

Journalism 415 — Fall 2017 Syllabus

Tuesday & Thursday 4 p.m.–5:15 p.m. (#21872)
2096 Dole Human Development Center

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Multimedia Reporting

Welcome to Journalism 415, a course in multimedia reporting. In this course you'll learn how to research, report, craft and polish stories for a variety of media platforms, including online, print and broadcast. You'll learn to tell stories quickly, accurately and thoroughly.

The goals of this class are to ...

- Learn to use primary and secondary research to build stories.
- Learn to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
- Learn to use your reporting skills to construct informative stories.
- Learn to tell stories using text, images and sound.
- Generate ideas for stories that are newsworthy, informative, clear and concise.
- Develop stories that present information accurately and fairly, including multiple perspectives from diverse audiences.
- Develop stories that are thorough and comprehensive.
- Collect information ethically.
- Report and prepare materials on deadline.
- Appreciate the First Amendment and its role in reporting and storytelling.
- Use a variety of writing styles and multiple forms of media to tell stories in complementary ways.

How you will learn

In this class, you'll learn by doing.

Each week you'll complete assignments that require you to think critically and creatively about "what is news," then package that news in a way that is informative and entertaining for media audiences. You'll be assigned story ideas, and you'll also be asked to come up with your own ideas. You'll gather information through

primary research (interviews) and secondary research (analysis and synthesis of information collected by others). You'll look for credible sources, and you'll use those sources to prepare and present stories that are accurate, fair and balanced.

You'll also be expected to **complete five 3-hour shifts in the KUJH newsroom**. These shifts will be scheduled via a sign-up basis and spread throughout the semester. Hint: Don't wait until the end of the semester to cram in all your required shifts.

Course materials

Access to Blackboard.
USB storage drive.
Digital recorder.
SD card for video cameras.
(No required textbook.)

What you'll need to do to succeed

- *Show up*

To avoid the nonsense often associated with "excused" and "unexcused" absences, know that you have one free absence. Use your freebie for sleeping, court dates, funerals, Twenty One Pilots concerts or whatever. We don't have to know why you aren't in class. After you've used your freebie, your course grade may drop a full letter for the second absence – and a letter for every absence following.

- *Pay attention to the policies*

Deadlines are, well, deadlines. We don't accept late assignments. Catastrophic events are the exception, but less than a catastrophe will earn you a zero. Even one zero could seriously decrease your grade. You'll be expected to begin work on assignments soon enough to contact all necessary sources or to prepare a backup story. Check with me if you have difficulty with sources.

Type all your assignments, unless told otherwise by me. Aside from a few in-class exercises, this means no handwritten assignments.

Turn off your phone when you come to class. No scrolling Instagram or playing Fruit Ninja in lab.

The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or lab meeting.

Disabilities: The University of Kansas is committed to helping all students learn. If you have a special need that may affect your learning, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Please be aware that the KU Office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted this office, please do so as soon as possible. Information about services can be found at <http://www.disability.ku.edu/~disability/>. Or you can visit the office on the first floor of Strong Hall. The phone numbers are: 785-864-2620. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course.

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid. Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

Course materials and lectures are property of the instructor or School of Journalism. You must obtain permission to record lectures electronically or use course materials outside this course.

In the event of inclement weather, KU officials make the decision to cancel classes. Call 785-864-SNOW (7669) to find out if classes have been canceled.

- *Don't cheat*

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

Plagiarism is stealing. You take someone else's ideas, thoughts or words and you present them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, such as books, as well as materials on the Internet. Cutting and pasting materials from the Internet and presenting that work as if it was your own is plagiarism. There may be times when you want to incorporate another person's ideas, opinions and words into the papers you write, to make a point or to provide background. If you do, it is essential that you attribute that information—that you explain where the information came from and give credit where credit is due. "Recycling" past assignments from other students and presenting them as your own falls into the category of plagiarism.

Fabrication and falsification mean that you made it up. This can include making up an entire story/source or embellishing a fact, quote or statistic to make it sound better. Don't do it. In this course, the penalty for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification is a failing grade for the semester. Additional penalties can include

expulsion from the School of Journalism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please contact me.

You signed a contract of understanding during the j-school orientation that says you know what plagiarism is and its consequences in this school. Don't be the student who has to call home and tell your parents you've been expelled.

