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 1978 (now the darkroom in L116), 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

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I. **Course Number and Title:** COMM 2315, News Reporting [This is a Texas Common Course Number.]

II. **Catalog Description:** Prerequisite: **Required:** COMM 2311 or professional experience approved by the instructor. “This course is a continuation of COMM 2311. Students study and practice writing more complex stories, such as features, profiles follow-up stories and sidebars. Students are required to write for the campus newspaper. (2 Lec., 3 Lab.)"

III. **Class Meeting Time:** Noon – 1:20 p.m. on Mondays in L109 & Wednesdays in U241.

IV. **Student Learning Outcomes:** The student will:

1. Be able to write complex stories.
2. Have an awareness of job opportunities in journalism.
4. Know how to cover speeches and meetings for a newspaper.
5. Be familiar with coverage of public affairs reporting.
6. Learn to value the implications of the First Amendment.
7. Be able to edit and communicate messages for different media outlets and audiences.
8. Be able to identify newsworthy events.
9. Be aware of the ethical and legal aspects of reporting.
10. Demonstrate research skills.

Specifically, the student will:

1. Develop story ideas, gather information, conduct interviews and write news and feature stories. 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. Use The Associated Press Stylebook.
3. Use a computer, voice recorders and cameras to research, report, type, edit, save and send stories.
4. Perform specific duties for each issue of the campus newspaper.
5. Complete readings about such topics as specialized stories, press releases, public affairs reporting and careers in journalism.
V. **Required Course Materials:**
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. Three (3) 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. **Attendance:** Don’t be late to class. 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.”
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. **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.
D. **Cyber civility:** Think before you tweet. “Cyber civility” is critical and is addressed in the Code of Ethics.
E. **Participation:** Take notes. Turn your cellphones and laptops OFF before each class session begins.
F. **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.
G. **Late Work:** Absolutely **no late work will be accepted**, No exceptions.
H. The instructor has the right to add, 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 and feature stories and an opinion/editorial
- 20 percent: Tests
- 10 percent: Exercises
- 10 percent: Newspaper duties
- 5 percent: Story sheets/pitches
- 5 percent: Stringbook
- Additional attendance points will 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 eight (8) stories:
     - Three (3) news stories (two of your first stories written should be news)
     - One (1) arts or sports feature story
     - One (1) long-form feature story
     - One (1) in-depth/investigative news story
     - One (1) opinion/editorial
     - One (1) story of choice on a **24-hour turnaround from pitch to submission**
   - Students will email their stories to both the instructor (dtrodrigue@dcccd.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 three additional stories to substitute for the three lowest story grades or for stories missed due to absences. Students will receive a grade of "0" (zero) for each story not submitted. In the last few weeks of the semester, students will put a printout of each of their stories in their stringbooks next to the clippings of all of their stories that were published in the campus newspaper.

- To even be considered for publication or grading, the minimum length for each story is roughly 550 to 600 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.

- Deadlines are critical in the world of journalism. 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, story deadlines will almost always be due on Mondays and Wednesdays by 10 a.m. and assigned by the editor-in-chief and/or instructor based on the subject or event.

- 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.

- Advance stories must be submitted far enough ahead so they can appear in the newspaper BEFORE the events they announce. 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 may cover any information included in the textbook chapters and from the lectures. Dates and chapters covered are shown on the Course Calendar.

c. 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 – so, naturally, if you are more than 10 minutes late, then you will not receive credit. Because you are graded on the basis of 10 exercises, you may miss two of the 12 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 eight 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.

f. Newspaper duties: Students will be expected to perform assigned duties for each issue of the campus newspaper, such as writing a column, helping with ads, distributing copies of the newspaper, taking pictures to go with stories or making videos for use on the newspaper’s website, etc.

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

Institutional Policies
Institutional Policies relating to this course can be accessed from the following link:
https://www.Brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum
# 2315 Course Calendar

**CE** = Class Exercise  
**SS** = Story Sheet

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>ASSIGNED READING + TOPIC</th>
<th>DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W – 1/23</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M – 1/28</td>
<td>Syllabus Ch. 1 in Kobre’s <em>Photojournalism</em> (5th ed.) – on reserve in LRC</td>
<td>CE #1: One-page summary of Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 1/30</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M – 2/4</td>
<td>Caption Writing Handout Ch. 2 and 3 in Kobre’s <em>Photojournalism</em> (5th ed.) – on reserve in LRC</td>
<td>CE #2: One-page summary of Ch. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 2/6</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #3: One-page summary of Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M – 2/11</td>
<td>Ch. 17 – Feature Stories</td>
<td>Read Ch. 17, Ex. 2 and choose one idea to turn into a story for BHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 2/13</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>Story #1 + SS #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M – 2/18</td>
<td>Ch. 16 – Brights, Sidebars &amp; Obituaries</td>
<td>Story #1 [REV]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 2/20</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>Story #2 + SS #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M – 2/25</td>
<td>Ch. 8 – Alternative Leads</td>
<td>CE #4: Write your own obituary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W – 2/27</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>Story #3 + SS #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M – 3/4</td>
<td>Ch. 15 – Speeches and Meetings</td>
<td>Story #3 [REV]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W – 3/6</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #5: Ex. 1, pg. 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>3/11-3/15</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
<td><strong>SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>M – 3/18</td>
<td>Ch. 18 – Public Affairs Reporting</td>
<td>Story #5 + SS #6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W – 3/20</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M – 3/25</td>
<td>Ch. 13 – Digital Media: Online, Mobile and Social Media</td>
<td>Story #6 [REV]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 3/27</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #7: Choose one exercise from pp. 388-400 + go to City of Farmers Branch or FBPD and request a record of your choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M – 4/1</td>
<td>Individual Conferences</td>
<td>Story #6 [REV]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>W – 4/3</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #8: Read pg. 284 and develop one idea for a story package based on Ex. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M – 4/8</td>
<td>Ch. 19 – Introduction to Investigative Reporting</td>
<td>Story #7 [REV]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 4/10</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>Story #8 + Extra SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>M – 4/15</td>
<td>Ch. 12 – Writing for Radio and TV News</td>
<td>Story #8 [REV]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 4/17</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #10: Ex. 1, pg. 266</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M – 4/22</td>
<td>Ch. 20 – Journalism and PR</td>
<td>Extra Story [REV]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 4/24</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td>CE #11: Ex. 4, pg. 437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M – 4/29</td>
<td>Becoming a Professional</td>
<td>CE #12: Write your resumé</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – 5/1</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>M – 5/6</td>
<td>Stringbooks without clips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>W – 5/8</td>
<td>END-OF-THE-SEMESTER “CLIPPING PARTY” in the newsroom</td>
<td>Completed stringbooks due by 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>FINAL</td>
<td>Individual Conferences + Stringbooks Returned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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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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<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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</tbody>
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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?

(\textbf{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:______________