



MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISM I

Intermediate Reporting

C&J 375 Syllabus

Dennis F. Herrick, M.A.
herrick@unm.edu
Office in C&J 223

Autumn, 2009
3 to 4:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays
Windows Computer Lab 134

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

CLASS WEB SITE: unm.edu/~herrick/cj375

An introduction to multimedia story telling and better writing skills

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course introduces the principles and practices of beat reporting and specialized interest writing. The class is designed as a writing practicum with the following general objectives:

1. Develop student research skills: the ability to cultivate human sources, access a variety of documentary and online resources, conduct different types of interviews, and critically evaluate the information received.
2. Offer continuing practice in news gathering and reporting with a focus on news and feature stories.
3. Strengthen writing skills and knowledge of

AP style gained in previous journalism courses. Emphasis will be placed on mastering technical aspects of writing and practicing accurate and precise reporting.

4. Deepen the understanding of ethics, First Amendment issues, and professional standards.
5. Foster multicultural awareness and reflection on the historical role of news media in a democratic society.
6. Provide opportunity to discuss current trends and internship and career choices in the news industry.
7. Facilitate the acquisition of newsroom experience in campus and local newspapers.

TEXT: AP Stylebook. Additional readings as assigned.

CLASS FORMAT

This course requires your participation in a variety of class activities:

1. Your beat reporting and newsroom work constitute the laboratory portion of this class.
3. Activities outside the classroom include government meetings and specific assignments. Activities inside the classroom include guest speakers and in-class exercises.
3. Coaching sessions with your instructor as they are announced and scheduled. Failure to attend will drop grade by one-third of a letter.

PROCEDURES

Students will be encouraged to make their stories available to the Daily Lobo (or any other publication). The New Mexico Magazine project will be 15 percent of the final grade.

There will be numerous graded assignments. Each story, project or other assignment will have equal weight except the New Mexico Magazine project. Final grade will be cumulative, based on the point grades of 100 to zero given on all assignments, divided by the number of assignments. After one unexcused absence, grades will be lowered one-third of a letter for each subsequent unexcused absence.

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. 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 about any member of the teaching staff are described in

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

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. Stories with errors of fact or misspelled names, or containing potential libel, will receive an automatic F until an acceptable rewrite is submitted.

EXTRA CREDIT: The only extra credit allowed in C&J 375 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 AP Stylebook to each class and coaching session.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR:

Dennis Herrick is a full-time 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.

Class Schedule for C&J 375

(subject to changes announced in class—links to readings on class Web site)

- Week 1: Aug. 25:
Intro; beat choices (see class Web site)
Aug. 27:
First Amendment, multimedia journalism,
assignment of beat
- Week 2: Sept. 1 and 3:
Photography and Photoshop
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 3: Sept. 8:
Guest speaker: Ashley Biggers, associate editor
of New Mexico Magazine
Sept. 10:
Magazine Writing
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 4: Sept. 15 — NO CLASS
Sept. 17:
Magazine Writing
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 5: Sept. 22 and 24:
Introduction to computer-assisted reporting
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 6: Sept. 29 and Oct. 1:
Excel spreadsheets, data-based Web resources
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 7: Oct. 6 and Oct. 8:
Beat story ideas assignment due
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 8: Oct. 13:
Beat reporting assignments
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
Oct. 15:
NO CLASS — Fall Break.
- Week 9: Oct. 20 and Oct. 22:
Note: This week's classes start at 3:30
Student editing of first beat story
New Mexico Magazine project
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 10: Oct. 27 and Oct. 29:
Government reporting orientation
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 11: Nov. 3 and Nov. 5:
Guest speaker on Tuesday
Government reporting exercise on Thursday
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 12: Nov. 10 — NO CLASS
Nov. 12:
Guest speaker on Thursday
This week's readings (complete by Thursday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 13: Nov. 17 and Nov. 19:
Magazine writing exercises both days
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 14: Nov. 24:
Writing for the Web both days
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
Nov. 26 — NO CLASS. Thanksgiving.
- Week 15: Dec. 1 and Dec. 3:
Beat reporting assignments
This week's readings (complete by Tuesday):
Check class Web site for links
- Week 16: Dec. 8 and Dec. 10
Final writing assignment written and finished
on deadline in class on Thursday

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

Assignment not turned in = Zero

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

C&J 375

3 credit hours

Intermediate Reporting

DESCRIPTION

This class is designed as a writing practicum that allows students to learn the principles and routines of beat reporting and special interest writing. Students cover their assigned campus beats and are strongly encouraged to make stories available to the *Daily Lobo* (or any other relevant publication upon consultation with the instructor). Reporters are expected to write original news and news features explaining trends, problems and complex issues.

MISSION

To offer continuing practice in news gathering and reporting with a focus on developing research and writing skills.

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen *writing and editing* skills and knowledge of AP style. Emphasis will be placed on mastering technical aspects of news writing and practicing *clear, accurate* and precise reporting.
- Develop relevant *research and analytical skills*: the ability to cultivate human sources, gain access to public records and online resources, *interpret data and statistics*, conduct different types of interviews and *critically evaluate* information received.
- Deepen the understanding of professional standards, *ethics* and *First Amendment* issues.
- Discuss current industry trends and internship and career choices in the field.
- Foster *multicultural awareness* and reflection on the *historical role of news media* in a democratic society.
- Facilitate the acquisition of newsroom experience in campus and local news organizations.