

JOURNALISTIC WRITING
STANDARD LEVEL
½ CREDIT – WRITING ELECTIVE FOR JUNIORS OR
SENIORS

JOURNALISTIC WRITING STANDARD

TEXTS

A. Harwood, William N. and John C. Hudnall. Writing and Editing
School News. Topeka, Kansas: Clark Publishing Inc., 1997.

PREREQUISITES

Students must have passed both semesters of LA 9 and LA 10.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

JOURNALISTIC WRITING is a one semester course designed for junior or senior students interested in writing various types of articles for a newspaper.

Students will be required to write news stories, features, editorials, and sports articles. In addition students will study writing types used in various types of journalistic articles by current journalists, both in the central Illinois area and at the national level.

Students in the class will automatically be a part of the MHS Kiln staff. Students will be required to submit articles for each issue of the newspaper. Students should have minimum keyboarding ability as stories for publication must be typed.

This class will NOT be an overview of all aspects of producing a newspaper. That is there will be no study of advertising, layout, headlines, or production problems related to producing a newspaper. The entire focus of study will be on writing and improving the students' journalistic writing.

A term paper is also part of the class requirement. Students will pick a topic/event to be investigated for an approved magazine. Composition will contain a minimum of 1,000 words.

VI. COURSE CONTENT

A. Development of mass communication

- 1. Dynamics of communication**
- 2. Elements of communication**
- 3. Forerunners of the mass media**
- 4. Development of the newspaper**
- 5. Development of American newspapers**

B. Newspaper

- 1. Criteria of what makes a newspaper**
- 2. Newspaper in our society**
- 3. Types of newspapers**
- 4. Functions of the newspaper**
- 5. Major divisions of the newspaper**
- 6. Staff organization on a newspaper**
- 7. Functions of the school newspaper**

C. News

- 1. Defining news**
- 2. Knowing what is publishable**
- 3. Determining what is not publishable**

D. Newspaper style

- 1. Preparation of copy**
- 2. Use of names and identification**
- 3. Use of capitalization**
- 4. Use of figures**
- 5. Use of abbreviations**
- 6. Use of punctuation**

E. Gathering the news

- 1. Eyewitness reporting**
- 2. Printed or written sources**

3. Interviews

- a. Interview techniques**
- b. Types of interviews**
- c. Errors to avoid in doing interviews**
- d. Organizing information**

F. Writing leads

- 1. Summary leads**
- 2. Feature leads**

G. Straight news writing

- 1. Inverted pyramid style**
- 2. Organizing elements of news**
- 3. Types of news coverage**
 - a. Covering the present**
 - b. Writing advance stories**
 - c. Writing follow-up stories**
 - d. Handling rewrites**

H. Feature writing

- 1. Purpose of features**
- 2. Characteristics of features**
- 3. Organization of features**
- 4. Types of features**

I. Editorial writing

- 1. Purpose of editorials**
- 2. Characteristics of editorials**
- 3. Types of editorials**

J. Sports writing

- 1. Purpose of sports stories**
- 2. Characteristics of sports stories**
- 3. Organization of sports stories**
- 4. Types of sports stories**

K. Special columns

- 1. Characteristics**
- 2. Organizations**
- 3. Purpose**
- 4. Types**
 - a. Syndicated column**
 - b. Exclusive column**

L. Magazine journalism

- 1. Audience demographics**
- 2. Investigative journalism**
- 3. Research methods in journalism**

M. Broadcast journalism

- 1. History of electronic journalism**
- 2. Impact on news**
- 3. Writing a radio newscast**
- 4. Vocal performance of radio newscast**

N. Social responsibility of journalists

- 1. Pressures of social responsibility**
- 2. Meaning of the first amendment**
- 3. Legal restraints**
- 4. Libel and slander**
- 5. Responsibility of school journalists**
- 6. Landmark cases in journalism**

VII. COURSE FORMAT

The following instructional strategies may be used in the teaching of this course: lecture, mini-lecture, small-group collaboration, discussion, problem-based research, and technology-based learning.

VIII. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students will be expected to complete all reading, writing, grammar, and speaking assignments and fulfill all tasks for daily homework. All will be expected to contribute to discussions and in-class activities as well as individual and group presentations. Some cooperative learning experiences, individual projects, and research work will also be expected.

IX. GRADES

Final course grades may include the following forms of assessment: daily work, class participation, quizzes, exams, projects, essays/compositions, oral presentations, technology-based presentations, portfolios, semester final exams, and alternative assessments as determined by individual instructors.

X. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Composition in journalistic style

- 1. The student will be able to write articles for publication following journalistic style.**
- 2. The student will be able to identify appropriate topics for possible publication in relationship to the date of publication.**
- 3. The student will be able to conduct detailed and various types of interviews as related to the topic of the article being written.**
- 4. The student will be able to write a straight news story using appropriate lead and transitional devices within the article.**
- 5. The student will be able to write a feature story using specific wording and quotations appropriate to the topic.**
- 6. The student will be able to write a sports story that is timely and informative but which does not rely on jargon or cliché phrases.**
- 7. The student will be able to write an editorial that is persuasive and factual.**
- 8. The student will be able to write a special column requiring specific information for a movie review of "Newsies," a CD review, or a sports column.**
- 9. The student will be able to research, collect notes, and write an outline for a term paper, which will include internal citations and a works cited page.**

B. Grammar in journalistic style

- 1. The student will be able to use punctuation correctly in journalistic style.**
- 2. The student will be able to use capitalization correctly in journalistic style.**

3. **The student will be able to write sentences with subject and verb agreement.**
4. **The student will be able to write sentences with pronoun-antecedent agreement.**
5. **The student will be able to write sentences using adjectives and adverbs correctly in comparisons.**
6. **The student will be able to write sentences using correct pronoun case.**
7. **The student will be able to distinguish between active and passive voice.**
 - a. **The student will be able to use active voice correctly in his/her journalistic writing.**
 - b. **The student will be able to use passive voice correctly in journalistic style.**
8. **The student will be able to vary the sentence pattern.**
9. **The student will be able to express parallel ideas by using parallel construction.**
10. **The student will be able to understand and define words from vocabulary lists/texts.**
11. **The student will be able to understand the importance of correct spelling in all written work.**

C. Journalistic writing and research goals

1. **The student will be able to identify his/her purpose when he/she writes.**
2. **The student will be able to restrict a topic.**
3. **The student will be able to adapt an appropriate tone in his/her writing.**
4. **The student will be able to adapt his/her writing to a particular audience.**
5. **The student will be able to use the appropriate diction for his/her topic.**
6. **The student will be able to write employing transitional devices.**
7. **The student will be able to vary the sentence structure of his/her writing.**
8. **The student will be able to write adequately developing ideas with specific details.**
9. **The student will be able to write using specific/concise wording.**
10. **The student will be able to write one or more paragraphs emphasizing paraphrasing and direct quotation skills.**

