

**The University of Findlay  
College of Liberal Arts  
Spring Semester 2008**

*The Mission of the University is to equip our students for meaningful lives  
and productive careers.*

<b>Course Number/Title:</b>	<b>ENGL 270 Newswriting</b>
<b>Credit Hours:</b>	This course is three credit hours
<b>Class Time/Place:</b>	MWF, 2-2:50 p.m. in BCHS 107/LAB: W 3-3:50 p.m. in BCHS 107
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Grade of "C" or better in ENGL 106 or 107
<b>Instructor:</b>	Chris Underation, 300 Frazer St., Office C Phone: 419.434.4442 E-mail: <a href="mailto:underation@findlay.edu">underation@findlay.edu</a>
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10 a.m.-noon/Tuesday, Thursday: Noon-2 p.m. If you need to talk I will be available to you.
<b>Course Description</b>	Journalists are a different breed. In this course you will learn how journalists think, gather information and write for newspapers (all under deadline pressure). Students will practice journalistic skills by covering news, conducting interviews and writing stories. We may also briefly cover broadcast, web, and public relations writing and practices.
<b>Relationship to the Conceptual Framework</b>	The class will provide hands-on experience in working with sources, compiling news, writing it, and providing a practical introduction to the craft (and thinking) behind the journalistic task.
<b>Course Objectives</b>	There are three: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To help get students <i>become</i> a journalist so they can understand how and why certain decisions are made in the presentation of news.</li><li>2. To provide theory and practice in gathering and writing news so students can make reasonable news judgments and present written news in an appropriate way.</li><li>3. To give students experience in source management and the issues real journalists face, such as remaining independent, seeking objectivity, dealing with the frustrations of gathering news, etc.</li></ol>

**General Education Learning Outcomes Addressed**

Goal 1. Students will be exposed to diverse points of view, understand them and accurately reflect them in writing.	
Goal 2. Students will become familiar with the historical, scientific, literary and philosophical framework of journalism.	
Goal 3. Students will acquire and practice skills for reading, writing, speaking, listening, abstract inquiry, critical thinking and logical reasoning.	
Goal 5. Throughout their general education experience, students will analyze and reflect upon the challenges facing our society as well as the importance of being a responsible citizen.	

**Required Textbooks and other materials**

**Tim Harrower, *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism***

It is *required* you acquire an AP Stylebook if you do not already own one. Please see that it is 2004 or newer. This is the writing style we will follow in this class, and you will be expected to learn this style.

**Knowledge Base (i.e., why is this guy qualified to teach this course?)**

Underation has long experience and interaction with journalism. He has worked at daily and weekly newspapers in Ohio and at mid-sized dailies on the East Coast. He has won awards for his writing, and has worked in many facets of newspapering (ranging from beat reporting to column writing to investigative reporting to editing and layout). He has been a Fellow at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies in Florida and has an advanced degree in journalism from Kent State University.

**Instructional Strategies**

This class will use debate about ideas and concepts, interviewing, questioning, discussion, lecture, experiential learning, reading assignments, problem solving and (if your stories require it) independent research.

**Assessment Strategies**

You will be assessed based on your willingness to contribute to class discussion, quizzes, exams, the quality of your written news stories, and the completion of a successful two-part series of stories as your final project.

**Grading**

**Scale/Distribution**

Exams (3@7 percent each).....21 Percent  
 Beat stories (5@8 percent each).....40 Percent  
 News quizzes (15@ 1 percent each).....15 Percent  
 AP style quizzes (15@1 each).....15 Percent  
 Story series.....9 Percent  
 This course will be graded on a nine point scale: 100-92=A; 91=A-;

90=B+; 89-83=B; 82=B-; 81=C+; 80-74=C; 73=C-; 72=D+; 71-65=D; 64=D-; 63 and lower=F

### Honor Code

*I will not knowingly engage in any dishonorable behavior, cheat, steal, lie or **commit any act of plagiarism** during my academic work, course, or endeavor. If I observe an act which I believe violates the University's Honor Code, I may, in my discretion, report it to the appropriate personnel.*

### Course Assignments

1. The exams in this course are non-comprehensive.
2. Each of you will be assigned a beat to cover during the course of the class. You will be responsible for developing and writing five stories during the course of the semester. Each story should have a legitimate news angle and be no less than 475 words. *Along with each story you are to turn in a story organization sheet. Your stories are incomplete without this.*
3. The field of communication requires a love of news and information. In fact you should be a sewer for information. News should interest you and flow toward you. Once weekly we will have a quiz about what's happening in the news.
4. You will also be tested on your knowledge of Associated Press style, which is generally the standard in the news business. **If you do not have an AP Stylebook you should get one.**
5. Your final exam will consist of a two-part series you will develop from your beat. The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore with some depth an issue or news item that affects your beat. Each story should be at least 500 words.
6. We will do in-class tutorials to help you smooth out writing issues and to help you learn ways to handle and communicate information well.

