

# Reporting

Journalism 2346–Section 003 | Fall 2013

12:30-1:50 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays

ELAB 256

**Instructor: Dr. Erika Pribanic-Smith**

**Office:** 2114 Fine Arts Building

**Hours:** Tues./Thurs., 8-9 a.m., 11:30 a.m to noon, and by appt.

**Faculty Profile:** <https://www.uta.edu/mentis/public/#profile/profile/view/id/6106/>

**Cell Phone:** 205-239-5973

**Email:** [epsmith@uta.edu](mailto:epsmith@uta.edu)

Note: Because of other department and university duties, office hours will occasionally be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on the office door and, when possible, announced in class or by email.

**Prerequisite:** Completion of JOUR 1345 with grade of C (2.0/4.0 scale) or higher.

**Course Description:** Students will receive information on and practice in the crafting of complex journalistic stories, with an emphasis on ethics, interviewing, and writing of general news stories. This course will focus primarily on the mastery of print journalism, with additional instruction in convergence strategies.

**Learning Goals and Objectives:** Students will learn how to refine and research a story idea, gather facts and opinions from news sources, write the story, and develop it into a publishable article.

The following learning goals and objectives have been set for students in this class and all classes in the journalism sequence:

- Discuss the concepts, ideas and foundation of freedom of speech and press, including the role media play in today's society.
- Conduct research while using ethical and legal principles to produce quality work.
- Identify the theories and principles of reporting for the media, including the presentation of information via images, graphics, visual communication and the written word.
- Discuss today's news and information disseminated through various local and national media.
- Demonstrate creative, critical and independent thinking to interview sources, conduct research and write unbiased media stories.
- Discuss fundamental numerical and statistical concepts and demonstrate them in the writing and reporting of articles.
- Operate basic communication technology and software.
- Demonstrate correct Associated Press style and grammar when reporting and writing articles, and edit stories utilizing journalistic style, ethics and principles.
- Write quality journalistic stories, specifically news and feature stories, while working under deadlines.
- Critique their own work and the works of others according to the principles of accuracy, fairness, clarity, style and grammatical correctness.

**Textbooks:**

- News Reporting and Writing* by The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen and Don Ranly; latest edition)
- The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual (latest edition)

**Suggested supplies:** A jump drive for saving class work, a tape recorder for interviews, a notebook for interview notes, a dictionary and/or speller.

**\*\*NOTE: Students need to bring their AP Stylebook to every class.\*\***

## Course Policies

### Grade Calculation:

Assignment	% of grade	Grading scale
Out-of-class work	40	A – 90-100 percent
In-class work	60	B – 80-89 percent C – 70-79 percent D – 60-69 percent F – below 60 percent

### Out-of-class work

*Writing Assignments (20 percent; 10 percent each).* Students will have two story assignments to complete outside of class to practice the reporting strategies and skills they are learning each week: one covering a campus event, and one covering a campus issue. The instructor will distribute assignment sheets detailing the specific requirements and grading rubrics for each assignment.

Assignments will be submitted in two drafts. The first draft will not be graded but will be used for peer critiques. Students who do not submit a draft will not be allowed to participate in peer critiques. Peer critiques will be conducted in class the day after the draft is due and will account for 20 percent of the student's grade on the assignment. That is, students who do not participate in peer critiques will have 20 percent deducted from the writing assignment.

Students will have an opportunity to make corrections to the assignment after peer critiques and before submitting the final story for grading.

*Writing portfolio (10 percent).* At the end of the semester, students will submit writing portfolios that contain their three best stories from the semester as well as their resumes. The purpose of this assignment is to help prepare students to land internships and student media jobs.

**Students should save a copy of all assignments (both completed in class and out of class) so they can choose their three favorite at the end of the course.** Students will have an opportunity to create and/or refine their resumes in class. Additional details will be provided in an assignment sheet.

*News Tweets (10 percent).* Social media is an important avenue for posting and sharing news. Students will use Twitter to see how news organizations use social media to post news, and students will share news on their own Twitter accounts with the hashtag #JOUR2346.

**Each week**, students will be responsible for sharing on Twitter TWO news stories:

- 1) A local story (UTA, DFW area, Tarrant County or Texas)
- 2) A national or international news story

In order to find news stories, students should follow a variety of University, metroplex, and national/international news organizations (see what the instructor follows from the @UTAReporting account for ideas).

Students may spread out their stories over the week or tweet them all at once. To earn credit for the week, students must have posted both stories by 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

The instructor will re-tweet stories from students and may share stories that students have not posted as well. Students should keep up with all news stories posted (either by the instructor or re-tweeted from students) @UTAReporting; current events quiz questions will come exclusively from these posts, and some may be discussed in class.

