

COURSE SYLLABUS



Reporting I

Course code: JRN 200

Semester and year: Fall 2018

Day and time: Wednesday 18:30-21:15

Instructor: Michael Kahn

Instructor contact: Michael.kahn@aauni.edu, (420) 724 706 501

Consultation hours: One hour before class or by appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Intermediate
Length	14 weeks	Pre-requisite	TOEFL iBT 71
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	HSC el, PS el, JC Required, CEA

1. Course Description

Journalism is in the throes of massive changes, as information delivery systems continue to evolve and influence the speed, format and content of news coverage. Several elements are necessary to thrive and be successful in this environment. One is a mastery of core journalism skills – knowing how to develop, report and write stories that are accurate, balanced and informative. Another is presentation, knowing how to package and disseminate information across a variety of media platforms. The third is an awareness of the dynamic forces shaping journalism in the 21st century, not only in technology, but in critical areas such as freedom of the press, transparency, privacy and ethics. Students will receive instruction in all these areas, and demonstrate the skills they acquire in the online and print editions of the student publication *Lennon Wall*. Throughout the course, special emphasis will be devoted to grammar, spelling and other fundamentals of communicating clearly and effectively in written English.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Research, report and write a variety of stories in clear, standard English
- Apply the additional skills necessary to work as professional journalists
- Critically evaluate print and electronic news media
- Conduct interviews and do reporting
- Contribute to the student publication *Lennon Wall*
- Write better than they did at the start of the course

3. Reading Material

Required Materials

- Textbooks:

Bender, John R., Davenport, Lucinda, Drager, Michael W. and Fedler, Fred. (2015) *Reporting for the Media*. Harcourt College

O'Donnell, Michael and Ryan, Buck. (2001) *The Editor's Toolbox: A Reference Guide for Beginners and Professionals*. Iowa State University Press

The Missouri Group. (2014) *News Reporting and Writing*. Bedford/St. Martin's

Recommended Materials

1. A variety of topical articles distributed during the semester
2. Other books and resource materials:

Goldstein, Norm: *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, Perseus Books Group, 2004

Machin, Anne Marie and Ward, Russ. (2001) *Tools of the Writing Trade: Crafting Thoughtful Paragraphs and Essays*. Harcourt College Publishers

Murray, Donald M. (2000) *Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work*. Heinemann Publishing

Ramsey, Janet E., Smith, Ronald D. and Whitaker, Richard W. (2000) *Media Writing: Print, Broadcast and Public Relations*. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers

Scanlan, Christopher, ed. (2000 – 2015) *Best Newspaper Writing*. The Poynter Institute and Bonus Books, Inc.

4. Teaching Methodology

A combination of reading, lectures, discussion, interactive analysis and critiques, and writing assignments. The class will also include field trips and guest speakers. Each student will be required to write a minimum of four articles for publication in the school newspaper, and to work as a member of the publishing team by doing ancillary work in editing, photography, advertising, promotion or other support activities. A longer writing assignment utilizing the methods and models taught in class will comprise the final exam.

Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis. Each class will begin with a quiz about the reading material.

Lectures will focus on the mechanics of journalism: generating story ideas, doing accurate and thorough reporting, how to structure and develop a story, writing effectively in different formats and genres (news, features), and fundamentals of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Readings will include story samples that will be discussed in class, with students encouraged and expected to evaluate content and structure, identify strengths and weaknesses, and assess the stories' impact in a publishing context. As the semester progresses, reading samples will include the students' own work, considered in a positive atmosphere to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Every class may also include a full-group discussion and update on the school newspaper: status reports from individual students on the progress of their stories, with the instructor and classmates providing support and suggestions when necessary; updates from section editors and department heads about their progress, problems and needs; photography and

graphics planning; and continuing discussions about story ideas and assignments to keep up with current events both in and outside of AAU.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
09/05/18	Topic: Introduction Description: Course overview, methodology, goals and expectations Reading: N/A Assignments/deadlines: In Class writing
09/12/18	Topic: Fundamentals of good writing Description: Writing tips and strategies to produce clear copy Reading: Assigned chapters from textbooks Assignments/deadlines: In class writing
09/19/18	Topic: Where to find and how to pitch stories Description: Publishing specs, story evaluation and assignments Reading: Assigned chapters from textbooks, handouts Assignments/deadlines: Generating story ideas
09/26/18	Topic: Writing effective news stories Description: Requirements, techniques, research and interviews Reading: Assigned textbook chapters, handouts Assignments/deadlines: Continued work on assigned stories
10/03/18	Topic: Interviewing Description: Getting the best out of an interview Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: Find an interview subject
10/10/18	Topic: Conducting successful interviews Description: Interviewing techniques, proper use of quotes Reading: Assigned textbook chapters Assignments/deadlines: Researching and writing assigned opinion piece
10/17/18	Topic: Mid-term exam Description: Reading: Assignments/deadlines:
10/24/18	Midterm break
10/31/18	Topic: Writing Feature stories Description: Different kinds of features and introduction Reading: Assigned textbook chapters Assignments/deadlines: Generating feature stories
11/07/18	Topic: Headline Writing Description: How to grab the reader's attention Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: First draft of feature stories
11/14/18	Topic: Preparing for publication Description: Final group planning for final stories, individual consultation Reading: None Assignments/deadlines: Final stories, art, other publishing materials
11/21/18	Topic: A&E: Writing previews and reviews Description: Study and discussion of models and techniques Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: Final story proposals
11/28/18	Topic: Social media Description: How journalists can use/abuse social media

