

JOURNALISM 201/3, 2

Introduction to Journalism: Text

Winter 2015

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

Where: CJ-3.307

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 2:30-4:30 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 be a mix of workshops, lectures, and in-class exercises. 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 and Canadian Press style

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 provides a free daily news brief sent to your inbox every morning. Some news outlets, such as La Presse, offer their tablet edition for free.

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** (17th edition) and **Caps and Spelling** (20th edition). 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.

Universal 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

Importance of deadlines: Journalism is based on deadlines and it is rarely, if ever, acceptable to hand in stories late. There will be severe grade penalties for assignments submitted after deadline, except in the case of illness or family emergency. In such cases, please see me about it before deadline. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are due at the beginning of class, in hard copy. They must be **double-spaced**, with the word count and your name at the top of the page. I will request that some assignments be submitted via email. They should be in Word, with your first and last name as the file name. On your stories, put your name at the top and the word count, just as you do when you submit them in hard copy.

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 p.m. on Jan. 13, Jan. 20, Jan. 27 and Feb. 3. **Attendance is mandatory.**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan. 8: We will start the term by talking about “streeters” and their contribution to stories. We will brainstorm on topics before you head out to the streets to talk to people. Streeter assignment (about 300 words) due at the beginning of next class.

Jan. 15: How to find people and get them to talk. Assignment: Interview three experts on a timely topic that interests you. Due at beginning of next class. 400-500 words.

Jan. 22: Ethics. We will cover journalistic ethics and professional practices. Come prepared to discuss your choice of an ethical dilemma one might face as a journalist.

This could include bringing a photo or a copy of a news article that raises an ethical dilemma. Written report on an ethical due at beginning of next class.

Jan. 29: Covering meetings. They are the bread and butter of our business. Be prepared by doing your homework, getting there early, and keeping your eyes and ears open.

MONDAY Feb. 2: We will attend the monthly council meeting at Westmount City Hall at 8 p.m. Council agenda will be available online the morning of the meeting. You will write your story (about 400 words) in class on Feb. 5.

Feb. 5: Discuss and write city hall story (about 400 words). Due at the end of class.

Feb. 12: The Legal System. You will learn about the Criminal Code, common terms such as “homicide” and “arraignment,” and how to cover the courts and cops.

Feb. 19: We will go to the Montreal courthouse at 1 Notre-Dame Est and watch arraignments, held daily at 2 p.m. Submit at courthouse before we head into courtroom. **PUBLISHED STORY DUE.**

Feb. 26: Reading week. No class.

March 5: Workshop class. Write two court briefs. Due at the end of class. Feature pitch due.

March 12: Newsroom Day. Come with a story idea and then go out and do it.

March 19: Class cancelled to make up for city hall meeting.

March 26: Feature writing revisited.

April 2: Rough draft of feature due. Workshop class.

Apr. 9: Review. Feature story due.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

1. **JAN. 15:** Streeters. Hard copy at beginning of class. (300-400 words). Word doc with name and word count at top of page. 10 per cent.
2. **JAN. 22:** Talking to experts. Hard copy at beginning of class. Word doc with name and word count at top of page. (500 words). 10 per cent.

3. **JAN. 29:** Ethics assignment. Hard copy at beginning of class. Word doc in specified format. 500 words. 10 per cent.
4. **FEB. 5.** City council story. Hard copy at end of class. Word doc with name and word count at top of page. (400-500 words). 10 per cent.
5. **FEB. 19:** Published story due at beginning of class in hard copy. Five per cent.
6. **MARCH 5:** Two court briefs. Due in hard copy at end of class. About 150 words each. Five per cent each = 10 per cent total. Feature pitch due. Five per cent.
7. **March 12-15.** Newsroom Day story. Due by email, in a Word document, 24 hours after event ends. 400-500 words. 10 per cent.
8. **April 2:** Rough draft of feature due.
9. **APRIL 9:** Final copy of feature. Due in hard copy at beginning of class. 800-1,000 words. 15 per cent.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

*There will be five surprise news quizzes worth two per cent each.

*Professionalism: five per cent

Your writing on all story assignments must be **double spaced** (I know I am repeating myself but I find it difficult to mark single-spaced stories) with page margins that are one inch on all four sides and the type size must be 12 point. Please keep to the assigned length. Longer does not mean better.

Note: The class schedule is subject to change and I **may** substitute one assignment for another.