

COMM 323 Advanced Journalism: Editorials, Columns and Reviews

Syllabus, Spring 2018 (revised 1/15/18)

Instructor: Dr. Steve Hill (shill@uwsp.edu) CAC 303, 346-3887

Office hours: Tu 11 a.m.-noon and by appointment

The **purpose of the course** is to discuss and practice fundamental communication and persuasion skills, primarily by conducting in-depth research and analysis in order to write persuasive opinion pieces about various issues. Even if you haven't taken basic journalism courses, you'll still be able to function at a high level in this class, as fundamental skills used in journalism are also those you already use in daily thought and communication: attentiveness to detail, questioning, and good writing, among others. I'll provide some instruction, materials and exercises for you to understand more about how these skills function in journalism and other areas. A great deal of this course's success will depend on the effort that the entire class puts into discussion of various opinion pieces and the effort its members put into the writing process, including peer editing and colleague feedback. *(Note for those under the old GDR program: COMM 323 was designed as a writing-emphasis course for purposes of UWSP's general degree requirements.)*

Our **projected course learning outcomes** are that students will be able to:

- Use appropriate formats and a concise, detailed approach to write the following about significant public issues:
 - Editorials on news and public affairs stories over issues of local, regional and national significance; and
 - Columns, reviews or other analyses of books, journal articles, popular media or other important sources of information and entertainment;
- Conduct thorough research and analysis on issues of public significance and interest, using interviews, databases, reports, Internet sources, personal experience and other appropriate resources and skills;
- Demonstrate increasing capability in other core journalism skills, such as following AP style, organizing and structuring information, listening and observing, and conducting interviews; and
- Critically analyze opinion pieces, news stories or other information sources and articulate your understanding of ways they do or do not reflect principles of ethical communications practice and appreciation of diverse and global perspectives

We'll measure these outcomes through the skills and knowledge you demonstrate on class writing assignments and critiques of those assignments (both of the work of others and yourself). Timeliness with your weekly writing tasks and dedicated participation in the peer review process will be especially critical in this class.

Required Readings

All required readings will be readily available online, whether in .PDF or other format on D2L or as links to various news & public affairs or other media websites.

My teaching philosophy is based on the concepts of community, relevance and the importance of excellent language skills. A short explanation of this philosophy is posted on D2L. I hope you'll read it

and understand how respecting this philosophy in class will contribute to a positive learning experience for our class.

Writing Assignments	Points
1. First drafts (4 x 50 points)	200 (minimum 500 words each)
2. Second drafts (4 x 30 points)	120
2. Feedback to peers on their drafts (8 x 15)	120
3. Final portfolio (minimum four pieces, due 4/26)	120
4. Survey and other feedback on colleague portfolios	150
5. Colleague evaluation of your portfolio & participation	175
6. Attendance/participatory discussion	125
TOTAL	1,010

Class participation grades will depend on attendance and your completion of tasks for classroom discussion, such as bringing in a piece of your choice for sharing and discussion that you will lead. Attendance is required. Please see attendance policy for full explanation.

Grading Policy

Your grade will be based on the number of points that you earn. Point totals required are:

A: 930 or more A-: 900-929 B+: 870-899 B: 830-869 B-: 800-829

C+: 770-799 C: 730-769 C-: 700-729 D+: 670-699 D: 600-669

F: Fewer than 600 points

Deadlines are critical to all professionals, but especially to journalists. **No work may be turned in late without penalty.** First and second drafts will be docked 25 percent of the assignment's potential value for each 24-hour period that it's late. **Late peer feedback, surveys or portfolios will be penalized 50 percent of their value per 24-hour period.** The clock starts ticking at the time that it's due. All work is turned in electronically. For example, if a 40-point draft is due on Tuesday at 11 p.m., it loses 10 points at 11:01 p.m. Tuesday and another 10 at 11:01 Wednesday.

Generally, work will be posted electronically in D2L dropboxes and/or discussion forums as MS Word 2010 or later or RTF (*.rtf) files – no Microsoft Works or other noncompatible formats. **Work not posted in a compatible format will be counted as late. Work that I cannot download because you do not name it in an acceptable manner – such as naming the file incorrectly – will also be counted as late.**

Citations:

Please keep track of all your sources, but you may use the informal attribution style of journalism to refer to your sourced material. I reserve the right to ask for a more formal listing, such as a thorough bibliography of any of your work, if I deem it necessary. Guidance on these two styles is available from the Purdue Online Writing Laboratory.

PLEASE NOTE: ANY ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, INCLUDING MISREPRESENTING ANY WORK IN ANY WAY, WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE COURSE.

Statements of University Policy. You are responsible for understanding university policies, especially regarding academic misconduct. That policy can be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

Statements of University Policy

UWSP 14.01 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

The board of regents, administrators, faculty, academic staff and students of the University of Wisconsin system believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education and of the University of Wisconsin system. The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Students who violate these standards must be confronted and must accept the consequences of their actions.

UWSP 14.03 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

- (1) Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:
 - (a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
 - (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- (c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- (d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- (e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- (f) Assists other students in any of these acts.
- (g) Violates electronic communication policies or standards as agreed upon when logging on initially (See uwsp.edu/it/policy).