

News Media Writing
Fall 2005
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You just saw a fire and attempt to answer all your friends' questions: Where was it? Anyone hurt? How bad was the fire? How did it start? Reporters do the same thing – answer questions. This class helps you look for important parts of any story and teaches you how to smoothly pull all those elements into a composition that can be read quickly and understood perfectly by someone struggling to find time to grab a cup of coffee or stuff a child into a car seat before work. Thus, all J008 teachers expect students by the end of the semester to:

- Accurately and efficiently produce stories of the quantity and range of topics required in any newsroom, publication or company.
- Identify and write the best approach to a story – straight lead, feature lead or blended lead – and know how long that story should be.
- Apply critical thinking skills in deciding basic needs of a story and how to find information and interpret it.
- Convert print stories into broadcast stories.
- Have a preliminary knowledge of professional ethics, responsibilities and rights including the need for diversity and freedom from stereotyping.

Other information:

My office: Room 409 Johnston Hall. Office hours will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. E-mail works great: Rummler1@aol.com.

Procedures, Evaluations and Attendance: There will be no formal tests. Your entire grade emerges from writing, editing and rewriting. Because I believe we learn to write by rewriting, the following procedure will be followed: You will receive one grade for the first effort and another grade for the rewrite. However, the grade on the rewrite will not be entered until you hand in an errorless rewrite. You will turn in as many rewrites as necessary. The key, of course, is to do it right the first or second time, not the fifth or sixth time. If you receive an A on the first effort, you will also get an A on the rewrite, but that second grade, just as for those receiving a lower grade, will not be entered until all errors have been corrected. An A is worth seven points, an AB six and so on. At the end of the semester I add up the points and divide by the number of assignments so missed work, including incomplete rewrites, kills you. Why this approach? In the real world, correctly spelling 90% of all names brings no praise. Neither does getting most of an address or transposing only two numbers. If you are asked to edit someone else's work, your editing will be graded.

Literary Shyness: Shed it. You are heading into jobs where other writers, layers of editors, copy editors and the public evaluate your work so get used to your copy being read and discussed in class. Tenderly.

Plagiarism, Falsifying Sources. The following is the college position:

In accordance with the high standards of excellence set forth by, and for, all members of the Marquette University community, the College of Communication finds it imperative that each student understands that the responsibilities associated with high standards of excellence include ensuring that all class work undertaken in this college is performed in an environment that promotes serious scholarship and moral rectitude. Therefore, the college herein delineates a zero-tolerance policy for acts of academic dishonesty. All acts of suspected academic dishonesty will be thoroughly investigated in a manner that is fair, timely and efficient and done so in a manner that protects the rights of both the faculty member and the student. Any individual who is found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty may receive a penalty up to and including expulsion from Marquette University. The definition of plagiarism includes lifting chunks of material from the Web without attribution.