

**MCM 2362 News Reporting & Editing**

Prof. A.J. “Alex” Avila, PhD

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Phone: 936-294-1387

Fall 2017 Credit: 3 hours

9 a.m.– 10:20 a.m. M and W

Classroom: 205 (Lab)

*Office hours:* 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wed  
and by appointment DRCB 318

**Course description:**

In this course you will learn how to identify good news stories, learn interviewing techniques, learn researching skills for supporting information and how to report the news with accuracy, precision and balance on a deadline. This course will cover the theory and practice of writing specialized stories typically covered by the news media. Emphasis will also be placed on knowledge of current events and the covering of news beats.

**Required materials:****Textbooks:**

Tuggle, C.A. *Broadcast News Handbook, Writing, Reporting and Producing in the Age of Social Media*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. McGraw Hill, 2014.

*Associated Press Stylebook 2014* (Handbook and Briefing on Media Law) or earlier version.

Class 10 or above SD Card at a minimum 16 GB (later in the semester)

**Course Objectives:**

You will develop your news reporting skills by:

- Writing News Ledes
- Writing Readers
- Writing VO/SOTS
- Writing Packages
- Researching
- Writing, Editing and Shooting VO/SOTs
- Writing for Radio/Newspaper

**Methods:**

To keep up with the news you are expected to regularly:

- Watch Broadcast Network Nightly New, NBC,ABC,CBS,FOX
- Watch Area Local Broadcast News,(Houston News)
- Read the *Houstonian* and the *Huntsville Item*

We will compare how each of these news organizations covers an issue or event.

**Assignments:**

Most of our focus will be on writing different types of news stories. These will be evaluated on two levels: 1) The reporting involved to get the story (the people you interviewed, as well as your thoroughness of your research and the angles you pursued) and 2) The actual writing (clarity, organization, focus, creativity, grammar and spelling).

You are required to interview people face to face, taking extensive notes and later in semester on camera interviews. For fact-checking purposes, you will be asked to provide contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) of your subjects.

It is likely you will be assigned to cover events or conduct interviews off campus. You must provide your own transportation. All written assignments must be typed and in correct format.

**Critiques**

Students' work will at times be read, displayed or distributed to class. This is one way to learn what works well and what doesn't, by example. Critiques and comments are to be respectful and constructive.

**Quizzes, Exercises and Tests**

There will be weekly quizzes and graded exercises/or videos based on reading, assignments, and lectures. (60% of grade)

There will be three tests and a final exam over material discussed in class based on our textbook. (40% of Grade)

**Late Work**

In the News Industry there is no such thing as late work. All assignments must be turned in on time. Any and all assignments are due on the due date. After Class is late. If you show up late for class and miss the start of a quiz or a test, you will not be able to take the test or quiz and will receive a ZERO (0) for its grade. Because you are late.

**Grading**

A = 1000-900

C = 799-700

F < 599

B = 899-800

D = 699-600

(MCOM majors receiving a grade of D or lower will be required to repeat the course.)

You will be working with a partner on some assignments, both will turn in their own work so each student will receive credit on what they did and grading will be separate.

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. If you come in after attendance has been taken please remind me at the end of class. Students will be allowed **2** class days of absences without penalty. Any Additional Absence over 2 class days will result in a final grade reduction of one letter grade from the final letter grade.

Doctor's excuses will be accepted for an excused absence. The note must be on official letterhead from their office.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Sam Houston State University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings up to and including but not limited to cheating on an examination or other academic work that is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**If you fabricate content or violate ethical newsgathering practices, you WILL fail this course.**

Under no circumstances are you permitted to plagiarize the work of others. Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, including the work of other students, as your own. Any ideas or materials taken from another source must be fully acknowledged. If you reference someone else's work, give them full credit. **Any student who plagiarizes will receive a failing grade on the assignment and is subject to an F in the course, disciplinary referral to the dean, even expulsion from this institution.**

**Writing Center:**

You should already know proper grammar and mechanics, including the correct use of punctuation. If writing is difficult for you, I urge you to visit the Sam Houston Academic Success Center, located in Farrington 111. Tutors are available to work with you one-on-one at no charge. To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the writing center or call 936-294-3680.

**Computer Use:**

The computers in this classroom are for schoolwork only. You are not allowed to do personal business on the computer (such as checking your email or Facebook page) during class. During class lectures and discussions, you are allowed to use the computers only to take notes or as directed to complete assignments. Students who violate this policy might be asked to leave.

**Appropriate Dress:**

Please dress professionally when conducting interviews or covering events. Some sources and members of the public will make a judgment your professional credibility based on your appearance.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely for reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs

or subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his or her work in the class, then the student is encouraged to register with SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with the instructor about how to best deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Services for Students with Disabilities. . For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

**Religious Holidays:**

Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is accused within a reasonable time after absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under the Tax Code.

**Visitors in the Classroom:**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, they can be admitted at the discretion of the instructor.

**Instructor Evaluations:**

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Common courtesy is required of everyone. Students creating any type of disturbance, such as excessive talking, will be asked to leave. Students may also be told to leave if they are not paying attention. Students' cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during class. No texting.