COMM 104: News Reporting and Writing
Westchester Community College

PROFESSOR Passariello
OFFICE AAB 214
PHONE 914 606 6119
EMAIL Blackboard

OFFICE HOURS
M 12-12:50 and 2-2:50 TEC 13C
T 2-2:50 ONLINE 914-266-0690
W 3-3:50 ONLINE 914-266-0690
R 2-2:50 AAB 211 or TEC 13C

EMAIL: Please use Blackboard for email

TEXT: Telling the Story, The Convergence of Print, Broadcast, and Online Media, 4th ed. Missouri Group

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES:

An introduction to reporting and writing news for all media, including defining what is newsworthy; this is one of two foundational courses for the journalism program (the other being Journalism & Democracy). Students will develop a mastery of the basic elements of newsgathering, interviewing and storytelling skills that conform to standards of clarity, accuracy and fairness. An emphasis is placed on gaining practical experience through reporting on campus and community events. The course includes an immersion in grammar, spelling, and punctuation (GSP). Students must receive a passing grade on the GSP test in order to continue in upper level journalism courses.

This course is designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of news judgment, reporting and writing.

You will also learn about:

- Professional standards and ethics
- Cultural awareness
- Current events and how to keep up with them
- Associated Press style rules
- Using the tools of your trade, including your computer

COURSE OUTLINE:

Part One — Journalism and Journalists
The Nature of News
Redefining News: Citizen Journalism and Convergence

Part Two — Reporting Tools
Interviewing
Gathering and Verifying Information
Reporting with Numbers
Computer Assisted Reporting

Part Three — Storytelling
The Inverted Pyramid
Beyond the Inverted Pyramid
Feature Writing

Part Four — Covering and Writing News
Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings
Other Types of Basic Stories
Beat Reporting

Part Five — Multimedia Writing
Writing News for Multimedia Platforms
Law and Ethics of Journalism

BASIC SCHEDULE: (Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor)
Seeing as we meet two times a week, our general schedule will be as such (subject to change):

Mondays: discuss assigned reading, weekly news writing assignment given
Wednesdays: weekly news writing assignment due, discussion about material/assignments, and quiz on material, assign reading for following week

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in The Viking News for extra credit determined by degree of participation. The Viking News staff meetings are every Wednesday from 11-1 in the newsroom or in the Tec 13 D or E labs. All students from all areas are welcome to participate so bring your friends.

GRADING:
A. Participation (25%): Assessed by your participation in classroom discussions (obviously you must be present to participate so attendance figures in here)

B. Quizzes (25%): There will be one quiz each week on the material (from both the text and lectures)

C. Weekly Writing Assignments (50%): Weekly news writing assignments (must be typed and in Word format)

D. Final Exam Grammar Spelling & Punctuation test--GSP Students are required to pass the GSP in order to pass the class. You will have three chances to pass the GSP

E. Extra Credit (TBD%): Assessed by your participation in The Viking News

LATE/MAKE-UP POLICY:
There is no make-up policy for the quizzes – if you miss them due to absence, they are counted as a zero.
I do not accept late writing assignments. Journalists who file stories late are one thing—FIRED.

CLASS ETIQUETTE:
Please be respectful of your fellow students and the instructor at all times during class; group discussion is encouraged but respect is mandatory. Also, when/if you feel the need to text/message during class using your preferred device, ask yourself if it’s really *that* important. If it is, please step outside to conduct such business. Our class time is limited so I won’t be wasting it asking people to pay attention, but it will certainly be obvious when you’re not. I’ll do my best not to waste your time and ask that you return the courtesy.