

English 227 Journalism/Writing the City

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☞ See Web <http://www.augsburg.edu/english/dalGLISH/journalism.html> for policies, goals, and links.

• Spring 2008 •

As we complete the following list of assignments, we may speed up a bit, or we may slow down a bit. Pace will depend on the needs of the class. So, you will have to be attentive to the pace. **That means, if you miss a class, it's your responsibility to stay informed about assignments.**

On the first day of class we will cover the basic nature of news: impact, conflict, novelty, prominence, proximity, timeliness, relevance, usefulness/helpfulness, and human interest/entertainment, inspiration, special interest, community problems, trends, and living myth. Next we will begin to practice "Inverted Pyramid Thinking." We will also look at community service learning and the course's interest in public journalism. **A key element in this course is understanding community service and writing about it.** **You will be expected to develop a relationship with a service agency, work at that agency, and write about the experience.** And we will work on writing for the voice – for radio and TV. Some writing assignments will be from the text, some from handouts, and others you will develop from interviews and research. I will ask you to find the focus of each story, get the focus into the first paragraph, and copy edit your work. I will also ask you to learn to coach/edit with a peer.

Required Material

- √ *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method, Fifth Edition* Carole Rich.
- √ *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.*
- √ A dictionary.
- √ A daily newspaper. Every student of journalism should read a daily paper.
- √ Access to Radio, Television and online news sources. Check out **The English Browser News Networks and Services.**
- √ A reporter's notebook or steno notebook (available in bookstore).
- √ Folders: for clipping files, story files, finished stories and assignments.
- √ Computer disks/Augnet access

April 8

√ Pick up your books and read the introduction and first three chapters in the text: *Writing and Reporting News, A Coaching Method, (fifth edition)* by Carole Rich. We will review those chapters and work on exercises (page 56) in class together.

Check out some of the web sites connected to the first three chapters.

√ The interviewing process (we will interview one-another in class and write feature stories – 1 ½ - 2 pages (double-spaced) – to be turned in on April 22st).

April 22 – Using Bibliographic Search Materials in Popular Writing.

We will begin class with a visit to radio station KROC for a presentation by their news and reporting team, and a tour of the station and its operations.

√ Following our return to the classroom, we'll have a presentation by Bill Wittenbreer, Augsburg Public Access Reference Librarian, on how to find resources on line for use in story support, etc.

√ Turn in story on your classmate.

√ Read *Writing and Reporting News* Ch. 6 & 7.

√ Locate an **article** that tells about a recent study, set of statistics, survey, etc., and see if there is also a web site location for this study.

- Write the focus statement and then summarize that study for print, in inverted pyramid news style (1 to 1 ½ pages – double spaced). You will have some writing time in class to complete this article, which needs to be handed in by the end of class.

√ Select and make contact with your Community Service Learning site. Do first work session there and begin a Community Service Journal.

May 6 – Writing for Voice and Broadcast

Possible visit to KTTC Television (pending) to start the class.

√ Take your notes from the April 22st KROC visit and write a 10-12 paragraph story.

√ Read *Writing and Reporting News* Ch. 4 , 5 & 11.

- Interview people at work, in your neighborhood, at your Church, at school, or via e-mail to get their reactions to your earlier statistical/study story.
- Begin work on a second version of the story (this one about 15 paragraphs – 2 or 2 1/2 pages (double spaced) incorporating the reactions of those you interviewed. You can take these comments and mesh them together with my comments on your first version of the story, which will be handed back to you at this class. There will be writing time for you that evening. This second version will be due on May 19th.

√ Apply broadcast writing principles as you complete exercise 2, page 249.

√ Using the facts in #3, p. 249, begin work on rewriting the story for broadcast; or select a story from the newspaper and re-write it for broadcast. Make your broadcast version about 45 seconds long. These stories need to be completed by May 23rd when we will read them on camera to see how important it is to write for the voice.

Δ Connect with your Community Service Learning site, do second work session, and continue writing your Community Service journal. You may continue to write – in class -- the journal entries about your experiences if time permits.

May 20 – Writing the “presentation” story:

We will begin class with a guest speaker who is a feature/travel writer. Class will break at 6:45 to prepare for a Convocation with Dr. John Perkins, beginning at 7 p.m. Write a straight news story about the Convocation speech – 1 ½ to 2 pages, double-spaced, due on June 3rd.

