

Sam Houston State University » Department of Mass Communication
MCOM 1332 Writing for Mass Media, Section 07» Spring 2018
Tues/Thur 11 a.m.-12:20 p.m. Room 205 Dan Rather Communication Building

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Office: Dan Rather Communications Building, RM 308
Office hours: Tues/Thur 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. or by appointment

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 (9th edition), by James G. Stovall, Published by Allyn & Bacon

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 three unexcused absences will result in a letter grade drop for each additional absence.
- 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		Assignment/exam points	
A	900 points and above	Attendance & participation	200
B	800-890	Exercises & quizzes	150
C	700-790		
D	600-690		
F	590 & below		
		<u>Assignments*</u>	
		Assignment 1 (Print)	150
		Assignment 2 (Broadcast)	150
		Assignment 3 (Public relations)	200
		<u>Exams</u>	
		Midterm Exam	150

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

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

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

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.

MCOM 1332 Fall 2017 Course Schedule (Subject to change)

	Section	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Jan 18 – Week 1	Introduction	Syllabus and Grammar Module		
Jan 23 – Week 2		Professional writing for the media	Stovall, Ch. 1	
Jan 25		Writing mechanics	Stovall, Ch. 2	
Jan 30– Week 3		Introduction to style	Stovall, Ch. 3	
Feb 1		Lab Day		
Feb 6 – Week 4		The elements of news	Stovall, Ch. 4	
Feb 8		The reporting method		
Feb 13– Week 5		Collecting information		
Feb 15	Writing for print media	Leads and story focus	Rich, “Leads and nut graphs,” pp. 131-144 (Blackboard)	
Feb 20 – Week 6		Basic news writing	Stovall, Ch. 5	
Feb 22		Putting it all together for print news		
Feb 27 – Week 7		Magazine and advanced story order		Assignment 1 Print News Release due
March 1		Ethical case study		
March 6 – Week 8		Midterm Review		

March 8				Midterm Exam
March 13 –		Spring break NO CLASS		
March 15		Spring break NO CLASS		
March 20 – Week 9	Writing for broadcast	Broadcast story forms	Stovall, Ch. 8	
March 22		Broadcast writing style		
March 27 – Week 10		News scripts		
March 29		Script writing		
April 3- Week 11	Writing for the web	Nonlinear storytelling & presenting information online	Stovall, Ch. 7	
April 5		Writing for web series continued		Assignment 2 Broadcast Script due
April 10 – Week 12		Writing headlines, summaries		
April 12	Advertising	The product and target market, Advertising formats and Writing advertising copy	Stovall, Ch. 11	
April 17 – Week 13		Writing Advertising Copy		
April 19-		Writing for Advertising continued		
April 24 – Week 14	Writing for Public Relations	Public relations process	Stovall, Ch. 10	
April 26		Press releases		

May 1-Week 15		Press releases continued		
May 3		Lab Day		
May 7- May 10 Finals week	Final Assignment due May 9th			PR Newsletter (Assignment 3)