

JOURNALISM 201/3, 2

Introduction to Journalism: Text

Fall 2014

When: Thursdays 12:15-2:30 p.m. unless otherwise announced

Where: CJ 3.307

Professor: Janice Tibbetts

Office: CJ 4.308

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Office hours: Tuesday: 2:30-3:30 p.m., Wednesday: Noon-1 p.m., or by appointment

Course Description: This course lays the foundation for all subsequent reporting and writing courses. Students learn how to do library and online research, structure and conduct interviews, and write news and feature stories for print and online outlets. Emphasis is placed on reporting stories in the community. Practical out-of-class assignments use the city of Montreal as a laboratory.

Objectives: This course will function as a hands-on workshop. Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- Write leads and structure news stories
- Gather accurate information for journalistic reports using a range of research and interviewing techniques
- Generate story ideas
- Work under tight deadlines
- Distinguish news stories from feature stories
- Use editing skills

Texts and equipment: You must keep up with the news, so steady consumption of media will be a requirement of this course. Keep yourself plugged in, both online and off. Read at least one daily newspaper. Check out news websites. Watch how stories are played. For national news, you can read the Globe and Mail and/or the National Post. For local news, try the Montreal Gazette and La Presse. Check out cbc.ca. You can sign up for free emailed news alerts on the websites of most media outlets. The Globe, for instance, provides a free daily news brief sent to your inbox every morning. In short, a core requirement of this course is to become a bit of a news junkie.

Also required are **Reporting for the Media** (Canadian edition) by John Bender, Lucinda Davenport, Michael Drager, Fred Fedler, Maxine Ruvinsky, and Charles Hays, **The Canadian Press Stylebook** and **CP Caps and Spelling**. You will need a **portable voice recorder** for some assignments. Any basic one will do for this course, including the voice recorders on smart phones. If you have a smart phone, the app TapeACall enables you to record phone interviews.

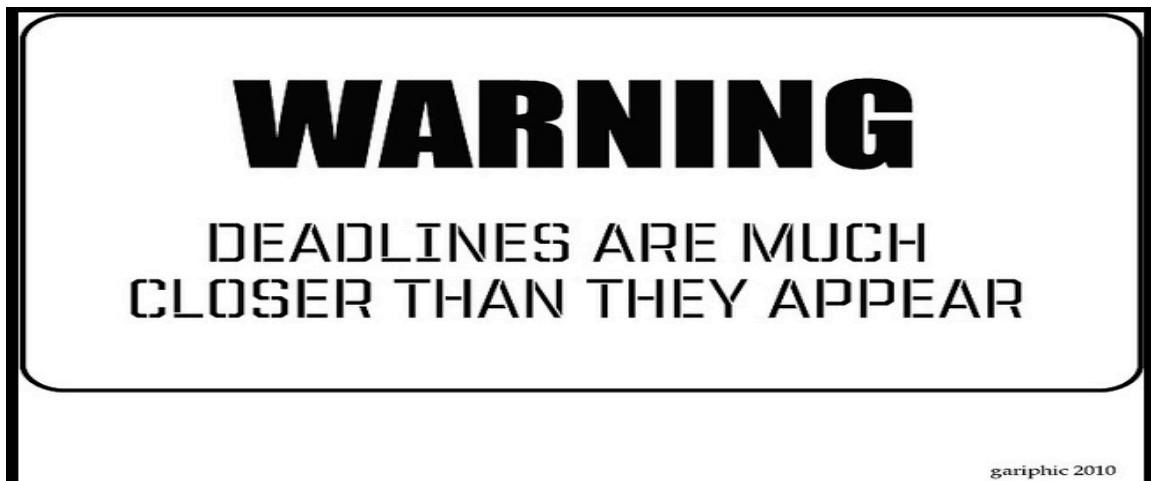
Policy statement: As an applied program, the Department of Journalism is committed both to teaching students how to practise journalism as well as how to conduct themselves as working professionals. For this reason, we enforce strictly a number of rules concerning attendance in class and deadlines for course assignments. **Attendance in all classes is mandatory** and is excused only in the case of serious medical or personal reasons (supported by a signed doctor's note) or an internship organized by the department. Students on internships must inform their instructors in advance and remain responsible for all assignments during their absence. Once registered for a course, **a student missing four or more classes, for whatever reason, will receive a failing grade.** Instructors may deduct up to 10 per cent of a student's final grade for poor attendance, chronic lateness or inappropriate behaviour. All course assignments must be completed in the sequence and time frame stipulated in the course outline. Students must submit all assignments at the beginning of class, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. University-wide regulations are contained in the undergraduate and graduate calendars and the full list of department-specific rules and regulations is posted on the third-floor bulletin board, the computer labs, and classrooms CJ 3.307 and CJ 5.305.

Grading: This course does not involve exams. Your grades will be based on the assignments outlined below. Marks will be based on focus, originality, writing, reporting, accuracy, and adherence to CP Style. Each term is worth 50 per cent of your final mark, which will be issued at the end of the 2014-2015 academic year. The scale for Journalism Department is:

Grade	Numerical Value	Meaning
A+	95-100	Outstanding
A	90-94	
A-	85-89	
B+	80-84	Very Good
B	75-79	
B-	70-74	
C+	65-69	Satisfactory
C	60-64	
C-	55-59	
D	50-54	Marginal Pass
F	< 50	Failure
R	< 50	Very Poor - Failure

Students will receive grade deductions for factual errors, misspelled names and failure to address the assignment.

Importance of deadlines: Journalism is based on deadlines and it is rarely acceptable to submit stories late. Extensions may be granted only for serious personal or medical reasons (supported by a signed doctor's note). In such cases, please see me about it as soon as possible. There will be severe grade penalties for missing deadlines.



