Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce students to the basics of news reporting and the journalistic style of writing through reading assignments, lectures, and newswriting assignments. We will discuss the newsgathering process, the elements of a news story, the various types of news stories, issues surrounding the law and ethics, as well as writing for broadcast news and public relations.

Course Objectives:
1. To improve your ability to write in a clear and concise manner
2. To learn the principles and skills of gathering, organizing, and writing for the media industry with particular emphasis on print journalism and the news
3. To examine and critique the media’s role and impact in our lives
4. To develop analytical skills for understanding the news industry
5. To develop an awareness of the importance of ethics and professionalism in journalism

Required Textbooks & Materials:

*The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.* 2017 version
(or) The Associated Press Stylebook app available through the iTunes Store or Google Play Store

Optional materials: a reporter’s notebook & USB drive or google doc, etc. to store your work.

Class Policies:
1. **Attendance is required!** You must attend class and actively participate in order to achieve the goals of this course. This class meets three days per week, so you may only miss three classes without penalty. You will lose 50 points for each additional absence. If you have an emergency situation, and will be missing class, please notify me as soon as possible. **If you are frequently late for class you will be warned and continuing to arrive late will result in a loss of points. If you are frequently sleeping or texting in class, you will be marked absent.**

2. **Absences during exams/quizzes:** The only absences that will be considered excused are a death in the family, severe documentable personal illness, and participation in a college sponsored activity (e.g., intercollegiate activities or sports). **Whenever possible, please notify me in advance if you will need to miss class during an exam or presentation.** You must contact me prior to or within 24 hours of the missed class. If you (or someone acting on your behalf) fail to notify me within 24 hours of the missed class you will not be allowed to make up the missed exam. **In-class activities and quizzes cannot be completed as make-up work. If you are not present you will not earn the points associated with the activity/quiz.**
3. **The best way to contact me is via email.** However, please be aware that I may not be able to respond immediately to emails sent later in the day (typically after 4 p.m.) or on weekends, but I will get back to you as quickly as possible. During my office hours, I will also try to be available via D2L’s chat feature. If you have a simple question, you may want to try this option for a quick response.

4. **Cell Phones & Computers:** As a matter of courtesy, please turn your cell phone ringer off when you enter the classroom. Please refrain from texting during class; it is disruptive. **Students who are texting in class will be marked absent.** I reserve the right to prohibit a student from using a mobile device or computer during class if I feel the student is using it for other purposes, or if I think its use is disruptive in any way.

5. **Reading Assignments & Lecture Notes:** You are expected to complete all reading assignments before coming to class. Some chapters will have additional handout and/or lecture notes available on D2L. I will spend a limited amount of class time lecturing about the chapter. Even though I may not cover all of the information discussed in an assigned reading, I am always willing to answer questions about your readings. You need to be familiar with the material in your text whether or not it is discussed in class. Class periods will primarily consist of activities based on the day’s reading and coming to class unprepared will inhibit participation.

6. **Written assignments:** Unless otherwise noted, your work should be **typed, doubled-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font.** Please follow the format discussed in class when submitting your assignments. Your work communicates something about you and your level of professionalism. **Be sure to proofread your papers for typos and grammatical errors.** If you have questions about the requirements for an assignment, please contact me.

7. **Submitting Assignments:** The news industry is a fast-paced, deadline-driven industry. If you don’t complete a story by your deadline, it could cost you your job. **Late work will NOT be accepted, unless you have spoken to me prior to the deadline, and I have granted you an extension.** Unless otherwise noted, the start of class will be the deadline for your assignment. Be sure to allow enough time to print your papers if a hard copy is required for submission. Some assignments may require you to submit your work online. Do not wait until the last minute to submit assignments online—D2L will close assignments automatically and may not accept them. Assignments that do not adhere to the assignment guidelines given in class may receive a zero. If you have questions about the proper format for an assignment, please feel free to contact me for additional instructions.

