WRITING FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA
BC 111-01 | SPRING 2018 | 10:30 MW | 275 MCC
Bradley Weaver, Westminster College, M.S. Journalism & M.Ed., Broadcast Journalist Since 1985
308 TCH | Office/Newsroom Hours F 1:30-3:30 PM
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Final Exam Period: Monday, May 7, 8:00-10:30 AM

Course description (from the Westminster College Catalog, 4 hr.)—This class introduces students to the fundamental techniques for broadcast news writing. Students gain skills and experiences in interviewing, writing and editing news in multiple electronic formats.

Required course text, supplies, etc.
- Quality headphones for reviewing audio and video materials during class. Bring headphones with you to each class. I encourage you to use headphones and not earbuds. Access to a smartphone or other digital device and microphone that will allow you to record interviews and natural sound in the field.
- MS Office- You can download MS Office for free through LIS. You will use MS Word for all documents in this class.
- The NPR One App, installed on your smartphone. You should develop a routine of listening to a couple of hourly newscasts throughout the day to help you develop an understanding of current events and to start analyzing how broadcast news is written.
- Twitter account

Attendance policy- Missing class is your responsibility as a professional to manage. Miss five classes and you automatically fail the course.
- If you're sick and miss a quiz, you still get a zero.
- If you're out for a field trip or athletic competition, you get a zero. There are never any makeup quizzes.
- If you miss a class, never ask me what you missed or for assignment details. Don't ask me to review what we covered. If you do, I will deduct five points from your final grade. Do not seek me out to arrange makeup assignments or quizzes or in-class assignments.
  o You're responsible for all notes and acquiring materials, handouts, and anything you miss from a class. You must make arrangements with your peers, not me. You should never involve me in these arrangements or discussions.

News Awareness and Current Event Literacy - You are required to engage daily with the news. You are to watch, listen, read, and review international, national, local, and campus news. This includes items from pop culture and sports. You must remain engaged and interface with established news sources from multiple platforms and develop an understanding of what's happening in the world around you.

Working with Disability Services- Students requiring adaptations and accommodations in the class to meet course requirements should contact me by January 31, 2017. Please see me by that date so we can make any arrangements. Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should call the Disability Resources Office at 724-946-7192.

Communication- Email is a requirement for this class. You must review and reflect on my emails daily if not more often and respond accordingly. This is how I communicate with you and the REQUIRED method approved by the College. You should have your email interfaced with your smartphone so you can receive and respond to emails from me in a timely manner. Your Westminster account will serve you well. You will also need to consult with D2L (that means at least daily) for access to information, guides, templates, examples, graded assignments, etc. You may also text me or reach out through Facebook messenger.
Participation and professionalism
This is 10 percent of your final grade. I assess this on classroom observations and our interactions. I will assign points based on each of the categories listed with the appropriate point value to describe your professionalism and participation.

1 point: I am disappointed that I can point to multiple examples where you disappointed me as a professional. I could not offer a recommendation on your behalf as the negatives I would share outweigh the positives. Your habits, behavior, and conducted created hassles and hurdles for me and your peers.

2 points: I can identify examples where you disappointed me and failed to demonstrate professionalism as mapped out for this course. You have offered excuses and agreed to address issues. However, you continued to fall short of professional conduct. I would have serious doubts about offering any kind of reference for you.

3 points: You had some issues with professionalism and participation, but offered sincere apologies. You addressed the issues and demonstrated a higher level of professionalism as the semester progressed. I would be willing to discuss how I could serve as a reference.

4 points: You are an exemplary student and meet the criteria mapped out in the syllabus. I would actively advocate for you in the job market and beyond.

Attendance & promptness. For every three occasions you’re late for class, I will deduct five points from your final grade. This goes beyond the participation and professionalism score.

Demonstrate sincere effort to engage in current events, news awareness, and news literacy. You clearly are aware of current events from across the globe, nationally and regionally, locally, and on campus. You can critically assess the value of news coverage and have a savviness about current events.

You remained engaged and attentive in notetaking, class discussions, presentations, etc. You never fell asleep and had an enthusiasm in the class.

You demonstrated you were prepared and well-read before class. Your assignments were submitted well before the deadline and you clearly did the work to foster your learning and experience in the course. You take an active role in your learning and progress.

Taking accurate, meaningful notes, I may request to review your notes for quiz points. You never know when this will happen. Failing to have updated, legible, meaningful notes will cost you quiz points.

Manage your distractions. This relates to your phones, laptops, computers, or chatting with your peers. Remain focused on what’s happening in class. Put that phone away. Avoid situations where I must call your attention to discussions or class activities.

