Term: 15-Week Course: Media Writing  
Course: COMM-2311-43002  
Course Dates: 2/5/2019 - 5/16/2019  
Class Location: N-200

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Lori Dann</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>972-860-7290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:loridann@dccc.edu">loridann@dccc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office &amp; Office Hours:</td>
<td>N-241</td>
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| A&C Division: | G-Building: Room 138 | 972-860-7124 |

| Course Drop Date: | April 17, 2019 |

| Disclaimer:         | The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary. |

| Institutional Policies: | Eastfield College Institutional Policies  

**Course Description**
This course focuses on the fundamentals of writing for the mass media. It includes instruction in professional methods and techniques for gathering, processing, and delivering content. Students are required to write for student media. (2 Lec., 3 Lab)

**Course Purpose**
To introduce students to the basics of journalism, including interviewing, reporting and writing. There is an emphasis on producing clear, concise writing that adheres to Associated Press style and is suitable for publication.

**Required Course Materials and Supplies**
- *The Associated Press Stylebook*, 2018 edition (or 2017 if not available)
- Daily Newspaper/Newspaper Website: Select a daily newspaper of your choice, such as The Dallas Morning News or The New York Times, and read this publication daily. Your newspaper can be published online or in print. DCCCD students have free access to nytimes.com.
  - Dropbox access (Free)
  - Highly recommended: Digital voice recorder (or phone recording app if your phone is consistently charged) and headphones
  - Suggested tools: Professional Twitter and LinkedIn accounts; Grammar Girl’s website, podcast, social media pages; Et Cetera website and social media sites, Poynter.org website; Student Press Law Center website

**Course Objectives**
To learn the basics of writing for several forms of mass media, including newspapers, the World Wide Web, broadcast news (radio and TV) and public relations. By the end of this course you should be able to research, report and write a news story for several platforms. You will learn to write in a concise, accurate and fair manner, and to work under deadline. You also will brush up your grammar, spelling and punctuation skills, and familiarize yourself with Associated Press style.
Learning Outcomes
After completing the course, you should be able to:

- Define news as it is understood by professional journalists and public relations professionals.
- Demonstrate proper media writing and editing styles.
- Modify writing styles to fit various media platforms.
- Demonstrate effective information gathering skills and techniques.
- Demonstrate an understanding of laws, ethics, and responsibilities of media writing.
- Describe the operation of typical news organizations.
- Understand and use the AP Stylebook.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.

Mass Communications/Journalism Student Learning Outcomes
Students who earn an associates degree in Mass Communications/Journalism and Broadcast Journalism will have increased knowledge and understanding of:

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<tr>
<th>First Amendment</th>
<th>Journalism students should value the implications the First Amendment has throughout journalistic work.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Journalism students should be able to edit and communicate messages verbally and non-verbally for different media outlets and audiences.</td>
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<td>News</td>
<td>Journalism students should be able to identify newsworthy events, gather information about the same, and communicate those to audiences of different media outlets after editing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate the use of different technologies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate awareness and understanding of and/or apply the codes of ethics as well as legal rights and restrictions inherent to their chosen field of journalism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Journalism students should demonstrate research skills throughout their practical and academic course work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Journalism students should discuss the diversity of their professional environment as well as their audiences.</td>
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Class Attendance Policy
This is a skills class, so class attendance is critical to your overall success. You must attend both class and lab sessions. Activities during lectures and labs, such as quizzes and other in-class assignments, represent a significant portion of your overall grade. Those with an unexcused absence will receive a zero on their assignment and cannot make it up. After 3 unexcused absences, a 10-point deduction will be taken on the 4th and subsequent unexcused absences. Students will receive 50 points for attending all classes/labs and participating in discussions and peer reviews.

The stories you work on for this class will be considered for publication in Eastfied’s national-award-winning student newspaper, The Et Cetera, and missing classes or labs could interfere with your story deadlines. Treat this class as if it is a job. Be on time and meet deadlines. If you must miss class or lab, contact your instructor in advance, just as you would your editor or boss at work. Acceptable reasons for missing class include a verifiable illness, family emergency or religious holiday. Be prepared to show documentation, such as a physician’s note.
Lab Hours
Students will be required to complete three lab hours per week, which are built into the course meeting time. Some class meetings will be used for writing and interviews and will count toward lab hours.

