



The University of New Mexico

# WRITING FOR PRINT JOURNALISM

C&J 271 Syllabus

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Office is in C&J 223

Autumn, 2009  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
12:30 to 1:45 p.m., Windows Lab, CJ 134

*Office hours at 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment.  
Drop-ins are always welcome*

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## A Workshop to Build Print Newswriting and Reporting Skills

**COURSE OVERVIEW:** This is a continuation of C&J 171, with increased emphasis on gathering news from original sources and writing specifically for the print and online media. This is a writing workshop class. We will explore what constitutes a compelling and well-written article in print journalism. There will be a strong emphasis on learning and using AP style. The instructor will implement a coaching style in advising students.

In an actual newsroom, deadlines are strictly observed. Most graded stories will be written in class on deadline. Turning in articles late or not at all will severely affect a grade.

In general, once the course is well underway (in the second week), articles will be written and/or quizzes will be given in

every class, so attendance is *vital* to each student's grade.

The final grade for the course will be as follows:

Graded stories .....	30%
AP Style and other quizzes .....	15%
In-class exercises, assignments.....	15%
Mid-term examination .....	5%
Portfolio .....	5%
Final profile story.....	30%

A pre-requisite to this course is C&J 171 with a grade of C or better. It is assumed that students already have learned basic skills. C&J 271 emphasizes writing on deadline. Most assignments will be written in the lab and due at the end of class.

**TEXT:** "Writing and Reporting News," by Carole Rich (6th edition). Students also will need a copy of the AP Stylebook. Students are expected to read the Albuquerque Journal or some other daily newspaper every day. Students will save stories on their e-mail accounts or on a USB flash drive.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** The purpose of this course is to learn to write clearly and accurately in print journalism. There will be an emphasis on building awareness of the diversity of audiences through news coverage. Even if you are not pursuing a career in print journalism, this course will provide a foundation for effective reporting and writing (not necessarily the same thing).

This course also is intended to enable you to appreciate the social consequences of how news and other information is reported by seeing how articles are researched, written and evaluated. Truth, accuracy, fairness, objectivity and writing to deadlines will be emphasized, including the problem area of statistics.

By the end of the course, you should be proficient in AP style, interviewing, story construction and grammar, as well as the use of research tools for writing a news story.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Unannounced grammar, AP style or other quizzes will be given on a regular basis each week.

**Readings—**You will be required to read a daily newspaper every day of the week and watch TV news. Topics in the news will be an important part of classroom discussions.

**Stories—**Along with in-class assignments, several 500-word articles will be required. The final assignment will be a 1,000-word personality profile that will in effect be the course's final exam.

**Attendance—****Be forewarned that it is impossible to achieve a good grade in this course without consistent attendance because quizzes and/or in-class writing assignments will be featured every time we meet.**

# Miscellany....

**ATTENDANCE: Even if you have an excused absence, it is your responsibility—not the instructor’s—to find out what you missed in any class and complete any missed assignments before the next class meeting.**

Unless the instructor is notified ahead of time, you will not be allowed to make up any test or assignment because of absence or tardiness. Missed tests and assignments will be given a zero, not an F. **E-mail your assignments if you cannot be present or they will be given a late penalty.**

**PLAGIARISM:** Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language defines plagiarism as “....to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass them off as one’s own.” Just like fabrication and copyright infringement, plagiarism can get you fired from a future job—and it can get you a failing grade on an assignment or the entire course here.

**ASSISTANCE:** Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in other formats upon request.

**DIVERSITY:** This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating.

**ETHICS:** The course emphasizes ethical practices and perspectives. Above all, students and instructors should strive to communicate and act, both in class interactions and in assigned coursework, in a manner directed by personal integrity, honesty, and respect for self and others. Included in this focus is the need for academic honesty by students as stated by the “UNM Pathfinder.” Students need to do original work and properly cite sources. For example, be aware of plagiarism. Directly copying more than three or four words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Further, course content will encourage the ethical practices and analysis of print journalism.

**COMPLAINTS:** Procedures for students with a complaint

The instructor acknowledges the contributions of many other educators. Their collective creativity is reflected in this syllabus.

about any member of the teaching staff are described in the “UNM Pathfinder.” Basically, a student should try to resolve the matter with the instructor first. If the complaint is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student can appeal the matter to the departmental chair and then, if necessary, to the associate dean of the college.

