalist must simultaneously do many things. While you are researching and writing a story, you must observe and describe, interview, find important information in documents, impose structure on your story, self-edit, fact-check, consider opportunities for publishing your completed article — and do it all before a deadline. You will notice as you read through this syllabus that the course is front-loaded with suggested readings: many chapters at the beginning, none at the end. This has been done to make sure you have the information you need to successfully complete your articles. Despite all the reading, you still may have questions: Please ask!

Smartphone Usage:

We've come to a point in technology where your smartphone will be a valuable device in certain professional situations—research, accessing your article drafts etc...You will be using these devices for classwork everyday. **HOWEVER**, smartphone use otherwise is not allowed and your phone should be out of sight, not on your desk.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's ideas and work. It will not be tolerated, either in academia or in journalism. You are responsible to know how to cite and how to use sources responsibly. Not knowing the rules, misunderstanding the rules, running out of time, submitting "the wrong draft", or being overwhelmed with multiple demands are not acceptable excuses. There are no excuses for failure to uphold academic integrity.

PROHIBITION AGAINST FIRST-PERSON WRITING:

Journalists use a variety of writing styles and formulas for their stories. The most commonly used voice is the third person; that is, reporters write about he and she and they and it rather than I or we. Therefore, no articles for this class will be written in the first person.

PROHIBITION AGAINST WRITING ABOUT FRIENDS, RELATIVES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS, CO-WORKERS, AND BUSINESSES/ ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH YOU BELONG: Journalists do not write about those close to them to avoid potential conflicts of interest. As the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics (<http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>) spells out:

Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know. Journalists should:

- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if they compromise journalistic integrity.
- Disclose unavoidable conflicts.

You should approach every article you write as though it were going to appear in a newspaper, magazine or website; avoid the trap of thinking that an article is "just for class."

PROHIBITION AGAINST BEING PAID FOR COURSE WORK:

It is frowned upon for students to receive both a grade and compensation for course work. So, what happens if you write a really good story and a newspaper such as The Boston Globe would like to publish it? You have three options: 1) decline payment, 2) do two different versions of the article — one for class, and one for publication, or 3) publish the article after the course has ended. This tends to be a moot point, since if an editor accepts an article for publication, she would generally require revisions.

Article Assignments:

Article #1

An article on a live Nichols event: Cover a live Nichols event, either a sports contest or cultural event. Write in the form of a good news story. Please note that football, soccer, and field hockey games are news too, even though they are about sports.

Article #2

A feature story of your own choosing:

700-1000 words:

Based on your brainstorming in class, choose a story idea that you are interested in and care about. You could base the story on the Nichols campus, in your home, community, or in some organization with whom you are associated. In either case, you need to interview and quote at least four people (no family members please) connected to the story to get sufficient

information to make the story effective. The quality of your quotes will help determine your grade.

Article #3

Due via email by 11:59 pm. On

A profile of someone other than a family member 750 words

This assignment will focus on your ability to do good interviews, both with the subject of your profile, but at least two other people who can contribute well to your story.

Article #4

Due via email by 11:59 pm on

A feature story outside of the Nichols Campus

1000-1500 words

For this article, you need to stretch your research and writing muscles to talk with people whom you may not already know. Based on your brainstorming in class, choose a story idea that you are interested in and care about. You could cover a story from any number of communities, from Dudley and Worcester to your hometown or surrounding towns, BUT NOT THE NICHOLS CAMPUS. Since this story is longer than previous ones, you need to develop more angles and gather more information. You also need to interview and quote at least six people (not family members) connected to the story to get sufficient information to make the story effective.

Instructional Methods

Credit Hour Policy: A 3-credit course requires 37.5 contact hours, which does not include time spent on homework assignments or studying. A 4-credit course requires 50 contact hours. A traditional full-semester course fulfills this requirement by meeting in class for 2.5 – 3.5 hours per week. Students should expect to dedicate an additional 6 hours per week to homework and studying for a 15-week course.

Netiquette and Discussion Forum Expectations

Discussion posts, blogs and an online presence is important to your virtual learning and helps to build a trusting, non-judgmental online community. Make sure your comments are supported by fact and I expect each of you to comment on two other students' posts (unless different instructions are provided). If you disagree with a peer, counter their idea, not the student. Everyone is entitled to a well thought out, researched opinion, but please keep things professional and appropriate.

Grading Policy

A 100-93%	C 76.99-73%
A- 92.99-90%	C- 72.99-70%
B+ 89.99-87%	D+ 69.99%-67
B 86.99-83%	D 66.99-63%
B- 82.99-80%	D- 62.99-60%
C+ 79.99-77%	F 59.99% & below

Late Work Policy

Turning in your assignments on time is important and will ensure your success. I understand that sometimes, something unforeseen can happen. That is why it is imperative that you contact me if you feel you may submit something late BEFORE it is late, so we can plan alternative arrangements. If you submit something late and have not contacted me, there is a strict 10-point deduction on late assignments. After 4 days, assignments will not be accepted. There are NO late discussions, blog posts or online responses on your peers' postings.

Academic Honesty Policy

All students are required to adhere to the Nichols College Academic Honesty Policy. This policy may be found in the Catalog or online at: <http://www.nichols.edu/academics/course-catalog/academic-policies>.

Technical Support

If you encounter any technical difficulty using Moodle, uploading files, accessing email, etc., please contact the Help Desk for assistance: helpdesk@nichols.edu | <https://help.nichols.edu> | 508.213.2206.

Accommodations & Learning Support Services

If you have a documented learning difference and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this course, please contact the Office of Learning Services: <http://www.nichols.edu/about/offices-and-services/learning-services> | 508.213.2293.

I Support You

I want you to succeed. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions, concerns, or difficulties. I will make every effort to meet your needs so that you are successful. I will check email daily and am available virtually or through text and phone call. In person meetings on campus can also be arranged if you feel you need to do so. Please, just reach out.