8. **Revising Assignments:** Assignments that were submitted on-time and earn less that a C- may be revised and resubmitted. If your assignment qualifies for revision, it will be noted in your assignment feedback. Typically, revised assignments will be due at start of the next class period.

9. **Academic Integrity:** In accordance with Westminster College’s policy, violations of academic integrity include cheating, misconduct, plagiarism, and providing false information. Please refer to your student handbook for a detailed description of Westminster’s Academic Integrity Policy. **Work that violates the college’s policy will receive a zero and the assignment may be turned over to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for further disciplinary action.** Please remember that violating the Academic Integrity Policy may be grounds for dismissal from the college. If you have questions about properly citing source material or what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me.
10. **Accessibility:** Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who may require additional accommodations for environmental or curricular barriers should contact the Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall, ext. 7192.

10. **Respectful Communication:** As participants in a collegiate learning community, it is important to respect your classmates’ right to express themselves. It is quite possible that you may not agree with every comment or opinion expressed in class. You may not agree with others, but I ask that you are respectful when addressing other people’s comments or opinions. **Scholarly debate can be a valuable educational tool. However, racist, sexist, or other oppressive language will not be tolerated. Students using this type of language may be asked to leave the classroom.** It is important to remember to disagree in a respectful manner and not resort to personal attacks on those who may see things differently and/or have opinions that are different than yours.

11. The information contained in this syllabus is subject to change. If you miss class, you may want to check with a classmate to make sure that there have been no additions/subtractions to the course/

**Assignments/Evaluations:**
Late work will not be accepted. More detailed assignment information and guidelines will be provided for each assignment during the semester.

1. **Quizzes.** Journalists make their living with words. They must be familiar with the rules of grammar and must follow AP style. In addition to course content you will be quizzed on grammar and AP style. You are permitted to use your style book on the quizzes.

2. **Current Events.** Reading news is one of the best ways you can become familiar with news writing. We will discuss the options for current event assignments. Your class will choose one of the two option presented. More information will be provided in class and on D2L.

3. **Homework/Class Activities** are comprised of brief exercises designed to reinforce some of the concepts or skills we discussed in class. Assignment point values and deadlines will vary.

   In addition to the minor assignments, which will mainly be completed in class or as homework, there will be a few more substantial writing assignments. Assignment point values and deadlines will vary. More information will be provided in class and on D2L.

4. **Major Story Assignments.** You will be responsible for pitching stories, covering events on and off campus on a rotating basis, and helping your classmates by serving as copy editors. In the past, students in Journalism I have written for *WCN 24/7*, Westminster’s online news site. These stories will be written under a tight deadline; in most cases, they will need to be posted within 48 hours of covering the event, etc.

   I will meet with each of you following the submission of your first story to provide extensive feedback. I find this helps students because, for many of you, this will be the first time you’ve written in AP Style. Your two best stories will count toward your final grade.
Grading Criteria:

A  The work is outstanding. The story would be publishable with little or no editing.

B  The work is very good. Minor editing and/or revisions would be necessary before publishing.

C  The work is judged to be “average.” Parts of the story may need rewritten and/or may require a fair amount of editing before it can be published.

D  The work is poor. Stories earning a D may contain factual errors, structural problems, and writing deficiencies. Stories are unable to be published without significant editing/revisions.

F  The work is unacceptable. Stories are not publishable and would need to be completely rewritten and undergo substantial editing.

Assignment Point Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP Style &amp; Grammar Quizzes (4 x 25)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Events (10 weeks x 10 pts)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework/Class Activities</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Stories (3 total; 2 x 50 pts)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCN Pitches/Copy Editing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Available Points</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Evaluation: Points to arrive at a final grade.

A: 600-558  B+: 539.9-522  C+: 479.9-462  D+: 419.9-402  F: Less than 360
A-: 557.9-540  B: 521.9-498  C: 461.9-444  D: 401.9-384
B-: 497.9-480  C-: 443.9-420  D-: 383.9-360

If you have any questions or concerns about this course or a particular assignment, please contact me.