**LATE PAPERS:** As in a real newsroom, which this course attempts to emulate, writing assignments are due on the deadlines stated. Non-submitted articles will receive a zero and late assignments will be marked down. Even one zero can significantly affect your final grade.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** The only extra credit allowed in C&J 271 is for an assignment written specifically for the class that is published elsewhere.

**I’M AVAILABLE:**

If you are having problems in this course, don’t hesitate to contact me. I check my e-mail several times a day. I am always available to talk with students just before or just after class.

I am always willing to work with any student to help improve skills in a particular area. Don’t wait until the end of the semester to ask for assistance.

It is your responsibility to learn the material in this course with the intention of preparing yourself for working in a newsroom. It is my responsibility to help you achieve the skills, perspective and knowledge to help you succeed.

**TEXT:** You need to bring a copy of the text to class each time because it will be used for in-class assignments.

**CLASS WEB SITE:** A site is available for this class at [www.unm.edu/~herrick/cj271](http://www.unm.edu/~herrick/cj271)

**ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR:**

Dennis Herrick is a fulltime lecturer in journalism at the University of New Mexico. He also taught journalism for two years at the University of Iowa.

He was owner and publisher of a group of weekly newspapers and a shopper in Iowa for 12 years before selling his company in 1997. His newspapers won several awards for news coverage, editorial writing, photography, public service, newspaper design and advertising during his ownership. He also worked as a reporter for more than 11 years with daily newspapers in Michigan, and he was chief of staff for a member of Congress in 1977–85. He has won several individual writing awards at the state and national levels.

# Details, details, details....

## HEADINGS FOR PAPERS:

Please use the following format for all work you submit (placed in the upper **left** corner):

Your Name  
C&J 271  
Date  
Assignment

## COURSE OVERVIEW:

The best way to learn writing is to write. Therefore, we will be doing a lot of writing in this course, both in the classroom and through outside assignments. Much of what we will do will imitate an actual newsroom, including a strict adherence to deadlines, writing under pressure sometimes, rewriting, editing of your own articles, constructive criticism, coaching and teamwork.

It is imperative that you come to class prepared. At the start of each class, you must have already read the daily newspaper, you must have read the day's assignment, and you must have the text, "AP Style Book" and Zip disk or USP memory stick in your possession. Your assignment for the day must be ready to be turned in at the start of class.

Classes will be conducted in a lecture-discussion format, with emphasis on participation by students.

## FORMAT OF ARTICLES:

All articles completed in class or outside of class on assignment will have a one-inch margin at the top, bottom and on both sides of 8 1/2 x 11 paper. The text will be double-spaced and typed in 12 point fonts, with paragraphs indented a quarter of an inch. All articles must carry the formatted identification described at the top of this page. Non-conformance to these rules will lower your grade. Your papers will be graded not only on the basis of content but also on the writing mechanics of grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentence construction and clarity. Accuracy of your facts will be paramount. Multiple-page articles should be stapled when you turn in the assignment. Improperly formatted articles are not acceptable. All stories must be double-spaced.

## ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION :

You are expected to attend class and to participate in discussions. Grading consideration may be given to these factors. Exceptional contributions may be rewarded, and lack of participation or attendance may be penalized. Papers are turned in at the start of class on the dates due. Stories with errors of fact or misspelled names, or containing potential libel, will receive an automatic F until an acceptable rewrite is submitted.

## DISTRACTIONS:

In the interest of preserving an effective learning environment, as free from as many disruptions as possible, all mobile telephones, pagers and iPods shall be turned off while in the classroom. Any kind of disruption in class will result in you being penalized in grades on that day's assignment and/or your final grade.

Use of the computers for e-mail or Internet surfing during class time is forbidden without specific permission from the instructor each time. Violations will result in you being penalized in grades on that day's assignment and your final grade. Computer games are never allowed. The ban on snacks and drinks is re-emphasized here.

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## EVALUATION:

Grading for all work turned in as follows:

100 = A+; 94-99 = A; 90-93 = A-  
87-89 = B+; 84-86 = B; 80-83 = B-  
77-79 = C+; 74-76 = C; 70-73 = C  
67-69 = D+; 64-66 = D; 60-63 = D-  
Below 60 = F

Grading criteria for articles will include satisfactory completion of assignment requirements, grammar, spelling, AP style, factual errors, typographical mistakes, etc.

