

**Introduction to Media Writing (3 Credits)
C&J 171 Fall 2011**

Course Supervisor: Richard J. Schaefer, Associate Professor

Office Hours: Tues. 11:15 a.m.-noon & Wed. afternoons by appointment C&J Building, Rm 252

Phone: 917-9909

Email: schaefer@unm.edu

NOTE: Students should first consult their instructors about assignments, deadlines and other matters before scheduling a meeting with Richard Schaefer.

Instructors: (Consult your

Santhosh Chandrashekar, email: santhosh@unm.edu 277-2106

Lillian Kelly, email: lkelly02@unm.edu 277-5305

Melanie Majors, email: mjmajorsunm@comcast.net 459-4587

Toby Smith, email: bsmith3366@aol.com 681-0667

Lecture: Sec. 001, (CRN 15001), Tues. 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., in Education 103** (Lab required)

**** Tuesday lecture students must also be enrolled in one of the following labs.****

*** Students enrolled in the following labs must also be enrolled in the Tuesday lecture (Sec. 001)**

*Sec. 002, (CRN 15003), Thurs., 8 to 9:50 a.m., in CJ 134 – Santhosh Chandrashekar

*Sec. 003, (CRN 15004), Thurs., 10 to 11:50 a.m., in CJ 134 – Santhosh Chandrashekar

*Sec. 004, (CRN 15005), Fri., 8 to 9:50 a.m., in CJ 134 – Toby Smith

*Sec. 005, (CRN 15006), Fri., 10 to 11:50 a.m., in CJ 134 – Toby Smith

*Sec. 010, (CRN 42625), Fri. 10-11:50 a.m., in CJ 124 – Lillian Kelly

There is a \$35.00 course fee is for use of C&J 124 or 134.

The following sections in C&J 134 are stand-alone classes; only register for the section indicated.

Sec. 006, (CRN 15002), Mon. & Wed. 19:00-20:30 (p.m.), in CJ 134 – Melanie Majors

There is a \$35.00 course fee is for use of C&J 124 or 134.

Description: This class is designed for students who are interested in becoming journalism majors (multimedia) and mass communication majors (public relations, advertising and strategic communication) who plan careers in the mass media. The course offers a practical introduction to journalism, emphasizing journalistic conventions and gathering and writing of news for the print broadcast and Web media, as well as an overview of the types of writing required in public relations, advertising and strategic communication. Language and keyboarding skills required. Prerequisites: 15 hours, 2.0 GPA, English 102 with a grade of C or better. Journalism and mass communication students should take STAT 145: Intro to Statistics, though it is not a prerequisite for this course.

Texts: Christian, D.; Jacobsen, S.; & Minthorn, D. (2011). *The Associated Press Stylebook*. Associated Press. (This book is available online. But a recent hardcopy edition, published on or after 2008, is sufficient. This common reference book can be purchased at almost any bookstore. The ring-binder hard copies are more convenient.)

Bender, John R.; Davenport, Lucinda; Drager, Michael W. & Fedler, Fred (2009). *Reporting for the Media, 9th Ed.* New York: Oxford Univ. Press. (UNM Bookstore or online vendors, and used copies will serve well in this course. Two copies of the book are also on reserve for 171 students in Zimmerman Library.)

Schaefer, Richard J. (2011). *Introduction to Media Writing*. (ISBN 978-1-61549-141-4.) A Great River Technologies online textbook available for \$40.00 either from the UNM Bookstore or online at: <http://webcom8.grtxle.com/media> (To buy click on "PURCHASE AN ACCESS CODE NOW." All students will need to purchase the online textbook to take the course.)

Materials: Instructors may require students to read the online edition of various public relations and journalism outlets, including the *Daily Lobo* (<http://www.dailylobo.com/>). Consult your instructor for specifics.

GRT: This is a Web-enhanced course, which means that students will be required to go to the course Web site < <http://webcom8.grtxle.com/media> > to access materials, including the assignments, lesson pre- and post-tests and a grammar quiz.

Course Objectives:

- To help students *write accurately, fairly, correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for communication professionals.*
- To expose students to the most common *styles* and *grammar* used by print and broadcast journalists and public relations experts.
- Students should gain an appreciation for *fairness and clarity in writing*, as well as the advantages and craft involved in creating objective reports. Even if students do not become media writers, this course should help them become more proficient and versatile writers.
- To help students understand news values and the way that professionals *critically evaluate information*, including an introduction to *basic statistics*.
- To take the *diversity of the audience* into account and strengthen citizenship in a *global society*.
- To introduce *research and information-gathering techniques*, including interviewing and electronic information searching, so students can write on unfamiliar topics and address issues of concern to audience members with varied interests and identities.
- To introduce some of the basic concepts of journalism, public relations and advertising, as well as some of the *legal restraints* and *ethical issues* facing media workers.
- To make class participants more informed and *critical* producers and consumers of media.
- To prepare students for further courses in the journalism, mass communication and strategic communication concentrations.

Materials: Students should bring some means of storing their lab writings, such as a “thumb drive,” and have access to an e-mail account. Save all your lab work to your storage device. Microsoft Word is on the personal computers in the classroom, as well as Adobe Creative Suite. **Always bring your AP Style Manual to the labs.** Bring No. 2 pencils to the two tests during lectures.

Class Attendance and Other Expectations: It will be impossible to do well without regular class attendance. Since emergencies may come up throughout the semester, students will be permitted to miss three classes, any combination of lectures or labs, without penalty. Each additional absence after the third will result in approximately a 2 percent reduction in the student's overall grade. Students who arrive late for lectures or labs will also be penalized.

Journalistic credibility rests on accurate reporting. Students who make factual errors will be heavily downgraded on that assignment. Standard grammar and spelling will also be emphasized, since these are both professional norms and mechanisms for clear and concise communication.

