

COM 220 Basic Reporting

Spring 2012, CB 128

3 hours credit

Section 01 TR 8:00 – 9:15

Section 02 TR 12:30 – 1:45

Dr. Jim Martin

Office CB 120A

Office Hours: **MTWRF** 10:00-11:30; other times by appointment.

Phone 765-4945

E-mail: jmartin @una.edu

TEXTBOOKS

Brooks, Kennedy, Moen and Ranly. *News Reporting and Writing*, Tenth Edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. [Text] ISBN: 13: 978-0-312-61811-7

Roberts, Gene and Klibanoff, Hank. *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*. New York: Vintage, 2007. [Race] ISBN-13: 978-0679735656

Martin, Jim. *Study Guide to the Race Beat* (Available at the Off-Campus Bookstore)

The Associated Press. *The 2011 Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. New York: Basic Books, 2011. [AP] ISBN-10: 0465021875; ISBN-13: 978-0465021871

Recommended:

Evensen, Bruce J., Editor. *The Responsible Reporter*, Third Edition. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008. [RR] ISBN-10: 1433103508 ISBN-13: 978-1433103506

(NOTE: The previous Ninth Edition of *News Reporting and Writing* is still available and will suffice for this class. Likewise, this is the 46th edition of the *AP Stylebook*. Any edition published in the last year or two will be fine. Page and chapter numbers of other editions will differ from those listed in the syllabus. Page numbers of the paperback edition of *The Race Beat* are the same as the hardcover edition.)

You will also need a flash (thumb) drive. Bring your flash drive and your textbooks to class each time.

SCOPE OF COURSE

Basic Reporting is a nuts and bolts course in journalistic writing. This class stresses the mastery of basic news writing skills through reading assignments, lectures, exercises, writing assignments, tests and quizzes. Topics to be covered include the inverted pyramid story structure, lead writing, use of quotations and sourcing, legal and ethical concerns—with continued emphasis on basic information gathering skills including interviewing and use of printed sources.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The prospective teacher will demonstrate:

Standard #	Standard Statement	Assessment
290-3-3-.10 (2)(a)6.(i)	<u>Knowledge of:</u>	
(2)(a)6.(i)(IV)	How students' experiences with various media can enhance their composing processes, communication, and learning.	Unit exams; Final exam; Lab writing assignments.
290-3-3-.10 (2)(a)6.(i)(V)	Journalism, including:	Unit exams; Final exam; Lab writing assignments; Reporting assignments.
(2)(a)6.(i)(V)I	Basic principles.	Unit exams; Final exam; Lab writing assignments; Reporting assignments.
(2)(a)6.(i)(V)II	Processes of producing print and nonprint journalistic media.	Unit exams; Final exam; Lab writing assignments; Reporting assignments.
(2)(a)6.(i)(V)III	Ethical, moral and legal rights and responsibilities of journalists.	Unit exams; Final exam; Lab writing assignments; Reporting assignments.

In addition to teaching the fundamentals of journalism, COM 220 designed to:

- familiarize you with the workings of the news media in gathering, writing, producing and disseminating news;
- teach you the importance of relationships between news gatherers and news sources, and between advertising and public relations professionals and news professionals;
- help you become a more informed news consumer through a deeper understanding of what it's like to work in the news environment and how news value judgments are made;
- teach you to think critically, creatively and independently;
- teach you to write correctly and clearly in the appropriate forms and styles;
- teach you to critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- teach you to apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which you work.
- teach you to understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- prepare you to demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- provide initial experiences in reporting and writing material in journalistic style.

GRADING

One-fourth of the semester grade will be based on four or five major news stories written by the student. Normally stories will be written or re-written during scheduled labs. One-fourth of the grade will be based on daily assignments, lab exercises, and class participation. One-fourth will be based on tests and quizzes, and one-fourth will be based on the two exams (mid-term and final) covering assigned reading and lecture material.

Journalists are expected to “get it right!” Factual accuracy—including correctly spelled names of people, places, organizations and institutions—is of the utmost importance in your writing. On all written work, inaccuracy, misspelling, poor grammar and typographical errors will significantly affect your grade. When you graduate, they will affect your job.

Journalists also must be reliable. In the profession, missing assignments can cost you your job. Here if you miss a class you are likely to miss a graded assignment or quiz, which will affect your grade. *Quizzes and assignments missed due to unexcused absences may not be made up and no late work will be accepted. Work missed during an excused absence must be made up within one week.*

Quizzes and exams will be objective. A professional subjective evaluation will be made on other assignments according to these standards:

- A:** Outstanding performance. Copy usually is publishable with little or no editing.
- B:** Superior performance. Copy is usually publishable with minor editing and revisions.
- C:** Adequate performance. Portions of copy probably would need to be rewritten and closely edited before the story could be published.
- D:** Marginal performance. Copy contains major factual, structural, writing and usage flaws. It is doubtful whether it could be published.
- F:** Unacceptable performance. Copy fails to meet even minimum standards for the assignment.

