There are two very basic goals to this course:

1) For students to write effective broadcast news copy, and;
2) For students to write effective radio and television commercials.

That’s it. This course will spend the next 15 weeks detailing how exactly that is done. Broadcast writing is a bit different than traditional academic writing. It is written for both the person reading the story and for those who will listen to it. Sentences are usually more informal and should always strive to be conversational in quality (that is they should sound when read out loud as if someone were actually speaking normally). All this aside, broadcast writing still needs to be grammatically correct.

By the time this semester is over not only should you be writing effective news and commercial copy, but you should be comfortable doing it as well.

Approach to Learning:

There are two things that I as a teacher am concerned about with this class. The first is that you learn the content of the class and the second is that you develop as a learner (develop learning and critical thinking skills). All too often college classes focus on dumping loads of content into your brain much like we load information onto the hard drive of the computer.

Yes, this class does focus on content. But what is just as important to me is that this class in some manner contributes to your development as a learner. Here is how the typical college class works. You get a book and you read it (hopefully). You go to class and the teacher lectures on the material or hold some lecture that masquerades as a class discussion. You are told what to know, when to know it and how much of it to know. You take a test or write a paper and then move on to the next piece of material. This method of instruction creates the impression that when you enter the “real” world, everything you need to know to complete your job successfully will be supplied to you. Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

It is very typical that in a job you are given a task or problem to solve. Part of this responsibility is to seek and find the information you need to successfully complete the task. You have to take
the responsibility to teach yourself what you don’t know and then often teach it to others. No one is there to give you all the information you need. What many people lack today are the skills to find information and to critically apply it to the task at hand.

In order to build your skills as a learner, you will be given the responsibility to maintain certain important pieces of information in this class. You will not be given constant reminders of what is due and when it is due. You will be given guidelines and due dates but you will not be monitored every step of the way. If you have issues or are having difficulty adjusting to this methodology or instruction, then help is only an office visit, phone call, or email away. If you are encountering difficulties, you need to take the initiative to see me. Please do not mistake this approach of mine as indifference to your overall level of success in this course. It is quite the opposite. I want you to succeed in this class and I want you to succeed outside of this class and that is why I employ this approach.

Course Materials:


Instructional Method:

Traditional lecture based classrooms don’t help promote good learning behaviors and therefore I try to avoid lecturing like the plague. Sitting in a lecture and “soaking” up the material helps create a passive learner and that is the opposite of what I want to promote. There may be some short periods where I share some information, but I don’t anticipate that those moments will last more than 10 minutes.

In this class we will do a lot of in-class, writing. As a matter of fact, there will be very little writing that you will have to do outside of class. Most of your outside work will be reading the textbook and preparing some work to bring to class. The goals by the end of the newswriting section will for you to be comfortable with writing news, but also writing it under a deadline. So be prepared to write, write and write some more while in this class.

At the end of every class session you will be asked to write a one-minute paper to hand into me. This paper allows you to pose questions about the material, let me know something was unclear, comment about the exercises we used, or anything else that comes to mind. The one-minute paper brings to my attention issues that you may have in understanding material or why we are doing things in a certain way.

I reserve the right to change or modify this methodology to serve whatever instructional need may arise.

Participation and Attendance:

You receive a grade for this part of your final grade. It’s only 10 percent but that can make the difference between an C+ or a B- or even a B, so read the following carefully. Your participation grade depends exclusively on how many classes you attend. For the sake of clarification, you are considered absent if you are more than 10 minutes late for class (that means later or leaving early.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B- (plus a one-step deduction in final grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C (two-step deduction in final grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>D (three step deduction in final grade-full letter grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or more</td>
<td>F (Plus continued one step reductions for each unexcused absence)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is an unexcused absence?

- Missing a total of 10 minutes or more of class
- Not showing up at all
- Being sick in your room (doctors excuses don’t mean anything in this class)
- Anytime you miss class without a prior excuse.

You are granted release time in this class. This means if you need to attend an event such as a sports activity or field trip as part of another class, this will not be counted against you as long as you let me know. The key here is that you need to let me know…a note from the coach or teacher isn’t my notification, you are.

How does attendance impact the grading of your assignments?

Most of your writing assignments are due in class. If an assignment is due on a day where you take an unexcused absence, you can’t get credit for that assignment. This is the broadcast news industry, if you are present, you can’t do the work expected of you.

Any assignment due on a day you have a pre-approval from me, you will be given the chance to make it up.

Assignments:

Listed below are the assignments that will be a part of this class. The class schedule at the end of the syllabus will indicate the due dates of these assignments.

Writing Assignments. These can be either completed in-class or out of class. Not all in class assignments carry a grade, some are just done for practice. I will let you know which ones count toward your grade. These need to be completed the day they are assigned for you to be a grade other than a zero.

Lab Assignment: All students in this class must complete one in-station lab per week beginning with Week Three of the semester and ending with the last full week of classes. At least one story must be written during this time but the producer of the newscast is under no obligation to use it if they feel it needs improvement. Students are expected to keep copies of all stories in a portfolio and should be able to hand this to me at any time I might request. The portfolio needs to be up to date. Any stories missing will result in 5 point in the final grade assigned to the Writing Assignments section stated above.
Midterm Exam of News Writing. This is a very comprehensive exam of news writing in this class. The entire exam takes a week to complete in class. Make sure you are in class for this. 

There are no make ups for this exam

Final Commercial Project. This project is due during the final period for this class. For this project you will pick a client and write a 30 and 60 second radio commercial for them. In addition, you will write a 30 second storyboarded TV commercial and a 15 second scripted TV commercial.

Grading:

The grade for this class will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing assignments</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final commercial project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your grade will result in percentage that will be translated into a letter grade. The following details how the letter grades are assigned.

93-100 A  
84-86 B  
74-76 C  
64-66 D

90-92 A-  
81-83 B-  
71-73 C-  
61-63 D-

87-89 B+  
77-80 C+  
67-70 D+  
60 or below F

Academic Integrity:

Page 22 of your student handbook states:

Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster Community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the College.

The most flagrant violation of academic integrity is cheating on an exam or a quiz. Students caught participating in such an activity (either for their own or for another's benefit) will receive a course grade of "F," with no opportunity for the student to receive a "W" or "WF."

Other forms of scholastic dishonesty will be dealt with in a like manner. These may include (but are not limited to):

A. Copying/turning in another's work (e.g., a fellow student's, a past student’s, or work from the internet) as one's own.
B. Lending of one's work to another so that he/she may turn it in as his/her own.

C. Stealing class materials from students, the professor, or from the library.

D. Inhibiting another student from using library materials or other resources necessary for the class.

*NOTE: See your Student Handbook, pp. 22-24 for more exhaustive explanations of Academic Integrity.

For this class, your take home tests must be typed and submitted through Turnitin.com. This is a web based application used throughout the college to assist students in completing original work. Instruction on how to set up an account and submit the tests will be discussed in class.

**Tentative Class Schedule:**

Note that this schedule does not in any way represent a contract. It is fully up to my discretion to change this schedule to meet the needs of the course goals and other practical matters.

There is no set daily schedule in this class. We cover material in this class as I see fit according to the progress of the students in the class. There are, however, some key dates to keep in mind with regard to your midterm and final project.

Midterm Exam: This will be conducted the week of March 27th (March 27th, 29th, and 31st)

Final Project: Is due Thursday, May 11th, 8-10:30 am