### **In-class work**

*Writing practice and discussion exercises (40 percent).* Throughout the course, students will engage in team discussion exercises and individual writing practice assignments designed to prepare them for their outside assignments and to practice skills discussed in class. The instructor will distribute assignment sheets detailing the requirements for each assignment.

*Current events quizzes (10 percent).* Every other Tuesday, students will have a multiple-choice quiz on current events items from Twitter (see previous page). Quizzes will be given at the start of class, and students will have no more than 10 minutes to complete the quiz.

*AP Style quizzes (10 percent).* Students will have four quizzes during the semester covering specific AP Style sections as noted in the syllabus. These quizzes will be open-book. Students will have no more than 40 minutes to complete the quiz.

**Grading procedures:** Each in-class and out-of-class writing assignment handout will include a rubric that explains exactly how the instructor will grade that assignment.

**AP, Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Lab:** Students must pay close attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, and AP Style when writing each story for class, whether it is an out-of-class assignment or in-class writing practice. Students who have an excessive number of mechanical errors on in-class assignments will be **required** to visit the AP, Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation Lab (FAB 257) with the final story for out-of-class assignments and submit a form signed by the lab instructor. **Assignments submitted without the signed form will not be graded, and the student will receive a 0 on the assignment.**

Students must plan ahead and give themselves enough time to make any necessary corrections to their stories after visiting the lab and before submitting their final stories. Lab hours will be posted on Blackboard near the start of the semester.

Students have three options for submitting the form:

- 1) The student may take the form in hard copy to the

**A note on sources:** Unless otherwise specified, each out-of-class story must have at least four **HUMAN** sources **CITED WITHIN THE STORY**. The following do NOT count as official sources: information that has been printed in books, newsletters, magazines, newspapers, or the Internet, or information that has been broadcast on television or the radio.

**Attendance:** Students are to treat the class like a job; they are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Employees who miss work do not get paid. Students who miss class receive 0s for work completed in their absence.

Absences from class are neither excused nor unexcused. Students are given two personal/sick days to use at their discretion over the course of the semester, which will allow the student to make up work missed in class. The student must consult with the instructor immediately upon returning to class to set a deadline for makeup work. Failure to complete the makeup work will result in a zero.

Tardiness will not be tolerated. Employees would be docked pay for arriving late to work. Students similarly will be docked points off work completed in class at a rate of 2 percent per minute late. In other words, students will lose a full letter grade off that day's participation exercise for every five minutes they are late. Furthermore, students who arrive after a quiz has begun will have only whatever time remains of the quiz time to complete the quiz. For instance, if a student arrives five minutes into a current events quiz, the student will have only five minutes to log into the computer and Blackboard and complete the quiz. Students who miss a quiz due to tardiness will not be permitted to make it up.

**Late work:** Students are expected to adhere to deadlines as posted in the course syllabus, on assignment sheets, and on Blackboard. ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED LATE. Out-of-class assignments will be due at 11:59 p.m. on the assigned deadline day.

**Assignment portals will close at midnight. Therefore, students who have not submitted their assignments by 11:59 p.m. will receive a 0.**

Note that only **unexpected emergencies (such as a death, grave illness or debilitating injury)** will excuse a student from completing an assignment on time; because of the length of time students are given to complete assignments, they should plan accordingly for religious, personal or professional obligations that may arise around the time that an assignment is due.

In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible to indicate that the story will not be submitted on time. The instructor will not accept the assignment late without official documentation.

Computer and Internet malfunctions will NOT be given consideration for late assignments. Students should give themselves plenty of time to complete assignments so that they may regroup in the wake of a technological snafu.

**Work Expectations:** Students often will be working on several projects and/or homework assignments at the same time in addition to keeping up with readings for classes and quizzes.

Effective communication requires practice, so students can expect to write every week (if not every day) and to complete both out-of-class and in-class assignments. Students will need to begin their projects in advance and not start working on them the night before they are due. If students are struggling with the material or the workload, they should see the instructor during office hours to discuss it.

Assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. Students must have access to a computer to submit assignments as well as to communicate via e-mail. Students do not have to own a computer, but they must be able to access a computer and Internet connection on campus or off campus.

**Behavior expectations:**

Students are expected to remain focused on the task at hand for the duration of class each day.

