

COMM 321. Intermediate Journalism: Newswriting and Reporting II.

3 cr. News and public affairs reporting. Prereq: 221 or cons instr.

(official catalog copy for COMM 321)

Syllabus, Spring 2016 (revised 1/26/16)

Instructor: Dr. Steve Hill (shill@uwsp.edu), CAC 303, 346-3887

Office Hours: M 11:15-12:15, W 11-noon, and by appointment

Required Texts:

- *The Elements of Journalism* by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. This book is available for purchase at the university bookstore.
- *News Reporting and Writing* by Melvin Mencher. This book is available for text rental at the university bookstore.
- *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. This book is available for purchase from the university bookstore. If you had COMM 221, you should still have this book. You can also subscribe to the stylebook online for about \$25 a year – more expensive, but very handy.

My teaching philosophy is based on concepts of community, excellent language skills and relevance. A short explanation of this philosophy is posted on D2L. Please read it and understand how respecting this philosophy will contribute to a positive learning experience for you and your colleagues. I try to keep **class rules** to a minimum and post those I have in the D2L content area.

The **purpose of the course** is to critically analyze use of fundamental principles of journalism covered in COMM 221. You'll also consider ten critical elements of good news and public affairs reporting and, with these elements in mind, demonstrate your ability to analyze and communicate clearly about public issues. You will also try your hand at producing effective public-affairs journalism. You are expected to have a basic understanding of good grammar, syntax and diction; Associated Press style; the fundamentals of news gathering and analysis; and both familiarity with basic computer functions and the D2L course management system. Understanding D2L is obviously important for keeping up with class requirements and knowing where you stand in the class.

Our **projected course learning outcomes** are that all students will be able to:

- Identify elements that lead to concise but detailed news and public affairs stories, using appropriate formats, on issues of public significance.
- Evaluate source use in media coverage of issues of public significance, including use of interviews, databases, reports, Internet sources, and other appropriate resources.
- Analyze and critique news stories by using peer editing techniques and critical-thinking skills, and
- Analyze news stories and articulate your understanding of ways they do or do not reflect the principles embodied in the elements of journalism as discussed in the Mencher and Kovach & Rosenstiel texts.
- Demonstrate strong writing capability.
- Produce acceptable news and public affairs story ideas and effectively critique them using rubrics based on principles and elements from our texts.

In addition, advanced students will be able to:

- Demonstrate increasing capability in other core journalism skills, such as following AP style, organizing and structuring information, and conducting interviews, by producing a publishable story on an important news and public affairs issue (no sports, entertainment, fashion, etc.).

We'll measure these outcomes through the skills and knowledge you demonstrate on class assignments and online quizzes. See details in "Assignments and Grading Policy" in the D2L content area.

COMM 321 a writing-emphasis course for purposes of UWSP's general degree requirements, so you'll be required to write quite a bit – and quite well – to receive credit in this course.

Grading Policy

Grades will be based on the number of points you earn. Please see the above-mentioned document on assignments and grading standards in the D2L content area. There will be at least 1,000 points available during the semester. Point totals required for grade levels are these:

A: 950 or more	A-: 900-949.99	
B+: 870-899.99	B: 830-869.99	B-: 800-829.99
C+: 770-799.99	C: 730-769.99	C-: 700-729.99
D+: 670-699.99	D: 600-669.99	F: Fewer than 600 points

Deadlines are critical to journalists. Most types of work will not be accepted late; severe penalties apply in all other cases. Please see the document on my late policy in the D2L content area for complete details.

PLEASE NOTE: any academic misconduct, including misrepresenting any work in any way, will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Statements of University Policy. You are responsible for understanding university policies, especially regarding academic misconduct. That policy can be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

UWSP 14.01 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

The board of regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the University of Wisconsin system believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the University of Wisconsin system. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

UWSP 14.03 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

- (1) Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:
 - (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
 - (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.
- (g) Violates electronic communication policies or standards as agreed upon when logging on initially (See uwsp.edu/it/policy).