

Sam Houston State University » Department of Mass Communication  
**MCOM 1332 Writing for Mass Media, Section 02 » Spring 2018**  
M/W 12:30- 1:50 or 2:00 -3:20 Room 205 Dan Rather Communication Building

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Office hours: By appointment only  
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### **Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce writing for media across a wide spectrum of disciplines. It will provide hands-on practice in basic writing skills for news, broadcast, the web, public relations and advertising. Emphasis is placed on the enhancement of language and writing skills.

### **Course Objectives**

This course serves as the foundation for the sequence of writing courses required of mass communication majors, whether they are pursuing journalism, film, broadcast production or public relations and advertising. This course is designed to provide you with:

- The development of creative capacities in writing for print and broadcast media, public relations, advertising, and online
- An in-depth understanding of ethical writing based upon accuracy and verification
- The ability to communicate effectively through the use of different writing styles
- To achieve a broader understanding of the US media environment

### **Required Textbooks**

Writing for the Mass Media (8<sup>th</sup> edition), by James G. Stovall, Published by Allyn & Bacon, 2011

Associated Press Stylebook, any edition 2010 through 2013 (Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law), by the Associated Press

Supplemental readings will be available through the course's online Blackboard site.

### **Course Guidelines**

**Attendance Policy** – The Student Handbook states that regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University and that it is expected that each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance. Therefore, the following attendance policy will be adhered to for this course:

- Absences will adversely affect the student's grade (see below for attendance grade weight as part of the overall grading plan). More than five unexcused absences will result in a failing attendance grade and additional or excessive unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

- Exceptions are for documented illnesses, family emergencies or for students attending SHSU activities in an official capacity. Documentation for illness or emergency should be presented upon the student's return to the classroom. Documentation for activities should be presented prior to the absence and contain the signature of the SHSU employee sponsor.
- Each semester hour of credit entails at least two additional hours of work outside the classroom per week: so for this 3 credit course, you should expect to do at least an additional 6 hours of work a week beyond class time. This is on average; some weeks may require more, others less.

**Grading scale**

A	90% and above
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% & below

**Assignment/exam weights**

Attendance & participation	10%
In-class exercises & quizzes	40%

Assignments\*

Assignment 1 (Print)	5%
Assignment 2 (Broadcast)	5%
Assignment 3 (Online)	5%
Assignment 4 (Public relations)	5%
Assignment 5 (Advertising)	5%

Exams

Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	20%

**\* Guidelines for each assignment will be handed out during class time**

**Writing Skills component**

During the first week of class, each student will register for the Pearson Writing Skills Lab through Blackboard. The Writing Skills lab can be accessed through the Mass Communication MyWriting Lab. During the second week of class, students will take the Writing Skills Learning Path to determine what modules, if any, they need to study.

Students will need to study and master each Writing Skills module in which they are deficient outside of class before taking the mastery check. The mastery check must be completed by the sixth week of the semester.

Students who do not successfully complete the writing skills component of the course will not be able to register for upper level Mass Communication courses.

Students who need additional instruction on writing skills can work with the instructor during office hours or visit the Writing Center (see below).

**E-mail** – You must be able to receive e-mail via your “@shsu.edu” account. You will be responsible for any messages you miss if you do not use this university-assigned address. Class announcements may also be posted on Blackboard.

**Deadlines** – Late major assignments will be marked down five points per day after they have been graded. Thus, an “85” assignment that is two days late will receive a “75.” No assignment will be accepted late unless you have notified the instructor *in advance* with an explanation. No assignment will be accepted more than five weekdays after it is due. Except in exceptional and documented situations, all make-up work (arranged prior to your absence) must be completed within two (2) calendar weeks of the set due date or the grade reverts to a zero.

**Academic Dishonesty** – All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences 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. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[Dean of Student's Office](#)

**Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy** – 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 travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” 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 excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf)

**Students with Disabilities Policy** – It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. 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 you have a disability that may

affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf\\_www/aps/811006.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf)

**The Sam Houston Writing Center**, located in Farrington 111, is open from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. Monday through Friday in person or Skype. Writing tutors will work with you at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, generating a draft, organizing a draft, or revising a draft) for any written assignment. The Writing Center operates on an appointment system, so please call (936) 294-3680 to schedule a session with a writing tutor. Skype sessions are available for distance students, and a tutor is available at the University Center. See website for more information: [www.shsu.edu/wctr](http://www.shsu.edu/wctr).

**MCOM 1332 Spring 2013 Course Schedule (Subject to change)**

	<b>Section</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Jan 17 Week 1</b>	Introduction	Professional writing for the media	Stovall, Ch. 1	Quiz Chapter 1
<b>Jan 24 Week 2</b>		Writing mechanics	Stovall, Ch. 2	Quiz Chapter 2
<b>Jan 29 Week 3</b>		Introduction to style	Stovall, Ch. 3	Quiz Chapter 3
<b>Feb 5 Week 4</b>		The elements of news	Stovall Ch. 4	Quiz Chapter 4
<b>Feb 12 Week 5</b>		Basic news writing	Stovall Ch. 5	Quiz Chapter 5
<b>Feb 19 Week 6</b>		Basic news writing II	Stovall Ch. 6	Quiz Chapter 6
<b>Feb 26 Week 7</b>			Stovall Ch. 7	Quiz Chapter 7
<b>March 5 Week 8</b>				Midterm
<b>March 12 Spring Break</b>				
<b>March 19 Week 9</b>		Broadcast writing style	Stovall Ch. 8	Quiz Chapter 8
<b>March 26 Week 10</b>		Broadcast story forms	Stovall, Ch. 9	Quiz Chapter 9
<b>April 2 Week 11</b>		Nonlinear storytelling & presenting information online	Stovall, Ch. 10	Quiz Chapter 10
<b>April 9 Week 12</b>		Writing for Public Relations	Stovall, Ch. 11	

<b>April 16 Week 13</b>		Writing for Public Relations	Stovall, Ch. 11	Quiz Chapter 11
<b>April 23 Week 14</b>		Media Law	Stovall, Ch. 12	
<b>April 30 Week 15</b>		Media Law	Stovall, Ch. 12	Quiz Chapter 12
<b>May 7 Finals Week</b>				<b>Final</b>

As the instructor of this class I reserve the right to change the syllabus at will during any point of the class, so it would behoove you to check blackboard and your school email regularly through the semester.