A = Acceptable for publication; needs minor changes

B = Competent job, but needs more work

C = Average effort, needs numerous changes

D = Story seriously lacking, major errors

F = Story potentially libelous, name reported inaccurately, turned in late, or other serious problems

# Class Schedule for C&J 271

(subject to changes announced in class)

- Week 1: Aug. 25-27:  
Intro; First Amendment; Writing Sample  
FOR NEXT WEEK:  
Read Chapter 1 of text  
Read Punctuation Guide of AP Stylebook
- Week 2: Sept. 1-3:  
Principles of Good Writing  
In-class writing and quizzes **each week**  
THIS WEEK:  
Read Chapter 1 of text  
Read Punctuation Guide of AP Stylebook
- Week 3: Sept. 8 — NO CLASS.  
Sept. 10:  
Grammar and Usage  
THIS WEEK  
National grammar, punctuation exercise  
Know A of AP Stylebook
- Week 4: Sept. 15 — NO CLASS  
**Sept. 17:**  
Grammar and Usage (continued)  
THIS WEEK  
Read Appendix 1 in textbook  
Grammar exercise due, p501  
Know B & D (not C) of AP Stylebook
- Week 5: Sept. 22-24:  
Basic News Story; Story Ideas  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 3 and 5  
Know C of AP Stylebook
- Week 6: Sept. 29–Oct. 1:  
Convergent Media Writing  
Sources and Online Research  
Review of problem areas  
**Graded feature written in class Thursday.**  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 4 and 6  
Know E-F of AP Stylebook
- Week 7: Oct. 6-8:  
Ledes and Nut Graphs  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapter 8  
Know G-H of AP Stylebook
- Week 8: Oct. 13:  
Mid-Term  
Oct. 15 — NO CLASS, FALL BREAK
- Week 9: Oct. 20-22:  
Story Structure  
Storytelling and Feature Techniques  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 10-11  
Know I-J-K of AP Stylebook
- Week 10: Oct. 27-29:  
Blogs; Online Journalism  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 2 and 13  
Know L-M of AP Stylebook
- Week 11: Nov. 3-5:  
Magazine Writing  
**Graded story in class Thursday.**  
THIS WEEK  
Read assigned online articles  
Know N-O of AP Stylebook
- Week 12: Nov. 10— NO CLASS  
Nov. 12:  
Student editing of magazine article  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapter 20  
Know P-Q of AP Stylebook
- Week 13: Nov. 17-19:  
Speeches, News Conferences, Meetings  
Statistics, Crime Reporting  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 20-21-22  
Know R & T (not S) of AP Stylebook
- Week 14: Nov. 24:  
Disasters, Weather and Tragedies  
Multicultural Sensitivity  
**Graded current story in class Thursday.**  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapters 17 and 23  
Know S of AP Stylebook  
Nov. 26—NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING
- Week 15: Dec. 1-3:  
Student editing of current events article  
Profiles/Review of problem areas  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapter 18  
Know U-Z of AP Stylebook
- Week 16: Dec. 8-10:  
Media Jobs and Internships  
**Final profile story written in class Thursday.**  
THIS WEEK  
Read Chapter 24

## C&J 271

3 credit hours

# WRITING FOR PRINT JOURNALISM

### DESCRIPTION

This class is a continuation of C&J 171, with increased emphasis on gathering news from original sources and writing specifically for the print media, primarily newspapers. Students will focus on interviews, accuracy, attribution, story structure and grammar. There will be a strong emphasis on learning and using AP Style. This is a writing workshop class. Students will explore what constitutes a compelling and well-written article in print journalism. The instructor will implement a coaching style in advising students. In an actual newsroom, deadlines are strictly observed. Thus, in this class, most graded stories will be written in class on deadline.

### MISSION

Teach accepted practices and skills used in writing for print journalism.

### OBJECTIVES

- Build awareness and understanding of the *First Amendment* and its importance in the operation of the media in an open and free society.
- Develop professional writing standards in *truth, accuracy, fairness, objectivity* and writing to deadlines, and reinforce *ethical ways of thinking and acting*.
- Learn to *write clearly and accurately* through study and practice of established conventions in grammar, AP Style, story structure, and interviewing.
- Exercise *creative and analytical thinking* and evaluation skills in topic/story selection, information-gathering, content development, writing and editing.
- Build awareness of the *diversity* of audiences through news coverage.
- Develop an understanding of *research and critical evaluation* skills including use of the Internet, libraries and public documents.