Missed Deadlines and Assignments/Tests
Journalism/Communications is a deadline-oriented field. **Late assignments will not be accepted** without providing proper documentation or getting prior approval from the instructor. Accommodations will be made for students who miss assignments or tests due to an approved extracurricular activity with the school or an illness that is accompanied by a doctor’s note.

Class Participation
Students are expected to complete assigned readings and be prepared to participate in classroom discussions about topics included in the readings. Students may also be asked to perform peer reviews. Students will receive up to 50 points for attendance and class participation.

Cell Phone Policy
Cell phones should NEVER be used in class, including text messaging, unless they are part of an assignment. You may be asked to leave class for using a cell phone inappropriately. Computers and Internet use are reserved for classwork.

Assignments and Grading

**News and Feature Articles (6 total, 5 will count)**
News and feature writing assignments are a major part of this course. Failing to turn in one story will have a major impact on your grade. Students will be graded with a rubric that addresses 5 areas worth 20 points each: overall news value, quality of the lead, structure, quality/number of sources, and AP Style, spelling and grammar. The lowest score on the six stories will be dropped if the student has turned in all six assignments.

100 points each = 500 possible points

**Midterm and Final**
There will be a closed-book midterm and final exam that will focus on your readings, class lectures/discussions, major AP Style issues and news writing techniques.

100 points each = 200 possible points

**AP Style/Current Events/Readings Quizzes (10 will count)**
There will be weekly AP Style and Current Events quizzes. The AP Style portion will be open book. Students will be allowed to drop their lowest quiz grade.

10 points each = 100 possible points

**Other Newsgathering Assignments (4)**
Students will be given four assignments relating to the writing process.

25 points each = 100 possible points

**Portfolio**
Students will compile a digital portfolio of all stories written during the class on Contently.com or another online site that can be used as a digital portfolio.

50 possible points
Classroom Participation
Students will be graded on participation in classroom discussions and assistance with peer reviews of news stories.

Value: 50 Points

Total Possible Points in Course: 1,000

Grading Scale
A = 900-1,000 points
B = 800-899 points
C = 700-799 points
D = 600-699 points
F = 0-599 points

Extra Credit
Students can earn extra credit for attending journalism-related events on campus that are announced in class or having additional stories published by the student newspaper, outside of those assigned in class. Student editors cannot get academic credit or extra credit for stories they are paid to produce as part of their job requirements.

Obtaining Final Course Grades
Final Grade Reports are no longer mailed. Convenient access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report, which is available in the Admissions Office.

Eastfield College Email Policy
Faculty and students must have and use a DCCCD account* for all correspondence relating to academic coursework. I cannot communicate with you about grades via email unless you are using a DCCCD account. If you do not have a DCCCD account and wish to discuss your grade, you will need to contact me via telephone or set up an appointment to meet on campus.

*For information on setting up a DCCCD student email account, go to: http://www.dcccd.edu/SS/OnlineSvs/Pages/MSOffice.aspx.

IMPORTANT: You may email the instructor through your DCCCD account or through eCampus by clicking on the Send Email option under Tools. DO NOT send messages through Course Messages because it does not send me a notification when you do.

Certification Information
You must attend and participate in your on-campus or online course(s) in order to receive federal financial aid. Your instructor is required by law to validate your attendance in any course in order for you to receive financial aid. You must attend class before Feb. 15 in order to be certified as an active student in the class. Failure to do so by the deadline date could affect your financial aid, if you receive any.

Withdrawing from the Class
Please see me first if you are considering withdrawing from this course. If a student is unable to complete a course (or courses) in which he/she is registered, it is the responsibility of the student to withdraw from the course by the drop date of April 24. If a student does not withdraw and does not complete the course, he/she will receive a performance grade, usually an “F”. Students who are receiving financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from classes. Withdrawals may affect your eligibility to receive further aid and could cause you to be in a position of repayment for the current semester.
Stop Before You Drop
Texas Education Code 51.907 limits the number of courses a student may drop. You may drop no more than 6 courses during your entire undergraduate career unless the drop qualifies as an exception. Your campus counseling/advising center will give you more information on the allowable exceptions. Remember that once you have accumulated 6 non-exempt drops, you cannot drop any other courses with a “W”. Therefore, please exercise caution when dropping courses in any Texas public institution of higher learning, including all seven of the Dallas County Community Colleges.