Grading

This course has two types of projects. "Exercises" are short-turnaround assignments assigned in class. Exercises come to 25 percent of the final grade. "Projects" are more substantial assignments. Deadlines are published in the Class Schedule document on Blackboard.

Exercises and Projects:

- Cover a Speech Exercise - 25
- Press Conference Exercise - 25
- Infographic Exercise – 25
- Social Media Exercise - 25
- Photographic Storytelling Exercise - 25
- Enterprise Story- 50
- Audio Podcast - 50
- Video - 50
- 300 Words Story - 50
- Final Project - 100
- Attendance and Participation, including completion of newsroom shifts - 75
- TOTAL: 500

The projects and grade weights are subject to revision as the course goes along.

Understand the grades you earn

93 to 100 percent – EXCELLENT (A)

An excellent story accomplishes **ALL** of the following:

- Provides readers with accurate and timely information.
- Has a clear summary focus statement positioned either in a summary lead (or lead-in for broadcast writing) or in a nut graf high in the story or news release.
- Presents a compelling lead that establishes the theme of the story and features new information or an intriguing anecdote or scene.
- Develops the story's theme through exhaustive reporting, research, persuasive examples and compelling quotes from key sources.
- Attributes all information that requires attribution.
- Sustains focus through logical organization and compelling transitions.

- Expresses ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety
- Demonstrates facility with the conventions (i.e., grammar, usage, mechanics and AP style) of journalistic writing, usually manifested in flawless use of the language

87 to 92 percent— GOOD (B+ to A-)

A good story accomplishes **MOST** of the following:

- Provides readers with accurate and timely information.
- Has a clear summary focus statement positioned either in a summary lead (or lead-in for broadcast writing) or in a nut graf high in the story or news release.
- Presents a compelling lead that establishes the theme of the story and features new information or an intriguing anecdote or scene.
- Develops the story's theme through exhaustive reporting, research, persuasive examples and compelling quotes from key sources.
- Attributes all information that requires attribution.
- Sustains focus through logical organization and compelling transitions.
- Expresses ideas fluently and precisely, using effective vocabulary and sentence variety.

77 to 86 percent — AVERAGE (C+ to B)

An average story accomplishes **MOST** of the following:

- Provides readers with accurate information.
- Has a summary focus statement positioned either in a summary lead or in a nut graf.
- Presents a lead that establishes the theme of the story and focuses on new information
- Develops the story's theme through reporting, research, persuasive examples and quotes from key sources.
- Attributes all information that requires attribution.
- Sustains adequate focus through elementary organizational and transitional devices.
- Expresses ideas using adequate vocabulary and sentence variety.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the conventions of journalistic writing, though errors occur.

67 to 76 percent — LIMITED (D+ to C)

A limited story exhibits **ONE** of the following:

- Provides readers with accurate information that may not be timely
- Has an unclear summary focus statement positioned either in a summary lead or in a nut graf high in the story.
- Presents a lead that does not establish the theme of the story.
- Contains inadequate reporting and research, but can be salvaged with more effort.
- Leaves unattributed a single piece of information that needs attribution.

- Appears to have a vague organizational philosophy.
- Has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity.
- Contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, AP style and/or journalistic writing style.

60 to 66 percent —WEAK (D- to D)

A weak story exhibits **MORE THAN ONE** of the following:

- Provides readers with accurate information that may not be timely.
- Has an unclear summary focus statement positioned either in a summary lead or in a nut graf high in the story.
- Presents a lead that does not establish the theme of the story.
- Contains inadequate reporting and research, but can be salvaged with more effort.
- Leaves unattributed a single piece of information that needs attribution.
- Appears to have a vague organizational philosophy.
- Has problems in language and sentence structure that result in a lack of clarity.
- Contains occasional major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, AP style and/or journalistic writing style.

1 to 59 percent — FAILING (F)

A failing story exhibits **ONE OR MORE** of the following characteristics:

- Provides readers with inaccurate information.
- Appears to contain little “news.”
- Appears to have no focus statement or summary lead.
- Provides little or no evidence what sources were used to gather information.
- Exhibits a serious lack of organization.
- Exhibits severe problems in sentence structure that persistently interfere with meaning.
- Contains pervasive errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, journalistic writing style and/or AP style.