Dress appropriately for class and your fieldwork as reporters. You are representing our newsroom. Our classroom is an extension of the newsroom. Our student journalists and staffers are expected to dress appropriately for their stories, interviews, and scheduled duties.

Mastering and managing tools for our newsroom and class including D2L, MS Word, Twitter, audio production tools and techniques, naming and saving files, etc. Troubleshooting and problem-solving issues on your own with these items on your own is paramount.

Possible points 32/32

Grade Appeals
If you require assistance with understanding grades and grading protocols, you can alert me and I can address the issue immediately. I may enter the incorrect score in the D2L grade book or I may miscalculate a score on a writing assignment or exam. Please tell me so I can address the issue promptly. If you want to dispute a grade, you must offer a written appeal within two business days from receiving the grade. I have adopted this policy from Dr. Keith Corso as a way of fostering thoughtful and informed appeals through a focused, informed, rational argument.

All appeals should include the following:
- A paragraph detailing what you are appealing.
- Why it should be changed.
- To what it should be changed.
- Evidence to support the request. For the why section above never include something like, “I worked really hard” or “I really need a B- in this class for my scholarships.” These just aren’t good “why” statements.
- You should email the document to me attached to an email with your last name, class code, and Assignment Appeal in the subject line (Weaver, BC 111, Assignment Appeal).
**Smartphone/Technology Policy** - You will be writing news scripts in class on the Macs. However, you can’t go off surfing the web, watching YouTube videos, checking scores on ESPN, etc. The same applies to your cell phones off and put away during class. No texting during class. Turn it off or put it in airplane mode and put it away unless I ask you to use it in class.

**Meeting and beating deadlines** - Course assignments and projects have hard deadlines. If you miss any deadline, I will score your assignment with a zero. No exceptions.

Deadlines and best practices are REQUIRED in BC 111. I use these benchmarks in all my courses. **Any individual assignment or project that misses a deadline scores a zero.** You still must complete the assignment. The score will remain zero, but the feedback is important for your learning. **Any incomplete assignment that you fail to submit within 10 business days of the original deadline will result in an automatic “F” for the course.**

**Academic Integrity Requirement** (CODE OF ETHICAL, PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR) - It is your responsibility to be familiar with Westminster’s academic integrity policies in the Student Handbook. All your work must be genuine, original and properly credited. This means that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students who I determine are engaged in academic dishonesty will fail this class. For scholars, researchers, and professionals in media and communications it is paramount to foster a reputation above reproach when it comes to fairness, honesty, and integrity. This ethical reputation is the foundation of credibility in the field, and students in this class must meet the highest ethical standards. If you engage in academic dishonesty, misrepresent yourself or situations, falsify or fabricate information, you will receive an “F” for the course. The matter will be sent to the Academic Dean’s office for further action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting interviews, video, audio, air checks, live reports, etc.
- Misrepresentation of audio, video or printed materials. Often students will attempt to double-dip, or use work created and submitted in other courses. This is dishonest. You will fail the class if you submit work previously created for another project or class. Additionally, passing off work you have created for this course to another course is also cheating and will result in a report from me to the instructor, the Division Chair, and Academic Dean.
- Violating LIS equipment policies by using deception or misrepresentation; abuse or neglect of equipment; theft or other breaches that impede other student work or access to equipment.
- Failure to credit cast and crew for work and assistance of audio and video projects.
- Failure to cite/credit original sources in written works or in presentations
- Plagiarism or copyright infringement/violation.
- Collusion with others to mislead, misrepresent, or deceive the instructor.
- Providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or extension on assignments and deadlines.
- Any act designed to give an unfair advantage to any student or the attempt to commit such acts.

**Equipment use policy** - You will need access to a smart device that will interface with a microphone that will allow you to gather sound and interviews in the field. You may rent equipment for free from LIS. You are required to become informed about the policies and protocols for checking out and using equipment from LIS and Broadcasting program by Jan. 31, 2017. If you’re unfamiliar with the policies, you must visit LIS and schedule an appointment to review LIS policies and forms on MyWestminster with one of the LIS staffers.
Course outcomes - By the end of this course you will be able to:
✓ Write new stories under deadline.
✓ Write useable scripts and copy for Titan Radio News, Westminster Cable, and WCN24/7.
✓ Demonstrate an understanding of target audiences and demographics.
✓ Utilize the basic script formats, mechanics, and styles for writing stories in electronic newsrooms.
✓ Analyze story ideas, content and news items for newsworthiness criteria used by journalists and news organizations.
✓ Gather, process and assemble information as news stories in proper broadcast script formats.
✓ Analyze stories and news coverage for ethical issues.
✓ Apply key issues of libel, privacy, Pennsylvania’s wiretapping law, and copyright.
✓ Analyze electronic messages and content from a media-savvy position of one who produces content.

