



Middlesex Community College
New Media Studies Center Initiative

Course: COM*116 Publications Workshop

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Middlesex Community College

COM 116 Publications Workshop

3 Credits

Spring 2014

SYLLABUS

Course Description:

This course is designed to teach students the practical skills of news and information production through hands-on practice in producing *The Flying Horse*, the MxCC student newspaper. Students will learn about all aspects of production, including writing, editing, managing, layout, design, photography, digital imaging, proofreading, and pre-press work. Students will also learn to judge appropriate news content, check facts, and investigate legal and ethical concerns. Each student will specialize in one or two of the specific areas of newspaper production indicated above. The course will also explore new evolving methods of production and distribution beyond traditional print, including video, electronic, web, mobile devices, and social networking.

Prerequisite:

Completion of ENG 101 and a functional understanding of computers and Internet applications.

Specific Learning Objectives:

- Understand how a newspaper operates;
- Develop and deepen writing and reporting techniques;
- Generate, research, refine, and revise stories for the college newspaper;
- Demonstrate copy editing and proofreading skills;
- Practice time-management skills by meeting deadlines;
- Examine press law and legal issues related to journalism;
- Consider the relationship between traditional journalism and new media;
- Understand how editors oversee the publication;
- Use photographs and graphics effectively;
- Understand the basic elements of photojournalism;
- Plan, organize, and implement the newspaper's layout;
- Advertise, market, and distribute the publication;
- Publish multiple editions of the campus newspaper.

Text and Resources:

The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law 2013, Basic Books, 2013. Available in the college bookstore, Amazon.com, and on reserve in the library. The *AP Stylebook* is mostly a reference guide that you should use when writing or editing articles. Selected sections will be assigned as required reading and incorporated in a take-home assignment at the beginning of the semester.

Students will also need either a Flash Drive or access to an on-line file sharing service, such as iCloud, Dropbox, GoogleDrive, Skydrive, etc., for storing and working on class files both in and out of class.

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown:

- Assignment on News Values, Guidelines, and Media Law 10%
- Portfolio of Work 65%
- Class Participation & Production Contributions 25%

Assignment on News Values, Guidelines, and Media Law (10%) Due: Feb. 10

At the beginning of the semester, students will be asked to read (4) specific assigned sections in the text, *AP Stylebook*, (approximately 100 pages), that every journalist should know. The assignment is designed to make students accountable for this reading material and selected sections in the reference section. Specific guidelines will be handed out the second week of classes. The (4) assigned reading sections include the following:

- Guide to Punctuation (pp. 302- 313)
- Statement of News Values (p. 314- 327)
- Briefing On Media Law (pp. 328-368)
- Social Media Guidelines (pp. 369- 398)

Portfolio of Work (65%)

Due: May 12

Students will be graded via a portfolio of their work. 65%, or two-thirds of your final grade, will be based on this portfolio, which will be accumulated over the semester and submitted as a package at the end of the semester. This means you should **save everything you work on**. You may be assigned one area of focus for the class (writing, editing, layout, etc.), but you will have an opportunity to participate in many different parts of the production process.

“Work” means something you create or contribute to that becomes part of the paper or the news distribution systems we will be developing and using. This may include written articles, editorials, edited sections, photographs, videos, cartoons, graphics, pre-press layouts, web sites, mobile apps, etc. It is possible that you may create something that does NOT end up being used for publication, but it may still be included in your portfolio. Of course the goal is to create for publication. Because of this QUALITY and RELEVANCE is important and will be a major factor affecting your grade. Quality is usually achieved through a process of REVISION. All students should expect to go through a process of editing and revising their work. RELEVANCE is how useful your contribution is to the publication and its readers.

QUANTITY also counts. We need a substantial amount of material for a viable publication. While the specific quantity of work will depend upon the type of contributions made, a general guideline is that each student should contribute the equivalent minimum of **SIX full articles**, approximately one every other week. This does not mean that all students are writing articles. Most should (because that’s the bread and butter of the publication), but some may not. What it means is that the measure of the quantity of your work will be determined by equating the amount of time and effort it would take to write, edit, and revise full articles and comparing that to what you are doing, if you are not writing articles.

Finally, DUE DATES are crucial to a publication. We will develop a schedule with deadlines and it is vitally important that you complete your contribution by the expected deadline.

Class Participation and Production Contributions: (25%)

Each class, student participation is required. Class participation will be graded on how much you contribute to the discussion and exercises.

You are also expected to contribute to the production of *The Flying Horse*, beyond just individual creative work.