√ Read *Writing and Reporting News* Ch. 8& 9.

√ Turn in your second version of your statistical story that includes quotes and facts gathered from your interviews and incorporates my suggested changes from your first version.

√ Complete FORK exercise (a handout from May 6th class).

√ Connect with your Community Service Learning site, do a work session, and continue your journal entries about your work and visits at your site.

√ REVIEW exercises 1-2, pp. 117-118 in your text (this will be helpful for you for your Midterm Exam).

MID-TERM COPY EDITING/STYLE EXAM (take home).

June 3 – The Transforming Story

We will begin this class at the Rochester Post-Bulletin where editors will show you the setup for a typical newsroom and how a daily newspaper is produced. Come prepared to ask questions. Each student should have AT LEAST one question to ask. You may write a short report about the visit for an enterprise point if you wish.

Hand in Convocation story and Mid-term exam.

√ **The “transforming” story.** Select a person whose life has been “transformed” through education or life’s work. You will need to set up and do an interview with this person and write a 2-3 page story, which will be due June 17th.

√ REVIEW exercises 1-3 on pages 181-185 (these will be helpful to you in working on your “transforming” story).

√ Read *Writing and Reporting News* Ch 10 and 20.

√ Do a third work session and write a short news story on your Community Service Learning site. This can be based on an event they've had; something they recently have done; something they have coming up; a new employee named, etc. Use the inverted pyramid style and do 8-9 paragraphs

June 17 – Ethics and Law; Feature writing and revision

We will have a guest speaker from Minnesota Public Radio to discuss how MPR handles news features and talk about media ethics. You may write a report on this speaker for an enterprise point if you wish.

√ If you wish, you can select a “peer” reviewer to look over your transforming story and give you some feedback to incorporate into your final version. I will give you writing time at the end of class to re-work your story before handing it in.

Hand in Transforming story and news story about your S-L site.

√ Read *Writing and Reporting News* Ch. 13 & 14.

√ Come prepared to discuss the issues raised in the exercise section, 1-5, pages 318-319 and #1-#4 page 334.

√ Come prepared to discuss the issues raised in the exercise section, 1-4, pages 292-293, and 1-3, page 307.

June 24 – Complete your Community Service site work.

√ Interview someone from your Community Service Learning site. Particularly try to select someone whose background is radically different from your own. Plan to interview them at a place where they are at ease and write a 4-page (double-spaced) feature based on the interview. **THIS IS YOUR FINAL MAJOR PAPER.**

You may exchange this paper with a peer reviewer – via e-mail or in person (your choice). If you do so, give yourself enough time to make any suggested revisions so that you can hand this assignment in at the end of tonight's class period.

FINAL EXAM (OPEN BOOK). This is a comprehensive test from throughout the term.

Course Grading policies:

Final grades will be a combination of work in class and out: stories, exercises, newspaper critiques, completion of community service hours, revising and editing in class, questioning in class.

To achieve a 2.0 in this course, students must get a grade of at least 70 percent on the mid-term or final exams. Writing skills and city requirements (community service learning) must be fulfilled, and attendance requirements met.

To achieve a 4.0 in this course, students must finish the term with at least a cumulative 3.75 average and have logged in 3 enterprise points. Possible enterprise points include such things as:

- Writing and submitting work for publication to Augsburg student newspaper or other Augsburg publications; community newspapers; your company newspaper or newsletter; or the Rochester Post-Bulletin; or other publications related to your field of work or background.
- Writing extra stories about news events (including candidate speeches and other public events) that happen in the community.
- Giving reports to the class on current news stories which intersect with issues we are discussing in class.
- Reporting to the class on journalistic issues raised in the press or on talk shows, etc
- Reporting to the class on cases brought to the Minnesota News Council (these will be discussed in class if and when they arise).
- Finding and correcting errors of “fact” in professional news publications.

Final Grades will be based on the following:

Weekly writing assignments:	60 percent
Midterm Exam:	5 percent
Book Exercises:	10 percent
Final feature story:	15 percent
Final Comprehensive Exam:	10 percent

Absence Policy:

Students who miss 1 (one) class period may lessen that impact by agreement with the professor on suitable substitute assignments, but may suffer grade loss. Students who miss 2 (two) classes **will not** achieve a 2.0 for the course.