Staff writers,

Welcome to the ever-changing world of journalism and to the inky, award-winning pages of The Brookhaven Courier. I hope you enjoy becoming a part of the rich history of Brookhaven College’s 40-year-old student newspaper. It is my goal to make sure you get as much out of this course as I did when I first started my career in journalism here at Brookhaven. I completely understand that juggling your assignments for the newspaper with course work from your other classes can seem a bit overwhelming at times. But if you communicate with me, your other professors and the newspaper editors, staff and advisers, I’m sure you will find the work manageable and, ultimately, very rewarding.

Since first publishing from “The Basement” of the L Building in Fall of 1978 (the original newsroom is now the darkroom in L118), our modest newspaper quickly established itself as a reputable repository of all the campus and Dallas County Community College District news that was fit to print. And after leaving Brookhaven, many former staffers have had bylines in local publications such as Dallas Morning News, FD Luxe, Dallas Observer, D Magazine, Dallas Voice, Dallas CBS Radio and Denton Record Chronicle, as well as numerous other national publications from NPR to Billboard to the CBS Sunday Morning Show. The goal of this course is to prepare students for a career in today’s media by improving each student’s awareness of the functioning of a small publication, while highlighting the importance of accepting responsibility for completing deadline-sensitive, newspaper-related tasks. Please, if you run into a problem with an assignment, don’t ever hesitate to stop by the newsroom, Bldg. U, Room U241, or my office, L113, during my posted office hours.

That’s all on-the-record,
Daniel Rodrigue

I. Course Number and Title: COMM 2311, Media Writing [This is a Texas Common Course Number.]

II. Catalog Description: Prerequisite: Typing ability. “This course focuses upon recognizing newsworthy events, gathering information and writing the straight news story. It provides a basis for future study in newspaper and magazine writing, advertising, broadcast journalism and public relations. Students are required to write for the campus newspaper. (2 Lec., 3 Lab.)”

III. Class Meeting Time: 10:30 – 11:50 a.m. on Mondays & Wednesdays in L109.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes: The student will:

1. Know how to create news and feature stories.
2. Know how to communicate information clearly, interestingly and accurately.
3. Be able to conduct interviews.
4. Be familiar with the applications of libel law.
5. Understand the use of The Associated Press Stylebook.
6. Know how to edit messages for different media outlets and audiences.
7. Know how to identify newsworthy events.
8. Be able to demonstrate research skills.
9. Be able to simplify sentences and paragraphs.
10. Improve spelling, grammar and punctuation skills.
11. Know the basics of using quotations and attribution.
12. Be aware of the value of the role of ethics in journalistic practice.
13. Learn to value the implications of the First Amendment.

Specifically, the student will:

1. Develop story ideas, gather information, conduct interviews and write stories for use by the staff of the campus newspaper. The stories may be published in both the print and online versions of the student newspaper and may occasionally be quoted or referenced in other local publications. Published stories may also be entered in contests. Students will also communicate with the art director on any art or photo suggestions.
2. Complete class exercises dealing with newsworthiness, copy preparation, straight news, feature stories and law and ethics as they affect journalists.
4. Use a computer, voice recorders and cameras to research, report, type, edit, save and send stories.

V. Required Course Materials:

01902000888] Do not buy the 8th, 9th or 10th edition.
B. The Associated Press Stylebook (most recent edition, new or used) – hard copy or phone app
C. Webster’s New World Dictionary – hard copy or phone app
D. Five to 10 notepads for interviewing
E. Four (4) Apperson DataLink 1200 Scantrons and a #2 pencil
F. Not required but strongly recommended: Voice recorder for interviewing (and the Olympus TP8)

