

News Editing, JOUR 5552

Spring 2010

Basics:

Class time: 1 to 3:15 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, 209 Armory
Instructor: Sandra Fish
E-mail: fish@colorado.edu or sandrafish@comcast.net; be respectful, don't deluge me with msgs please.
Phone: (303) 492-0523; (303) 589-0584 cell; (303) 545-9004 (don't call past 9, i'm old!)
Office hours: 11 to noon Tuesday; or by appointment, i'll be around a lot.

The course:

Reporting and writing the story is only the first step in creating an engaging, authoritative and reliable news report.

Editors start with a blank page and bring together the work of others – writers, photographers, illustrators, other editors – in a way designed to capture the reader and tell a story as accurately, actively and attractively as possible.

An editor's skills must range from the minute to the truly big picture. You must know – or be able to figure out – the difference between peak, peek and pique. You must have an eye for detail such that you'll notice if a jump line on a page is wrong or a folio is missing. The delight is that there's room for the creative – from writing headlines to designing pages.

This class is oriented toward a newsroom model of editing, but we'll mix in some magazine and Web info too. Even if you don't plan a career in news, the things you learn here will translate to virtually any occupation you choose. At public relations firms, consulting businesses and government, an eye for detail, the ability to edit and – the bottom line in this class – the talent for effectively communicating a message will prove invaluable.

In a nutshell: We'll start with the nitty gritty: AP style, grammar, punctuation, words, accuracy, taste. We'll move on to the more

creative: headlines, design and putting it all together into the most eye-catching, appealing package possible.

Goals:

Understand and use the AP stylebook – and the dictionary!

Possess a knowledge of written English grammar – and have some familiarity with the exceptions.

Edit stories for grammar, style, content, factual accuracy, punctuation, fairness and legal issues.

Write good headlines, subheads, captions and other adornments.

Select and prioritize stories, wire or local, for a page or section.

Present stories, photos, graphics and other accessories in a meaningful package on the Web and in print.

Texts:

The Editorial Eye 2nd edition by Harrigan and Dunlap (Eye)

The Newspaper Designer's Handbook 6th edition, Harrower (Design)

Working with Words 7th edition, Brooks et al (Words)

AP Stylebook

Recommended:

In no particular order, some books that would come in handy:

The Elements of Style, Strunk & White; a classic

Webster's New World Dictionary, yo, look it up!!!!

A thesaurus. I'm telling you, use all the help you can get! Online or in paper, it's a godsend.

The drill:

One of my biggest peeves – and one of your potentially biggest fallacies in this class or in the real world – is people who don't read the news. Say you're a public relations specialist and send out a news release to business editors. How dumb would you feel making a follow up call to an editor or reporter and

finding out that, duh, they'd already done the story?

So we'll start each class by calling on people randomly to put up some examples of what we're talking about that day, be it AP style, headlines or design. The expectation here is that you'll be reading the Daily Camera, the Denver Post and even the New York Times, Washington Post or Wall Street Journal, plus all sorts of magazines. Bring examples! From there, we'll proceed to the topic at hand and the exercises on that topic, many of which will be done in class. We'll also be doing some design projects, including a final project that will be 25 percent of your grade.

The scale:

A = 9.3 to 10

A minus = 9.0 to 9.2

B plus = 8.8 to 8.9

B = 8.3 to 8.7

B minus = 8.0 to 8.2

C plus = 7.8 to 7.9

C = 7.3 to 7.7

C- = 7.0 to 7.2

D = 6 to 6.9

Below 6 is an F

I don't give incompletes.

Grades:

Here's the key info:

Attendance/my discretion/critiques: 10 percent

Final project: 25 percent

Exercises, design and graphics projects: 40 percent

Tests: 25 percent total

Work submitted late will be reduced by a letter grade for every day it is late.

Communication vitals:

We'll use CULearn and <http://fishediting.net/> for most communication and some assignments. I'll also use e-mail from CUConnect, so make sure you're checking your CU account or forward it to the account you use most often.