These outcomes are measured by assignments, exams, course projects, and active classroom participation.

Program Outcomes - The BC 111 course outcomes extend from the following Broadcasting and Media Production program outcomes:
✓ Utilize polished skills in writing for electronic media, interviewing, and digital media production that meet best practices established by the industry. Assessment: Script writing and editing assignments, script analysis and long format reporting project.
✓ Understand, integrate and appraise the ethical frameworks and legal issues for media professionals. Assessment: Script writing, script analysis, and course projects.
✓ Create and produce independently, and with others, original media content on digital and high definition platforms under hard deadlines serving the community with programming, information and entertainment. Assessment: Script writing for Titan Radio, WCN & wcn247.com along with long format reporting project.
✓ Utilize the language, aesthetic qualities, production values and media literacy skills to create a capstone project for critical review and portfolio development. Assessment: Script writing, script analysis & long format reporting project.
✓ Understand and utilize current technologies, techniques, theories, and best practices in both the production of media content and the critical review of it. Assessment: Script writing, script analysis, and long format reporting project.

Grading scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>94-93</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>70-73</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Assessment & grading criteria

Quizzes: We will have several quizzes to assess your knowledge about current events, class discussion, required readings, video assignments, writing style and mechanics, etc. You may use your book and your notes for quizzes, but not your phones or the computers. Your notes must be in hard copy format. Googling for the answer to a quiz question is prohibited. Be aware that I will sometime derive quiz points from a review of your notes from class, etc.

Assignments:
In-class and out-of-class writing assignments, homework assignments, newscast producing & anchoring, etc.

Exams: Open-book and open-note.

Reporting Projects:
- The interview podcast (long-format interview)
- Alumni or Faculty Spotlight (NPR-style radio wrap)

Participation & Professionalism
Possible Score 100

Assessment of scripts - You will write copy for electronic media geared toward the target audiences for Titan Radio and our television news magazine, as well as wcn247.com. Proper grammar is required. Proper spelling is required. You will lose five points on a script for each spelling error, grammar mistake and any failure to format and rules under the BC writing style.

As broadcast style rules and elements are presented in class, you are asked to integrate it into your writing. Your assignments will be graded accordingly. All news copy must include proper attribution and provide the key information of who, what, why, when, where, and how.

We will also be writing copy that fits time constraints. Failure to write copy that fits the time limitations can cause problems on the air. Failure to write scripts to match time restrictions will impact the score of the script.

Accuracy is paramount. Factual errors will open the door to lawsuits. Any script with factual errors will automatically score zero.

I will always deduct 5 points for each failure to incorporate broadcast style & script mechanics; grammar issues; missing key information; weak leads sentences; lacks proper attribution; script mechanic or format errors.

Assignments that can receive an A grade must be free of errors, follow proper broadcast style and format, include necessary facts and information and be properly attributed. The bottom line on getting an A grade on a script involves turning in copy that requires no editing/correction.

To qualify for a B on an assignment, your writing would require only minor editing/corrections. It is correct with style and formatting.

Scripts that require significant editing because of content, grammar or style or format mistakes, will fall into the C category.

Any scripts that bury the lead, fail to answer all the news questions, have significant style, lack of attribution, format errors, etc., would clearly fall below the average standard result in the fact that serious editing and significant rewriting would be required.

Managing your documents and files -- Naming, saving & submitting written assignments -- Writing scripts, proposals, treatments, reflections and other documents require good grammar and spelling practices. You will also apply best naming practices for such documents for sharing with the instructor via email or D2L. To make sure your work is graded in a timely manner, you must submit scripts electronically as instructed. I only accept MS Word document files with names that include the assignment slug and your last name. Failure to name assignment documents properly will result in a 0 score for that script. Examples of proper script labeling:

✓ EscapedOstrichesScript_Haybarger.doc
✓ WitchesNightOutANCHORINTRO_Haybarger.doc
✓ JamesonHospitalMergerPACKAGEscript_Haybarger.doc
✓ DancingWithMyDreamTREATMENT_Haybarger.doc
✓ CapstoneReflection_Haybarger.doc

If you’re submitting audio or video files, apply the same protocol with the format the instructor will identify at the time of the assignment.

✓ EscapedOstrichBite_Haybarger.MP3
✓ WitchesNightOutPackage_Haybarger.MP4
✓ JamesonHospitalMerger_Haybarger.MP2
✓ DancingWithMyDream_Haybarger.wav
✓ VideoPodcastCapstoneReflection_Haybarger.mov