90-100=A 80-89=B 70-79=C 60-69=D Below 60=F

Last day of “W” period is March 9. Last day of “WP/WF” period is April 18.

ATTENDANCE

Journalism professionals are expected to be dedicated and responsible on the job, so punctual attendance in this class is mandatory. Roll will be taken at the beginning of each class. The absence policy for this class is as follows: “whenever a student’s cumulative absences (for any reason)—excused or unexcused—exceed the equivalent of three weeks of scheduled classes, no credit may be earned for the course.” An “F” will be given after the sixth absence. Students with perfect attendance will have six points added to their lowest test or exam grade. Students with only one absence will have three points added to their lowest test or exam grade. One excused absence (Official University absence with proper documentation) will be allowed and will not count against perfect attendance. Anyone arriving after roll call will be counted tardy. Three tardies equal one absence. It is the student’s responsibility to change an absence to a tardy (by speaking to me after class) if arrival to class is after roll has been taken. (Note: Past experience confirms that students with more than four absences are unlikely to receive more than a “C” grade for the course.)

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Use of lab computers is a privilege, not a right. Do not turn on the computers until you have been given the go-ahead to do so. ***Do not attempt to change settings or configurations on the Macs.*** Absolutely no food or drink is allowed in the lab at any time. Men, please remove your hats or caps in the classroom. Do not expect to use class time to balance your checkbook, read your e-mail, check Facebook or study for other classes. **CELL PHONE USE INCLUDING SENDING OR RECEIVING TEXT MESSAGES IS NOT ALLOWED DURING CLASS TIME.** Students urgently needing to do those things will be dismissed from class (unexcused) so as not to be distracted by the lecture or class discussion. Cheating is looked upon as a serious offence and will be dealt with immediately and severely. The Department policy on academic honesty is attached.

COURSE CONTENT

(Jan. 12)	Introduction to Class	
WEEK 1 (Jan. 17, 19)	“What is News?” Accuracy, Fairness and Objectivity	RR Ch. 1 Text Ch. 1
WEEK 2 (Jan. 24, 26)	A History of Reporting	RR Ch. 2 <i>Race</i> Chs. 1-4
WEEK 3 (Jan. 31, Feb. 2)	<i>Review of COM 215</i> Copyediting symbols	Text: Appendix 1, 2 AP pp. 1-275 <i>Race</i> Chs. 5-7
WEEK 4 (Feb. 14, 16)	Writing Leads Test 1 (Tentative)	Text Ch. 7 RR Ch. 9 <i>Race</i> Chs. 8-10
WEEK 5 (Feb. 21, 23)	More Leads The Body of a News Story	Text Ch. 8 RR Ch. 10 <i>Race</i> Chs.11-13
WEEK 6 (Feb. 28, March 1)	Interviewing MIDTERM	Text Chs. 3, 4 RR Ch. 4
WEEK 7 (March 6, 8)	Attribution and Identification	Text Chs. 3, 4 RR Ch. 4
WEEK 8 (March 13, 15)	Obits and Death Stories	Text Ch. 10 <i>Race</i> Chs. 14-15
WEEK 9 (March 20, 22)	Accidents, Fires and Disasters	Text Ch. 13 <i>Race</i> Chs. 16-18
<i>SPRING BREAK March 26-30</i>		
WEEK 10 (April 3, 5)	News Releases	Text Ch. 11 RR Ch. 8 <i>Race</i> Chs. 19-21
WEEK 11 (April 10, 12)	Covering Speeches and Meetings News Conferences	Text Ch. 12 <i>Race</i> Chs. 22-23
WEEK 12 (April 17, 19)	Broadcast Newswriting Test 2 (Tentative)	Text Ch.13 RR Ch. 11
WEEK 13 (April 24, 26)	Press Law Ethics	Text Chs. 22, 23 AP pp. 341-380 RR Ch. 1
WEEK 14 (May 1)	Beyond Basics	RR Ch. 15

Wrap-up and Review

Final Exam: Section 01 Tuesday, May 8, 8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
Section 02 Wednesday, May 9, 10:15 a.m. – noon

This outline is tentative. Any announcements or assignments made in class take precedence over this schedule. One or more field trips may be added to the regularly scheduled class period. Times will be announced as the opportunities arise.

ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to an average person in the population. It is the responsibility of the student to contact Disability Support Services to initiate the process to develop an accommodation plan. This accommodation plan will not be applied retroactively. Appropriate, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow each student to meet course requirements, but no fundamental or substantial alteration of academic standards will be made. Students needing assistance should contact Disability Support Services (256-765-4214).

Academic Honesty Policy Department of Communications

Academic Honesty. All members of the university community are expected to be honorable and observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. Students are expected to behave in an ethical manner. Individuals who disregard the core values of truth and honesty bring disrespect to themselves and the University. A university community that allows academic dishonesty will suffer harm to the reputation of students, faculty and graduates.

It is in the best interest of the entire university community to sanction any individual who chooses not to accept the principles of academic honesty by committing acts such as cheating, plagiarism or misrepresentation. Offenses are reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for referral to the University Student Discipline System for disposition. (*University of North Alabama Catalog.*)

Any act of dishonesty in academic work constitutes academic misconduct. That includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following: (1) Cheating—using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise; (2) Plagiarism—representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own in any academic exercise; (3) Fabrication—unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise; (4) Aiding and Abetting Academic Dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism is the representation of the work of another person as one's own. In a digital world, the copying of text, graphics, audio and video, can be easily accomplished; the sharing or borrowing of ideas and information may seem perfectly legitimate but taking or borrowing those ideas and failing to provide reference information about the original source for the idea or information, is plagiarism.

Material used in student papers, speeches, electronic media productions or other assignments is expected to be the student's own work unless properly identified as the work of others. In written work, identification consists of quotation marks, footnotes or endnotes, indentation or spacing change, usually in combination. A speaker may indicate

"according to ..." or other words to attribute quoted material. Electronic productions such as films, videos, etc., should use a means of citation appropriate to the work. Electronic productions are never exempt from the responsibility of identifying and citing appropriate sources.

In some cases attribution may not be necessary, for example, if a phrase or section is so commonly known that there could be no possibility of believing the student was claiming the work to be his/her own.

When a student attempts to present a speech or other assignment prepared by someone else as her/his own work, this could be plagiarism but it is more likely cheating. The instructors in the Department of Communications will never approve of the use of materials previously submitted by another student. If you attempt to reuse or recycle a speech or paper (and any accompanying materials such as PowerPoint presentations, handouts, etc.) written by someone else, this is cheating. If you give a paper or electronic document to another student, and that student uses or attempts to reuse that work in another course, you are guilty of aiding and abetting academic dishonesty.

If an instructor believes a student has committed cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or aiding and abetting academic dishonesty, he/she will refer the offender to the department head for investigation. The department head and instructor will meet to discuss the matter. If they concur that cheating, plagiarism, fabrication or aiding and abetting academic dishonesty has occurred, the student will receive a grade of F or WF in the course in which the offense occurred. During this process the student will be permitted to bring evidence that the plagiarism has not occurred. The Department of Communications will pursue issues of academic honesty for currently enrolled and former students.

Additional sanctions by the University are possible, including expulsion from the university.

My signature indicates that I have read and understand the Academic Honesty Policy from the Department of Communications. I agree to adhere to these guidelines, to the best of my ability, and I am aware of the consequences of policy violations.

Name (PRINT): _____

Class: COM 220: Basic Reporting

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A copy of this policy is provided with your syllabus for your records.

Name _____ Grade _____

Dr. Jim Martin
COM 220

COM 220 Quiz 1

This is an "open syllabus" quiz. Use your handout to answer the following questions:

1. Name of course _____

2. Name of instructor _____

What do the following abbreviations in the course contents stand for?

4. *Race* _____

5. AP _____

6. Reward for perfect attendance _____

7. Number of tardies that equal one absence _____

8. Last day to drop _____

9. In addition to your textbooks and stylebook, what should be brought to class each session?

10. What is plagiarism? _____

I have received a copy of the syllabus for COM 220. I have read it and have been provided an opportunity to ask questions about it. I agree to abide by it in this class.

Signature _____

Date _____

*Dr. Jim Martin
COM 220*

Information Sheet

(Please Print)

Name _____

Major _____ Minor _____

Hometown _____

Local address _____

Local phone number _____

Permanent address _____

Permanent phone number _____

E-mail address _____

List the TV stations, radio stations and newspapers you watched, listened to and read as you were growing up.

TV _____

Radio _____

Newspapers _____

Do you know anyone famous? _____

What media experience do you have? _____

List two or three interesting facts about yourself:
