

COMM 103 JOURNALISM SYLLABUS

Westchester Community College

Spring Semester 2006

COMM 103 Journalism

3 credits

Study of journalistic styles, procedures, techniques of news, and information gathering; analysis of presentation of news information and opinion in print and electronic media. Class hrs. 3.
Offered every semester.

Section: 5724 T 10:00-10:50 CLA 0111
R 10:00-10:50 CLA 0111
F 10:00-10:50 CLA 0202
5721 TRF 11:00-11:50 CLA 0104

Professor: Carol Smith Passariello

Office: Science Building 310

Phone: 914 606 6119

Email: carol.passariello@sunywcc.edu

Office Hours: TBA

Texts:

Theory (To be read for final exam preparation)

Kovach and Rosenstiel, *The Elements of Journalism*. Crown Publishers. New York. 2001.

Practice

Rich, Carole, *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*, Media Enhanced Fourth Edition

Rich, Carole, *Workbook for Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*, Media Enhanced Fourth Edition

Supplement

The New York Times (pick up free of charge in college bookstore)

Required Activities: All journalism students must join the Viking News staff

Recommended activities:

- visit the Newseum and the Museum of Television and Radio in NYC

- read a second daily newspaper
- explore the EXTERNAL LINKS for new information, new ideas
- become a staff member of *The Viking News* (*The best way to learn journalism is to be a journalist*).

Course Objectives:

to develop an appreciation of the importance of a free press and the role of a free press within a democracy; to understand the First Amendment, necessary legal limitations, and threats to the First Amendment rights of journalists.

to develop a news concept and the critical thinking skills to recognize when news lacks fairness and credibility.

to develop an understanding of the skills necessary for news reporting; to understand the concept of gatekeeping and its importance to responsible reporting and publishing.

to learn to write news with special attention to objectivity, accuracy and fairness; the responsible use of sources; and the style and structure of good news writing.

to discern differences between print and broadcast news presentations; to understand the current trends in broadcast and print journalism and the pressures these trends have created for journalists.

to evaluate the criticism of current American journalism.

to understand the ethical principles that are the foundation of responsible journalism and the integrity of journalists; to recognize and respond to the ethical issues faced by contemporary journalists.

to understand the impact of economic conglomeration on print and broadcast news agencies.

to evaluate alternatives to mainstream journalism.

Course Units:

- First Amendment rights and responsibilities, laws and limitations
- Defining news and identifying the qualities that make it credible and responsible
- News gathering and gatekeeping
- Reporting news; investigative reporting
- Economic realities and pressures on the newsroom

- Conglomerate ownership of news agencies
- How electronic media changed journalism
- Journalistic ethics in an age of ratings competition, market mentality
- Optimism: how American journalism can strengthen its role as "fourth estate"; how citizens as consumers of the news can have an effect

Reading assignments are listed by chapter and week so that you have ample time for preparation. Please refer to the syllabus calendar for the reading schedule. You are also required to read *The Elements of Journalism* by Kovach and Rosenstiel at your own pace prior to the final examination during which you will answer one or more essay questions using this text as your sole reference.

Grading criteria:

- A. Portfolio (60%):
- B. Quizzes (10%): There will be four AP style quizzes based on assigned text readings and exercises.
- C. The *Viking News* or WARY staff work (10%) for documented participation. Students must keep track of and have advisors verify their contributions.
- D. Participation (10%): regular attendance, active and regular participation in class discussions, evidence of preparation, which will be measured by quality of discussion and in-class assignments. Note: Missing more than six class hours will mean the loss of this 10 percent. Three late entrances count as one class absence.
- E. Final Exam (10%)

Grading Key for Articles:

A=Publishable quality

B=Publishable with editing

C=Substantial editing needed

D=Marginal quality

F=Unacceptable

Portfolio specifications:

All journalism students will prepare and present a portfolio of collected assignments at intervals during the semester. Details to help you complete assignments will be provided well in advance to provide you with sufficient preparation time to meet deadlines. Although I will edit all articles and assignments and write comments on them for your review and revision, I will not grade them. Instead, you will revise all articles and assignments as needed and collect them in a portfolio along with any other assignments to be graded at midterm and again at the end of the semester. Do not discard edited work. Attach all revised work to originals and edited versions of each assignment to show improvement and effort, which can greatly influence your grade.

Deadlines are critical for journalists. There will be penalties for missing deadlines as follows:

Up to one day (including weekends and holidays) late –one letter grade

Up to two days late –two letter grades

More than two days late –F

Meeting the deadline means submitting assignments at the start of the class on the due date. In the event of not being in class on the day the paper is due, you can meet the deadline by Emailing the paper to me in rich text format or as a word document before the start of class that same day; otherwise it will be considered past deadline. Emails with corrupted files, incorrect addresses, forgotten attachments, late delivery or any other problem will not excuse the paper from late penalties.

Acceptable form for all written projects:

1. Papers must be typed on standard 8.5 x 11, white paper.
2. Standard manuscript form must be used: standard margins, double spacing, page numbering beginning with page two.
3. No cover page.
4. Near the top, left corner, in this order, include the following information:
 - Your name
 - Course & Section #
 - Date
 - Deadline
 - Word Count
5. Your first page will include a title that gives a specific indication of the paper's purpose and assignment (centered).
6. Papers must be stapled in the upper left hand corner. *Do not submit papers in envelopes, folders, plastic binders, etc.*

Papers will be returned as unacceptable if:

- a. they do not comply with above;
- b. sources are not properly documented;
- c. they do not comply with the assignment;
- d. errors and style problems obscure the content.
- e. they are more than two days late.

Plagiarism:

In the event that I suspect a paper has been plagiarized, I will ask the writer to meet with me. If my suspicions are confirmed, the paper receives an F. Refer to the college catalogue for a definition of plagiarism.