Original work: The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the code defines as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement.”

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, or a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone. It can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. **In simple words:**

Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying from where you obtained it! For more on Plagiarism see Academic Code of Conduct: <http://www.concordia.ca/programs-and-courses/academic-integrity/plagiarism/>

Lecture series: You are required to attend a lecture series of guest speakers, which will be held on Tuesdays from 4:15-5:30 on Sept. 2, Sept. 9, Sept. 16, Sept. 23, Sept. 30 and Oct. 7 in CJ-3.306. **Attendance is mandatory.**

Class Schedule

Sept. 4: Introduction to the course and to the world of journalism. We will introduce ourselves and go over the course outline. There will be a practice news quiz. Assignment: write a short bio (about 300 words) of a classmate and email it to me, with a photo, by Monday at 5 p.m. Bring a news items to class next week and be prepared to discuss why it caught your attention. Reading for next week: Chapters 1 and 4 in Reporting for the Media.

Sept. 11: What is news? What are news values? We will break into groups to discuss student news items, based on news values. Reading for next week: Chapters 2, 6, 7, 8 and 21 in Reporting for the Media.

Sept. 18: Story telling, Part 1. Writing leads, structuring news stories and using quotes. Importance of CP style, precision and accuracy. In-class assignment: Write a short news story.

Sept. 25: Story-telling, Part 2. We will take a more in-depth look at leads, and how to enrich your stories with quotes, details, facts and background information. Assignment: write a second in-class news story. Reading for next week: Chapter 9 in Reporting for the Media.

Oct. 2: Interviewing. Asking questions and listening to answers. Taking effective notes and use of recording devices. The meaning of "off the record" and "not for

attribution.” Assignment: Story based on Sept. 30 lecture series. Due beginning of next class.

Oct. 9: Library workshop with librarian Sonia Poulin. VL-127-5. Meet in front of the reference desk at 12:15 p.m. Ends at 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 16: Generating story ideas, finding sources. In-class assignment: online scavenger hunt.

Oct. 23: Covering news conferences. There will be an in-class news conference. Story (400 words) due following day at 5 p.m. Assignment for next week: Bring a story idea and be prepared to pitch it.

Oct. 30: Marketing your work. How to pitch stories. We will break into groups and you will pitch features ideas and get input from classmates. Assignment for next class: Submit written pitch for end-of-term story.

Nov. 6: Alternate story forms. Newspapers and online news outlets are increasingly using ASFs, such as Q&As and timelines, to quickly grab their readers’ attention. We will review our news conference coverage and discuss how it could have been done as an ASF. Assignment for next class: convert news conference coverage into a Q&A. For next class: Read Chapters 6 and 10, Reporting for the Media.

Nov. 13: Feature writing. The art of crafting a good read. To prepare for in-class quiz, read Chapters 20 and 21 in Reporting for the Media.

Nov. 20: Quiz based on textbook readings, news, CP style, and in-class discussions. Short feature (700-800 words) due at 9 a.m. on Nov. 28.

Nov. 27: Review. We will revisit our previous assignments and address any problems encountered during the term. Sneak peek at the winter term. Last-minute help on feature stories.

Assignments

First in-class news story: five per cent

Second in-class news story: five per cent

Story from lecture series (due Oct. 9): 10 per cent

In-class scavenger hunt: 10 per cent

News conference (due Oct. 24 at 5 p.m.): 10 per cent

Feature pitch (due Nov. 5): five per cent

Q&A (due Nov. 13): 10 per cent

First-term quiz: 15 per cent

Short feature (due Nov. 27): 15 per cent

Five surprise news quizzes at two per cent each: 10 per cent

Professionalism: Five per cent

Your writing on all story assignments must be double spaced. Please keep to the assigned length and remember that longer does not mean better.

Note: Given that the news is fluid, the class schedule is subject to change and I **may** substitute one assignment for another.

Who is Janice Tibbetts?

I am an experienced journalist who spent more than two decades in the daily news business. I have worked in Eastern, Western and Central Canada, covering no less than one dozen beats for newspapers and news services.

I began my journalistic career at the University of King's College in Halifax. Four days after graduation, I started work as a general reporter at the Daily News, a small Halifax daily. I was so thrilled to have a reporting job that I couldn't believe I was getting paid for it! After covering general assignment and business at the Daily News, I moved to the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, where I worked for five years, covering the courts, Dartmouth city hall, the labour beat, and the Nova Scotia legislature. My journalistic journey then took me to Edmonton, where I stayed for almost three years working for The Canadian Press. I worked on the Prairie desk and then covered the Alberta legislature, in the days when then Premier Ralph Klein was one of the biggest stories in the country.

I had a long-time dream of working on Parliament Hill, so I moved to Ottawa in 1997 for The Canadian Press, just months before a federal election that took me across the country, covering the national leaders' campaigns. After two years on the hill with CP, I moved to Southam News, which later became Canwest and then Postmedia. I spent 12 years covering politics, the Supreme Court of Canada and the national justice beat, before I left in 2011 to pursue new challenges. Still, I remember clearly how I had to pinch myself some days to believe that I got to cover some of the stories that I did: the legalization of same-sex marriage, an ocean yacht race between Marblehead, Mass., and Halifax, Henry Morgentaler's fight to open an abortion clinic and the tainted blood inquiry of the 1990s. I worked in Washington for the lead up to the U.S. war in Iraq, criss-crossed the country covering several Canadian elections, and I wrote about too many monumental Supreme Court of Canada rulings to count. I can't imagine more exhilarating work.

This is my second year teaching at Concordia.