### Course Policies

Communication is a field that runs on deadlines. It also runs on personal responsibility and maturity. There will be no attendance policy for this class, but any quiz or exam that is missed cannot be made up. (The only exception is in the case of an excused absence, in which case your story will be due before the class you'll miss.) If you are late to class you can begin taking quizzes from the point at which you came in. **PLEASE NOTE: Since deadlines are important, any beat story not turned in when it's due is an automatic ZERO. Stories will be due at the start of class.**

### Special Services

If you are a student with a disability, it is your responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services and notify your instructor one week prior of any needed service(s) so that reasonable accommodations can be made for you.

**Course and Instructor Evaluation** This is a dynamic field and I am always open to your personal feedback about class content and the way it is presented. You will also get a formal chance to evaluate the professor and class.

**Course Outline (subject to change as we grind through the semester)**

<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 7-11	Course Introduction Assigning of Beats HOW TO: Use Your AP Stylebook HOW TO: Cover a beat	Harrower, pp. 90-91 Harrower, pp. 54-55 Go over Harrower, Chapter 5, pp. 102-108 (as relevant to your beat)
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 14-18	HOW TO: Take notes HOW TO: Interview The Big Idea	Harrower, pp. 74-75 Harrower, pp. 76-79
<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 21-25	“The Story of Journalism” Rules of the Road #1 (No class Jan. 21, MLK Jr. Day)	Harrower, Chapter 1
<b>Week 4</b> Jan. 28- Feb. 1	IN-CLASS TUTORIALS “Elements of News, How Newsrooms Function” (Friday, Feb. 1— <b>Beat story #1 due at the start of class</b> )	Harrower, Chapter 2
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 4-8	“Newswriting Basics” (If needed, we’ll talk about the first round of stories)	Harrower, Chapter 3
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 11-15	<b>Friday, Feb. 8, EXAM #1</b> IN-CLASS TUTORIALS More “Newswriting Basics” (Friday, Feb. 15— <b>Beat story #2 due at the start of class</b> )	Harrower, Chapter 3
<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 18-22	“Reporting Basics” (If needed, we’ll talk about the second round of stories)	Harrower, Chapter 4
<b>Week 8</b> Feb. 25- Feb. 29	IN-CLASS TUTORIALS More “Reporting Basics” (Friday, Feb. 29— <b>Beat story #3 due at the start of class</b> )	Harrower, Chapter 4
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 10-14	Still more “Reporting Basics” (HINT: You should have already started working on your story series. Have you?)	Harrower, Chapter 4
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 17-21	<b>Friday, March 14, EXAM #2</b> IN-CLASS TUTORIALS, if needed “Covering the News” (Wednesday, March 19— <b>Beat story #4 due at the start of class</b> )	Harrower, Chapter 5

<b>Week 11</b> Mar. 24-28	(No class March 21—Easter) More “Covering the News” (No class March 24—Easter)	Harrower, Chapter 5
<b>Week 12</b> Mar. 31- April 4	Still more “Covering the News” IN-CLASS TUTORIALS, if needed	Harrower, Chapter 5
<b>Week 13</b> April 7-11	“Beyond Breaking News” (Friday, April 11— <b>Beat story #5 due at the start of class</b> )	Harrower, Chapter 6
<b>Week 14</b> April 14-18	More “Beyond Breaking News” <b>Friday, April 18, EXAM #3</b>	Harrower, Chapter 6
<b>Week 15</b> April 21-25	Catch-up/overflow week	

**FINAL PROJECT DUE: Wednesday, April 30 NO LATER than 2 p.m. in hard copy to Mr. Underation’s office.**

### **College Specific Information**

**Please note if you are a Communication major:** Communication majors are required to prepare a portfolio for COMM 313 Junior Assessment and COMM 410 Senior Assessment – a required course. The portfolio must document the skills you have developed in all areas relevant to your major. Please save copies of relevant assignments, presentations, term papers, etc. The following examples are illustrative but not inclusive: articles, video and/or audio tapes of speeches; musical performances, theatre roles; research papers; technical writing; creative writing; public relations projects; photographic slides and/or prints; art works; commercials; PSAs; promos; etc. Non-majors, please keep all work for a portfolio that may be requested of any future employer.