Strategies for reporting on minorities and writing for diverse audiences will be discussed during the semester. Students are expected to interact and report in a manner that adds to multicultural awareness, not one that detracts from it.

Students should develop an awareness of current events. At an absolute minimum they should read the online edition of the *Daily Lobo* and a national newspaper. This will help them understand conventional news values and begin to think like media professionals, as well as respond to all the lesson pre-tests and post-tests and in-lab quizzes. Students will be encouraged to write stories for media outlets, such as the *Daily Lobo*, KUNM news programming (FM 89.9) or *U-News*. Some basic techniques of radio and television news coverage will be presented in the appropriate weeks, as will the basics of public relations and advertising.

Deadlines are crucial to journalists, advertising teams and other media professionals. For this reason, there will be penalties for late assignments. Students can also expect to write under simulated deadline pressure in the labs. Students should expect that their written work could be published in a mass media outlet, along with being carefully examined by the instructors and their fellow students. Therefore, when arranging interviews for an assignment, never say that the interview is just for a class, as work may be published in any number of venues.

The success of this class is each student's responsibility. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, help edit other students' work and encourage their peers. Students who are unwilling or unprepared to interact in class detract from the course and will be penalized.

Whenever possible, students with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations in this class. During the first few weeks of the semester those students should take the initiative to inform their instructors and help make arrangements that address their particular needs.

Students who miss a test may be permitted to make it up on the following Wednesday at a prearranged time set with Richard Schaefer. This can occur no more than once.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty: Plagiarists take someone else's ideas and words and pass the work off as their own. Plagiarists do this without attributing the work to its source. Lifting information off the Internet or from publications without attributing it is plagiarism. Professional writers who are caught plagiarizing are fired and they may be sued. In an academic environment, plagiarism is cheating and will be treated as a form of academic dishonesty.

Students may discuss assignments, topics and techniques outside of class. But students who allow classmates to copy parts of their assignments will be participating in a form of academic dishonesty and both parties will be treated accordingly.

Students can avoid plagiarism by attributing quoted material.

ADA Accessibility: Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact both Richard Schaefer and their lab instructor as soon as possible to ensure their needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request. Please provide written documentation of the disability.

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 3 or 4 words from another author without quoting (not just citing) the author is plagiarism. Furthermore, course content will encourage the ethical practices and analysis of mass media writing.

CAPS The Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS) offers free one-on-one peer tutoring. CAPS tutors have proven particularly effective at helping C&J students with basic writing problems. The CAPS offices on the Third Floor of Zimmerman Library are usually open during business hours. Students can call 277-7205 to verify times for walk-in service or work virtually with a Web tutor (<http://caps.unm.edu/>). This is a valuable service, which is typically used by the most competent students. Students who are struggling with the course should use it.

Grading: This class emphasizes writing. The **9 written assignments** will account for approximately 68 percent of the course grade. Rewrites will be considered for up to two of the assignments. **Two in-class tests** will determine another 12.5 percent of the grade. Each test will cover materials from the online lessons, lectures, labs, current events and the textbook. **Unannounced lab quizzes and in-lab writing exercises** will account for another 12.5 percent of the grade.

Grammar Quiz: Each student will be required to take the Grammar Quiz and earn a grade of 80 percent or better on this multiple-choice test. Students will have the opportunity to take the quiz up to three times before 9 p.m. on Sept. 9, 2011 in an attempt to score 80 percent or better. Students who fail to score more than 80 percent will have 20 points (5 percent) docked from their final class grade. Perhaps most importantly, *any student who fails to earn an 80 percent after three attempts at the Grammar Quiz should consider dropping the class.* Sept. 9, 2011 is also your last opportunity to drop the course and still receive a refund.

The Introduction to Media Writing also has **10 Pre-tests and Post-tests** associated with the lessons. Students should take the Pre-test online before reading the lesson. It will alert them to the type of information they should glean from the lesson. Failure to take a pre-test will result in a one-point deduction from the student's final point total. Each of the 10 Post-tests is worth 3 points, for a total of 30 points. Post-tests should be taken online within a week of the termination of the corresponding lesson.

Finally, up to 3 percent of a student's grade could be determined by the student's ability to earn **publication points** by publishing work in the *Daily Lobo*, a KUNM news program, the C&J <http://www.unm.edu/~cjdept/department/c&j_online.html> *U News* (online and Facebook) or other media outlets. A maximum of 12 points can be earned in this way.

Students who are absent, tardy, not available to perform lab work or participate in class discussions will also have their grade lowered.

9 assignments (30 points each)	270 points (includes 2 rewrites)
2 tests (25 points each)	50 points
10 Pretests and Posttests (3 pts. each)	30 points
<u>In-lab quizzes (unannounced) and work</u>	50 points
TOTAL POINTS	400 potential points
Potential publication points	12 points

The final grade is likely to be "curved," although the relative weight of each aspect of the class will not change. Furthermore, each of the individual lab instructor's grades will be conformed via the curve to roughly match those of the other instructors. This will eliminate the overall differences in grades given by each instructor, so that no student will be penalized for having a more demanding instructor. As a result, the final grades represent a relative, rather than an absolute, measure of student performance.

The fine print on turning in assignments and making up tests: Students should turn in assignments to the lab instructor on the days the assignments are due. Each instructor will provide guidelines for doing so. In an emergency, late or early assignments can be turned in by arrangement with the lab instructor or at the C&J Department Office. The lab instructor's name and lab section number should be on the first page and your work should be time stamped if turning work in to the C&J Office.

If a student misses a test, the student can contact Richard Schaefer before the test date or immediately after it and arrange to take a make up on the following Wednesday at a prearranged time. Students should be prepared to provide an official written university excuse for missing a test.