Academic Honesty
Your enrollment indicates acceptance of the DCCCD Code of Student Conduct published here: https://www1.dcccd.edu/catalog/GeneralInfo/CollegePolicies/code.cfm?loc=EFC. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism and collusion.

* **Cheating** includes copying from another student’s work, using unauthorized materials, collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting the contents of an unadministered test, and substituting for another person to take a test or complete an assignment.
* **Plagiarism** involves partially or entirely copying an author’s sentences or words and presenting it as your own work in a paper, quiz, blog, or discussion post. You cannot mix the author’s words with your own or “plug” your synonyms into the author’s sentence structure. The author’s words, phrases and sentences must be put in your words, in your style of writing. When you do this, you are demonstrating understanding and comprehension. **If you summarize, paraphrase or directly quote from an author, you must use quotation marks and the appropriate documentation because the ‘idea(s)’ still belong to the author. Simply citing a source is not enough when taking information word for word from another source.**
* **Collusion** is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements.

Plagiarism/Charting/Collusion Penalties
If plagiarism, cheating, or collusion is committed, it will result in a zero on the assignment upon the first offense and a mandatory meeting to discuss the gravity of the offense, particularly in the field of journalism. Second and subsequent offenses may result in other penalties under the college’s Code of Student Conduct.

Obtaining Final Course Grades
Final Grade Reports are not mailed. Convenient access is available online at www.econnect.dcccd.edu. Use your identification number when you log onto eConnect. Your grades will also be printed on your Student Advising Report.

Key Semester Dates
**February 5:** First day of class.
**February 15:** Certification Date. Students who have not attended class by Feb. 15 will not be certified as active class members.
**February 28 & March 1:** Professional Development Days for faculty. No classes.
**March 11-15:** Spring Break. Campus closed.
**April 19:** Holiday. Campus closed.
**April 24:** Final day to withdraw with a ‘W’
**May 13-16:** Final Exams
**May 20:** Course grades posted on eCampus

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.
| Week 1: Feb. 5 and 7 | Introductions: Why Are You Here?  
The First Amendment  
What is News?  
News Judgment  
News Values & Qualities |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 2: Feb. 12 and 14 | Fairness and news language  
Basic Story Forms  
Writing Leads and Nut graphs  
Navigating the AP Stylebook |
| Week 3: Feb. 19 and 21 | Interviewing  
Quotes & Attribution  
Note taking  
AP Style: Numbers, Abbreviations & Titles |
| Week 4: Feb. 26  
(No class on Feb. 28 due to Professional Development Day for faculty) | Research  
Finding Sources  
Information selection  
AP Style: Capitalization |
| Week 5: March 5 and 7 | Covering a Beat  
Types of Beats and Coverage  
AP Style: Punctuation |
| Week 6: March 11-17 **SPRING BREAK.** No classes. | NO ASSIGNMENTS — RELAX! |
| Week 7: March 19 and 21 | Beyond Breaking News: Investigative Reporting  
Freedom of Information Act  
AP Style: Word usage |
| Week 8: March 26 and 28 | Feature Writing: Structure  
Observation and sensory reporting |
| Week 9: April 2 and 4 | Feature Writing cont.  
Obituaries  
**Midterm Exam** |
| Week 10: April 9 and 11 | Meetings, speeches and press conferences  
Public records and documents as sources |
| Week 11: April 16 and 18 | Law & Ethics  
Libel  
Plagiarism, Fabrication, Privacy, Diversity |
| Week 12: April 23 and 25 | Digital Storytelling  
Convergence  
Social Media |
| Week 13: April 30 and May 2 | Broadcast Journalism |
| Week 14: May 7 and 19 | Public Relations  
What’s next? Using What You’ve Learned  
Final Exam Review |
| Week 15: May 14 and 16 | **Final Exam** (Only 1 class meeting, exam day TBA) |