	<p>Reading: Assigned online sites and publications</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Reporting on assigned arts stories</p>
12/05/18	<p>Topic: Food and travel writing</p> <p>Description: Study of techniques and models</p> <p>Reading: Assigned handouts</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Finish arts stories</p>
12/12/18	<p>Topic: Lennon Wall evaluation/Final Exam</p> <p>Description: Discussion/critique of publication</p> <p>Reading: Assigned handouts</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: N/A</p>

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade %	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	30	Active involvement in class discussions and dependable participation in the team effort of planning and publishing the school newspaper is critical to learning the material and completing course requirements. Final grades will be adjusted based on students' preparation, attendance and participation.	1, 2, 3
Stories/in-class writing	60	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demonstrated knowledge of how to report, structure and write various types of newspaper stories. • A demonstrated knowledge of fundamentals and improvements in writing skills, reporting abilities, generating ideas and applying creative problem-solving skills. 	2, 3
Quizzes	30	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading material. • Critical reading and evaluation skills. 	1, 3
Work on <i>LW</i>	18	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published stories in both the online and print versions of <i>Lennon Wall</i>. • Active participation in assigned support roles (e.g., photography, advertising) • A demonstrated ability to meet deadlines. 	3
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Participation

Active involvement in discussions of assigned textbook and supplementary readings; constructive critical assessment of assigned readings, in particular student work; contributions to newspaper planning, in particular story ideas, social media, promotion and other community outreach.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Discussing and analyzing the assigned reading material.	50
Offering thoughtful critiques of both professional and student writing work.	20
Contributing solid story ideas and helpful suggestions to newspaper planning sessions.	30

Stories

Generating story topics that will be of interest to the AAU community; working with the instructor and student editors on story development and revising drafts; meeting all editorial and production deadlines; successfully completing work that reflects class instruction and shows consistent improvement.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Generating interesting story ideas.	10
Collaborating with the instructor and section editors through the reporting and rough draft phases.	10
Turning in completed assignments on deadline.	60
Writing a final story that reflects the reporting and writing methods taught during the semester.	20

Quizzes

Arriving promptly for class and demonstrating detailed familiarity with the assigned homework reading.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading material.	100

Work on LW

Along with contributing a minimum of four stories to the student newspaper, actively participating in planning and strategy sessions; successfully completing assignments in ancillary work (photography, graphics, promotion, production, etc.); participating in group efforts such as circulation and special events.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Participation in group planning activities.	20
Individual performance in ancillary job.	60
Support for other students and group goals.	20

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication. It is strongly recommended that any email communication between students and instructors take place in NEO LMS.

Each e-mail sent to an instructor that is about a new topic (meaning not a reply to an original email) shall have a new and clearly stated subject and shall have the course code in the subject, for example: "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are carried out through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance is required. The university recommends, as a minimal policy, that students who are absent 35 percent of the course should be failed (or administratively withdrawn from the course if the absences are excused).

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should the student be absent from a class for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he needs to submit an Absence Excuse Form supplemented with documents proving the reasons for absence to the Assistant Dean. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if they submit an Absence Excuse Form along with the finalized add/drop form. The form and documents must be submitted within one week of absence. If possible, it is recommended to inform the instructor about the absence in advance.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean are entitled to make up exams they missed provided that the nature of the exam allows for a make-up. The students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week from the date the absence was excused, and for making arrangements with the instructor about make-up options as necessary.

Unexcused absences

Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Absences above this number may result in failure of the course.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Any electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information...). Any other use will result in being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during the tests.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive or other conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment of an institution of learning, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating (e.g. whispering or passing notes) will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misbehavior the student will be expelled from the exam and the exam will be marked as failed.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)
Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

As the minimum policy the types of plagiarism from 1 through 8 results in the failing grade from the assignment and must be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult their papers with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are asked to contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when: Michael Kahn, August 2018

Approved by and when: School of Journalism, August 2018