Some words about honesty:

It is essential that the work you turn in is your own. Information from other sources must be attributed accurately. This means no lifting from Web sites, news releases or other sources without attribution.

The CU-Boulder campus policy on plagiarism is as follows: "Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing sources; and copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet." **In the real world, people get fired for this. In academia, you get an F.**

And some one-liners:

Content is queen. Or king, depending on your perspective.

Delivery can improve the content.

Ask questions, from the obvious to the hard, of the subordinates and the boss.

Look it up!!! That way you'll know for sure.

Admit your mistakes. It's a must, especially if you're pointing out the errors of others.

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a letter from Disability Services (DS) and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices)

Students who have conflicts between religious observance dates and course examinations or assignments must let me know two weeks in advance in writing. Please consult <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/index.html> for additional information on the campus policy.

There is a classroom behavior policy and associated new procedures. Please consult <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/index.html> for the policy.

The campus has adopted the Student Honor Code. Please consult the honor code information at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

The Agenda

(subject to change....)

Monday, Jan. 11: Introductions, overview, expectations, group blog, pretest

Wednesday, Jan. 13: Movie time: Helvetica! Maybe: how news organizations work; copy/design/presentation desk role; news judgment; budget exercise; Eye, 1&2; **Outside class:** find and post to <http://fishreporting.net> a cool grammar Web site.

Monday, Jan. 18: No class, Martin Luther King Day

Wednesday, Jan. 20: Critique; grammar basics; grammar exercise. Words, 1-5; Eye, 3 *nouns and verbs*

Monday, Jan. 25: Critique; more grammar; InDesign tutorial; AP style discussion; AP Top 10 using InDesign. Eye, 4; Words, Appendix *modifiers*, AP

Wednesday, Jan. 27: Critique; punctuation, word usage. AP Quiz; Words, 8 & 9. Find and post to <http://fishreporting.net> a story that needs help.

Monday, Feb. 1: Critique; accuracy, libel, taste and fairness; exercise; Eye, 5 & 6

Wednesday, Feb. 3: Speakers on content editing.

Monday, Feb. 8: Critique; full story editing; in-class exercise; Eye 7 & 8.

Wednesday, Feb. 10: Critique; putting it all together editing-wise.

Monday, Feb. 15: Exam No. 1

Wednesday, Feb. 16: Critique; headline writing in print and on the Web, SEO; headline writing exercise with InDesign; Eye 10

Monday, Feb. 22: Critique; design basics; font fun with InDesign; Eye 12; Design intro, 1 and 2

Wednesday, Feb. 24: Critique; design standards for different sections, publications, finish font fun; Design, Chapter 3

Monday, March 1: Critique; different elements of a page; design assignment – dummy a page; Design, Chapter 5

Wednesday, March 3: Critique; style sheets for print and the Web; continue working on page design assignment, move it to InDesign

Monday, March 8: Critique; using photos and graphics, fair use; work on design assignment; Eye, chapter 11; Design chapter 4

Wednesday, March 10: Critique; Visual display of data; basic graphics using InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop. page design assignment due. Design Chapter 6

Monday, March 15: Critique; guest speaker; start data display assignment in groups of two.

Wednesday, March 17: Critique; review of design elements and basics; why we have the rules; finish data display. Design, Chapter 7

March 22-26: Spring break. Whoo-hoo!!!

Monday, March 29: Exam No. 2

Wednesday, March 31: Final project description; planning worksheet in groups.

Monday, April 5: Using WordPress to create news sites; eye-tracking concepts; work on final project.

Wednesday, April 7: Group presentations on final project plans.

Monday, April 12: Redesigning publications; work on final project; Design, Chapter 8 & 9.

Wednesday, April 14: Finish Web design, setup for final project.

Monday, April 19: Work on print design for final project.

Wednesday, April 21: Work on final project.

Monday, April 26: Finishing final project.

Wednesday, April 27: Submit final projects before class; class presentations.