VI. Course Policies:
A. STOP BEFORE YOU DROP: If you are thinking about dropping the course due to coursework overload and/or grade status, talk to the instructor first. In most cases, the instructor will be flexible and work with you to come up with a plan for you to complete the course successfully.
B. Grade disputes: Students have one (1) week from the date they receive a story grade to dispute that grade. After one week, the story grade is considered final – no exceptions.
C. Attendance: Don’t be late to class. This is an easy class to earn an “A” if you attend regularly. But we’ll cover a lot if important material in every class session about how to write and report your stories, as well as the actual course material. And I’ll start promptly every class session. Also, according to the DCCCD catalog: “Students are expected to regularly attend all classes in which they are enrolled. Students have the responsibility to attend class and to consult with the instructor when an absence occurs.”
D. Code of Ethics: All students are required to read The Brookhaven Courier Code of Ethics and indicate they agree to abide by the code by signing the Code of Ethics Acknowledgment Form before their stories can be published in The Courier. The Code of Ethics and the acknowledgment form are located in the student newsroom, U241.
E. Cyber civility: Think before you tweet or post. Cyber civility is critical and is addressed in the Code of Ethics.
F. Participation: Take notes. Ask questions based on your readings in the text. Turn your cellphones and laptops OFF before each class session begins.
G. Plagiarism: Plagiarism of any form cannot and will not be tolerated. ALL assignments must be original work. Plagiarized work will receive a zero. No exceptions or excuses. (At many j-schools, students caught plagiarizing are immediately expelled.) Students who are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism should speak with the instructor or newspaper adviser.
H. Late Work: Absolutely no late work will be accepted. No exceptions.
I. The instructor has the right to add to, delete from, or otherwise revise the syllabus and/or course calendar.

VII. Course Evaluation: The course grade will be determined based on the following:

- 50 percent: News stories or features (average of five story grades)
- 20 percent: Tests (average of four test grades)
- 20 percent: Exercises (average of 10 highest of 12 exercise grades)
- 5 percent: Story sheets/pitches (average of five story sheets/pitches)
- 5 percent: Stringbook (Grade will be based on criteria listed under “Stringbook” below)
- Additional points may be added at the end of the semester based on attendance and punctuality.

Extra Credit: Students can earn extra credit to replace their lowest story grade by reading Brookhaven’s Open Book selection or by attending one of the Open Book Events and writing a critical response essay of 600-1,000 words.

Other factors that may affect the course grade include attitude and participation. The instructor has the right to give various extra-credit points to students who take on extra stories, assignments or duties for The Courier. Any exceptions to the grading policy require student documentation and instructor approval. Documentation does not guarantee approval.

Grading Scale:
- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 0-59

VIII. Course Expectations

a. News stories: Read the following bullet points thoroughly.

- Students will be required to write a minimum of five (5) stories. These are the recommended stories, in order:
  - One (1) story about an on-campus SkillsShop (must attend and “cover” the SkillsShop)
  - One (1) preview of an on-campus event (the subject can be about general news, arts & culture, sports, STEM, etc.)
  - One (1) news story about the event that was previewed OR a different news story
  - One (1) feature story
  - One (1) of choice (news, column, critical review, feature, opinion/editorial, etc.)

- Adviser Sessions: All students will be required to meet with Daniel, Rori or Kate for approximately 30 minutes per story, during which the adviser will review the student’s current story and give revisions. The student is then required to make the story revisions before re-submitting the story to the editors and instructor by the story’s deadline.
Students will email their stories to both the instructor (dtrodrigue@dccc.edu) and to courier.assignments@gmail.com. Failure to email a story to both will result in that story receiving a zero (0). NO EXCEPTIONS. Each story must contain the respective story number (i.e., Practice Story, Story #1, Story #2, etc.) in the top left corner of the front page.

Students may write up to two additional stories to substitute for the two lowest news story grades or for stories missed due to absences. Students will receive a grade of “0” (zero) for each story not submitted.

To even be considered for publication or grading, the minimum length for each story is roughly 450 to 525 words, or about “30 lines” (depending on formatting in Word). Thoroughness, however, is a grading consideration; so most stories should be longer than 30 lines to provide adequate coverage – closer to 700 or 800 words, especially for features. All stories must have at least three human sources. Write stories with publication dates in mind. This is ESSENTIAL for advance stories.

Story grades may be lowered – even after they are graded and returned to students – if factual errors and/or plagiarism are found prior to or following publication. Suggested story deadlines are listed on the course calendar to help you manage the course workload. However, all stories must be submitted by Wednesday, April 24.