**Students will be asked to leave the class if they are engaging in any of the following activities:**

- Using cellphones or Smartphones for ANY reason. Keep it silenced and in your pocket/bag for the duration of class.
- Speaking out of turn.
- Studying or working on assignments for other classes.
- Reading any sort of print media (unless required to do so for a lab activity).
- Utilizing the computer for any reason other than in-class assignments.
  - o When the class is not working on an assignment, keep the monitor off and mouse upside down.
  - o When the class IS working on an assignment, do not use the computer to check email or social media, surf the Web, IM, or anything else unrelated to the assignment.

**Students who are asked to leave will be counted as absent for that day and will receive a 0 for that day's work.**

## Department, College, and University Policies

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering.

**Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give

any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. Stairwells are located at either end of the hallway, to the right and left of the lab. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Furthermore, students are expected to model the honest and ethical behavior in this course that they would be expected to follow as professional communicators. In addition to examples of cheating, plagiarism and collusion described in the student handbook, the following behaviors in this class also constitute academic dishonesty:

- Making up sources, information or quotes except as explicitly specified for certain class assignments
- Failing to properly attribute quotes and ideas to their sources
- Asking someone to lie about a student interviewing him or her
- Getting other people to write class assignments
- Lying to a source to get information
- Copying a published story or using information from a published news account, Web page, database, research paper or press release without proper attribution
- Turning in a story students already have published or written for another class

### Course Schedule & Due Dates

The course schedule is tentative and is subject to change. Minor changes will be noted in class; major changes will result in the distribution of a revised schedule.

Week	Dates	Topics
1	Aug. 22	Course Overview and Introduction Twitter Setup
2	Aug. 27 Aug. 29	Beat Reporting Story Ideas
3	Sept. 3 Sept. 5	<u>Current Events Quiz</u> Paraphrasing, Quotes & Attribution  Writing Practice: Paraphrasing, Quotes & Attribution
4	Sept. 9 (Mon.) Sept. 10 Sept. 12	<i>CENSUS DATE</i>  <b>AP QUIZ 1: Stylebook A-E</b> PQ&A Discussion and Correction Workshop  Effective Leads & Nut Graphs
5	Sept. 17 Sept. 19	<u>Current Events Quiz</u> Writing Practice: Leads  The Basic News Story and Story Organization
6	Sept. 24 Sept. 26	Writing Practice: Inverted Pyramid Story  Peer Critique: Inverted Pyramid
7	Oct. 1 Oct. 3	<b>**EVENT ASSIGNMENT GIVEN**</b> <u>Current Events Quiz</u> <b>AP QUIZ 2: Stylebook F-O</b>  Interviewing Techniques/Interview Workshop
8	Oct. 8 Oct. 10	Writing Practice: Interview Write-up  Peer Critiques: Interview Write-up
9	Oct. 15 Oct. 17	<u>Current Events Quiz</u> Speeches, News Conferences & Meetings  Writing Practice: Government Meeting
10	Oct. 22 Oct 25	<b>AP QUIZ 3: Stylebook P-Z</b> Peer Critique: Government Meeting  Writing Workshop: Event Story
11	<b>Oct. 28 (Mon.)</b> Oct. 29 Oct. 30 (Wed.)	<b>EVENT STORY DRAFT DUE BY 11:59 P.M.</b>  <b>**ISSUE STORY GIVEN**</b> <u>Current Events Quiz</u> Peer Critique: Event Story  <i>LAST DAY TO DROP</i>

	<b>Oct. 31</b>	<b>FINAL EVENT STORY DUE BY 11:59 P.M.</b> COMMUNICATION DAY
12	Nov. 5	Crime & Punishment
	Nov. 7	Writing Practice: Police Story
13	Nov. 12	<b>AP QUIZ 4: Punctuation, Media Law &amp; Social Media Guidelines</b> <u>Current Events Quiz</u> Writing Workshop: Issue Story
	<b>Nov. 13 (Wed.)</b>	<b>ISSUE STORY FIRST DRAFT DUE BY 11:59 P.M.</b>
	Nov. 14	Peer Critique: Issue Story
14	<b>Nov. 18 (Mon.)</b>	<b>FINAL ISSUE STORY DUE BY 11:59 P.M.</b>
	Nov. 19	Online Journalism
	Nov. 21	Online Journalism, continued
15	Nov. 26	<u>Current Events Quiz</u> Writing Practice: Web package
	Nov. 28	THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)
16	Dec. 3	<u>PORTFOLIO ASSIGNMENT GIVEN</u> Media Jobs and Resume Workshop
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>Dec. 12</b>	<b>Portfolio zip file due to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m.</b>

