

COMM 323 Advanced Journalism: Editorials, Columns and Reviews

Syllabus, Fall 2015 (revised 8/27/15)

Instructor: Dr. Steve Hill (shill@uwsp.edu) CAC 323, 346-3887

Office hours: Mon 11 a.m.-noon, Tu 1-2 p.m., and by appointment

The **purpose of the course** is to build on fundamental journalism skills by conducting in-depth research, analysis and writing about significant issues in order to produce persuasive opinion pieces about those issues. . Even if you haven't taken basic journalism courses, you'll still be able to function at a high level in this class, as fundamental skills used in journalism are also those you already use in daily thought and communication: attentiveness to detail, questioning, and good writing, among others. I'll provide some instruction, materials and exercises for you to understand more about how these skills function in journalism and other areas.

COMM 323 is a writing-emphasis course for purposes of UWSP's general degree requirements.

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

- Use appropriate formats and a concise, detailed approach to write the following about significant public issues:
 - Editorials on news and public affairs stories over issues of local, regional and national significance; and
 - Columns, reviews or other analyses of books, journal articles, popular media or other important sources of information and entertainment
- Conduct thorough research on issues of public significance, using interviews, databases, reports, Internet sources, and other appropriate resources and skills
- Demonstrate increasing capability in other core journalism skills, such as following AP style, organizing and structuring information, listening and observing, and conducting interviews
- Critically analyze news stories or other information sources and articulate your understanding of ways they do or do not reflect principles of ethical communications practice and appreciation of diverse and global perspectives

We'll measure these outcomes through the skills and knowledge you demonstrate on class writing assignments and critiques of those assignments (both of the work of others and yourself). Timeliness with your weekly writing tasks and dedicated participation in the peer review process will be especially critical in this class.

Required Readings

All required readings will be readily available online, generally in .PDF format on D2L, but often on various news & public affairs or other websites. You will also be required to do a suitable amount of outside reading, including at least one full-length book of your own choosing for the book-review assignment.

My teaching philosophy is based on the concepts of community, relevance and the importance of excellent language skills. A short explanation of this philosophy is posted on D2L. I hope you'll read it and understand how respecting this philosophy in class will contribute to a positive learning experience for our class.

Writing Assignments	Points
1. Weekly first drafts (12x 20 points)	240 (ca. 500 words each)
2. Final drafts (12x25)	300
3. Weekly peer feedback (12x20)	240
4. Class participation	120
4. Self-evaluation of coursework	100 (1,000 words)
TOTAL	1,000

Class participation grades will often depend on tasks to be completed before class, such as compiling periodic lists of editorial/column ideas to discuss in class. At least 5 points for each class will be assigned for attending and taking part in discussion. Attendance is, therefore, required for full points.

Grading Policy

Your grade will be based on the number of points that you earn. Point totals required are:

A: 930 or more	A-: 900-929	B+: 870-899	B: 830-869	B-: 800-829
C+: 770-799	C: 730-769	C-: 700-729	D+: 670-699	D: 600-669
F: Fewer than 600 points				

There may be bonus points available during the semester, but at this point, none are planned.

Deadlines are critical to all professionals, but especially to journalists. **No work may be turned in late without penalty.** First and second drafts, any late class-participation exercises and your self-evaluation will be docked 25 percent of the assignment's potential value for each 24-hour period that it's late. **Late peer feedback will be penalized 50 percent of its value per 24-hour period.** The clock starts ticking at the time that it's due. All work is turned in electronically. If a 50-point assignment is due on Tuesday at 11 p.m., it loses 12.5 points at 5:01 p.m. Tuesday and another 12.5 at 5:01 Wednesday.

Generally, work will be posted electronically in D2L dropboxes and/or discussion forums as MS Word 2003 or later or RTF (*.rtf) files – no Microsoft Works or other noncompatible formats. **Work not posted in a compatible format will be counted as late. Work that I cannot download because you do not name it in an acceptable manner – such as naming the file incorrectly – will also be counted as late.**

Citations:

Please keep track of all your sources, but you may use the informal attribution style of journalism to refer to your sourced material. I reserve the right to ask for a more formal listing, such as a thorough bibliography of any of your work, if I deem it necessary. . Guidance on these two styles is available from the Purdue Online Writing Laboratory.

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.

Statements of University Policy

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).