No brights, commentaries, Q&As or off-campus reviews may be submitted for story grades unless approved by the instructor. (Though they may be included in the stringbook if they were printed in the campus newspaper.) In general, stories should pertain directly to the Brookhaven College community, but exceptions may be made if approved by the editor and yours truly.

Two or more students cannot receive credit for the same story – so attend those staff meetings! The exception to this rule is if the instructor approves a double byline prior to reporting the story.

Be sure to schedule appointments for interviews well in advance of the deadline for a story. Waiting until the last minute to try to get an interview is not fair to the person to be interviewed or to you. And your story will suffer as a result. Never schedule interviews during class time for COMM 2311.

b. Tests: Tests will be easy if you attend my reviews, but they will be taken in the Testing Center (not in class) and may cover any information included in the textbook chapters and from lectures. Dates and chapters covered are shown on the Course Calendar. Students are responsible for providing their own Scantrons (a total of 4) and a #2 pencil, as stated above under “Required Course Materials.”

c. Exercises: On the first day of class, you will receive a Class Exercise Packet. It is your responsibility to replace any lost class exercises. Class exercises will be checked at the beginning of class on the due dates. These exercises must be presented during the first 10 minutes of class to receive credit. Because you are graded on the basis of 12 exercises, you may miss four of the 16 exercises without jeopardizing your exercise grade.

d. Story sheets: Story sheets do not count if turned in after noon on the dates indicated on the Course Calendar. Story sheets indicate to the instructor and editors what the student will cover. The story sheet grade is based on a total of five completed story sheets.

e. Stringbook: The stringbook grade generally reflects your story average. The stringbook grade may be lower than the story average if the stories are not in sequential order or if stories are missing, and it may be higher if extra work approved by the instructor is included. Stringbooks must include a computer printout of each story and a clipping for each published story. The stringbook should also include a section containing any other work done by the student for the campus newspaper during the semester.

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**Spring 2019 Important Dates**

Certification date: Feb. 4 | Drop/withdrawal date: April 17 | Final exams: May 13-16 | Holidays (NO CLASS): Feb. 28-March 1, March 11-15, April 19

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**Institutional Policies**

Institutional Policies relating to this course can be accessed from the following link: [https://www.Brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum](https://www.Brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum)

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**Spring 2019 Courier Publication Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising/Copy Deadline</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>February 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>February 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>March 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>April 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>April 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>May 6</td>
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**News Consumption Disclaimer**

