

COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

Instructor: Nan Fairley

Office Hours:

TEXT: Community Journalism: The Personal Approach by Jock Lauterer
Assigned Readings
You will also need a dictionary and AP Stylebook, and you should read a newspaper daily.

Prerequisites: JRNL 2210, JRNL 1100

Course Description:

This course encourages students to take a complete view of community journalism. An effort will be made to view the total newspaper from several perspectives, ranging from publisher/manager, to advertising manager, to circulation director, to editor and reader. Community journalism is usually defined as journalism by papers--usually weeklies--with circulations of fewer than 50,000 that focus on service to their particular communities.

Public or civic journalism is usually defined as journalism that strives to provide readers with what they need to be responsible citizens. As Jock Lauterer makes clear in chapter 19 of Community Journalism, there is a strong overlap between these two types of journalism. In this course, we will explore and examine the relationships between these two types of journalism through reading, discussion, and practice. That practice will involve students actually creating and developing community newspaper resources and products. Major issues, such as diversity and attracting younger readers, will also be explored. The class will be involved in a major project stressing practical applications of skills needed by community journalists.

OBJECTIVE: Students are expected to apply knowledge and experience to "real life" by getting hands-on experience in a community. The civic engagement/service learning component involves a project that will be worth 50 percent of the grade for this class. Students are required to devote a minimum of 20 hours in a designated community where they will apply and demonstrate journalistic skills by creating a media product that serves the identified community. Many AU journalism students will become opinion-makers, reporters, and editors at community newspapers. This immersion experience in a community will challenge stereotypes as students acquire critical thinking skills. Students will be exposed to issues that pose major community challenges through their participation in the civic engagement project.

Objectives for each student include: Demonstration of knowledge in these areas through exams, outside reading assignments, and projects; integrating and demonstrating knowledge of community journalism practices by completing a comprehensive and quality project that address a specific audience.

GOALS

The goal of this course is to help prepare students for careers in community journalism. To reach this goal, we will investigate:

- The Special Role of Community Newspapers in Society
- Potential Conflicts in Economic vs. Social Responsibility Roles
- Top Management Issues Ranging from Creating Diverse Newsrooms to Management Styles
- Effective Policies and Procedures
- Technology and Changing Work Environments
- Readership

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

Quizzes, Class Participation and Outside Readings	- 30 percent
Community Newspaper Immersion Project	- 10 percent
Mid-Term Test-	5 percent
Community Civic Journalism Project	50 percent
Final Exam	5 percent

Time devoted to the PROJECT is required (20 hours) and will be monitored/documented throughout the semester. Failure to participate following team/class guidelines will affect your grade.

ATTENDANCE: More than five unexcused absences earn an F in the course. See Tiger Cub for acceptable excuses and make sure I have made note of your excused absences.

OTHER:

Students will be expected to collect and present findings on a weekly basis. Weekly journal reflections on our civic engagement projects will also be required. Please collect all articles from your own research, reflections and assigned readings in a notebook that I will review at mid-semester and at the end of class. This material will also be a component in your final presentation. Students must complete weekly two-page reflection papers about their experience to document what they did that week, what they learned, and how it relates to the final project and class discussions/lecture material. These reflection papers must be turned in every Thursday beginning in Week 5.

Other class projects designed to expose students to community journalism issues will evolve over the semester. I expect full participation of students in class discussions and project work. This is an upper-level class, and I expect maturity and hard work.

Factors that will affect your Final Project Grade include:

- A. Innovation
- B. Personal Responsibility and Leadership
- C. Impact on the Community (Feedback From Community Members/partners)
- D. The Product
- E. Time and commitment to the project
- F. Both individual and team evaluations

The true test is the creation of a viable print publication that serves your partner community.

PORTFOLIO:

One requirement for the class is a Portfolio. You should keep each graded assignment in a letter-size folder along with a copy of ungraded version. You should also keep copies of all handouts in this notebook.

The portfolio should also be a log of all time spent in your assigned community and include details on all community project activities, including reflection papers.

DEADLINES: Learning to write on deadlines is a part of journalism education. Deadlines are absolute. Late papers will receive a grade of F.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

We will be doing a great deal of independent work outside of regular class time. I expect active participation in class discussions, professional behavior “on the job” and a lot of hard work from you. Feel free to visit my office at any time and let me know well in advance of any problems you are having completing an assignment.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Any student needing special accommodations should contact Dr. Kelley Haynes, Director of the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096. Only those students who provide documentation from Dr. Haynes will be accommodated.

“The Department of Communication and Journalism recognizes the importance of both reflecting and teaching diversity. Our policy is intended to be inclusive of all underrepresented and minority groups whatever their race, religion, national origin, gender, age, ability or sexual orientation.”

**Academic dishonesty is an offense that will be reported to the Academic Honesty Committee. See Tiger Cub for more information.*

Week 1

Introduction to Community Journalism

Read Chapter 1-2 in Community Journalism

Outside Reading 1

Week 2

Outside Reading 2

Chapter 3&4 Community Journalism

Chapter 20, Community Journalism

Outside Reading 3

Week 3

More on Editorial Issues

Read Chapter 6 & 7, Community Journalism

Outside Reading 4

Chapter 18

Week 4

Required Field Trip

Community Project Starts

Editorial Chapter 8&9

Week 5

Weekly Reports Begin

Chapters 13-14/Design & Photojournalism

Week 6

Management and Business Issues

Chapter 17 & 18

Week 7

Second Half of Class/Group Project Work

Ethics, Chapter 16

Week 8

Mid-Semester Project Due

Mid-Semester Test

Week 9

Story Deadlines

- Site Visits: Lab Work: Final Budget

Week 11

Editorial Board Meetings & Project Work

Chapter 23, Case Studies

Week 12, Outside Readings and Progress Reports Due

Week 13 SITE VISITS/TEAM WORK including Editorial Board Meetings & Design

Chapter 24/Troubleshooting

Week 14 Final Production Deadline

Week 15 Project Presentation to Community

* The final exam will be on the University-set date and time of the final examination period.