Journalism and PR students and Courier staff should closely follow current events by reading a variety of news publications in print and online, especially local print publications such as The Dallas Morning News, Dallas Observer and The Brookhaven Courier. Students should also find time to watch local news broadcast and news radio stations.
The assigned reading for each class date must be completed **before** you come to class. Failure to do so will result in you missing information crucial to class discussions and assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNED READING BEFORE CLASS DATE</th>
<th>DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | W – 1/23 | 1. Course objectives, expectations + overview  
2. Don’t panic – talk to me first – don’t drop!  
3. Always ask for NAMES | Syllabus | 1. Take good notes in class  
2. Ask questions in class (any syllabus questions??)  
☐ Join the Media Writing & News Reporting Facebook group |
|    | M – 1/28 | 1. Forget That Survey  
2. Story sheets + story ideas  
3. Sourcery  
4. NEWSPRINT TOUR | ☐ Class Exercise (CE) #1: Ice Breaker Interviews  
☐ Favorite candy/nutrition bar  
☐ Two of each: favorite print publications & websites |
| 2  | W – 1/30 | 1. How to take good notes + why they’re important  
2. “Thick skin” talk | Ch. 2: Selecting & Reporting the News | ☐ CE #2  
☐ Practice Story Sheet (SS) |
|    | M – 2/4 | 1. The Basics + How to Google  
2. “The Swagger” talk | ☐ CE #3 |
|    | W – 2/6 | Quotations and Attribution | Ch. 10: Quotations & Attribution | ☐ CE #5  
☐ SS #1 |
| 3  | M – 2/11 | 1. How to take good notes + why they’re important  
2. “Thick skin” talk | Ch. 1: Journalism Today | ☐ CE #6 |
|    | W – 2/13 | Interviews | Ch. 11: Interviews | ☐ CE #7 |
|    | M – 2/18 | 1. Superstitions + “Lucky 13”  
2. Feedback on practice stories | ☐ CE #8 |
|    | W – 2/20 | 1. News leads + styles  
2. Inverted pyramid | Ch. 7: Basic News Leads | Test #1 opens in the Testing Center (deadline: March 6) |
| 4  | M – 2/25 | ☐ CE #4 |
|    | W – 2/27 | Quotations and Attribution | Ch. 10: Quotations & Attribution | ☐ CE #5  
☐ SS #1 |
|    | M – 3/4 | Quotations and Attribution, cont. | ☐ CE #6 |
| 5  | W – 3/6 | Newswriting Style | Ch. 3: Newswriting Style | ☐ Test #1 deadline  
☐ SS #2  
☐ Story 1 suggested deadline |
| 6  | 3/11-3/15 | SPRING BREAK | SPRING BREAK | SPRING BREAK |
| 7  | M – 3/12 | Newswriting Style, cont. | ☐ CE #7  
☐ Story 1 [REV] suggested deadline |
|    | W – 3/20 | Feature Stories | Ch. 17: Feature Stories | ☐ CE #8  
☐ Story 1 [REV] suggested deadline |
|    | M – 3/25 | Feature Stories, cont. | Ch. 4: The Language of News | ☐ CE #9  
☐ Test #2 [REV] suggested deadline |
| 8  | W – 3/27 | The Body of a News Story | Ch. 9: The Body of a News Story | ☐ CE #10  
☐ Test #2 suggested deadline |
| 9  | M – 4/1 | The Body of a News Story, cont. | ☐ CE #11  
☐ Story 3 [REV] suggested deadline |
|    | W – 4/3 | Individual conferences & Movie Day | ☐ CE #12  
☐ Test #2 deadline  
☐ SS #4  
☐ Story 3 suggested deadline |
| 10 | M – 4/8 | The Language of News | Ch. 4: The Language of News | ☐ CE #13  
☐ Story 4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Story 4 suggested deadline |
|    | W – 4/10 | Ch. 5: Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues | ☐ CE #14  
☐ All Stories Due |
| 11 | M – 4/15 | Ch. 5: Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues | ☐ CE #15  
☐ Test #3 suggested deadline  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues |
|    | W – 4/17 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #16  
☐ Test #3 deadline  
☐ Test #3 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Ethics & Breakfast Burrito Day  
☐ Ethics |
| 12 | M – 4/22 | Ch. 5: Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues | ☐ CE #17  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #18  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
|    | W – 4/24 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #19  
☐ Test #4 deadline: Monday, May 13  
☐ Stringbooks due in the newsroom by 4 p.m. |
| 13 | M – 4/29 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #20  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #21  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
| 14 | W – 5/1 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #22  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #23  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
| 15 | M – 5/6 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #24  
☐ Test #4 deadline: Monday, May 13  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #25  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
| 16 | W – 5/8 | Ch. 6: Ethics | ☐ CE #26  
☐ Test #4 deadline: Monday, May 13  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #27  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
| 17 | FINALS | ☐ CE #28  
☐ Test #4 deadline: Monday, May 13  
☐ Test #4 [REV] suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 suggested deadline  
☐ Test #4 (deadline: May 13)  
☐ CE #29  
☐ Libel, Privacy and Newsgathering Issues, cont.  
☐ Ethic Day  
☐ Movie Day  
☐ POST-CLASS “CLIPPING PARTY” in newsroom |
Name______________________________

Email______________________________

Phone______________________________

Due Date______________________________

Q: Why are you interested in journalism or PR?

Q: Is this your first news writing/journalism course? Did you write for a school newspaper before?

Q: What are your interests/hobbies outside of school?

(The fine print: By signing this form you’re agreeing that you have read the above portion of the syllabi relating to the “Course Policies,” as well as the grading process, plagiarism policy and the penalty for missing a deadline.)

Student’s Signature:______________________________ Date:______________