Writing Fundamentals (JMC:1600:0003)

Fall 2018

Noon-2:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Oct. 31-Dec. 5

W236 Adler Journalism Building

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SJMC DEO: David Ryfe, david-ryfe@uiowa.edu Office: E305 AJB, Phone: 335-3486

Course description (from catalog): “The importance of grammar; recognition of common errors in the student's own writing with a focus on fixing these problems.”

Further description: This class offers an intensive review of the fundamentals of grammar and punctuation in preparation for the next level of writing classes in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and writing assignments in other disciplines.

Required text:


The textbook is available at the University of Iowa Bookstore and will be useful not only for this class but for reference in any discipline. Those proceeding into the journalism program may need the text in future classes.

SJMC Learning Outcomes

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. This course contributes to these learning outcomes by helping you develop the abilities to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across multiple media domains and to communicate effectively with the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work. Achieving these outcomes means:

- You will demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.
- You will demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to your personal media habits and professional development.
- You will develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.
- You will learn how to create and disseminate media messages in various forms.
- You will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.
You will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

You will demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.

This course helps to fulfill Learning Goal 3 for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication:

3. Writing and Storytelling Learning Goal
Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally accepted standards in all work.

Learning Objective 1. Students will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.

Learning Objective 2. Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

Learning Objective 3. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.

Course requirements: All assignments, quizzes and exams are designed to support the learning objectives listed above.

Missed assignment policy: Attendance is required. This class covers an intensive amount of material at a rapid pace. Because it meets only five times, missing even a single session could put students’ grades at risk and, more importantly, set them back from learning critical writing skills that will be used throughout their academic and professional careers.

In-class assignments, quizzes and so forth cannot be made up unless the student is attending a University-excused activity or provides a doctor’s note verifying illness. The instructor will not repeat lecture information or in-class announcements. Students who must be absent should arrange to get notes from classmates. When students are absent for excused activities that are scheduled in advance, they must turn in assignments before the deadlines. For students who miss class because of a verified illness or emergency, the instructor may allow up to one week for students to take quizzes or turn in exercises for participation points. Students should be aware that absences will not be excused for internships, job duties, etc. It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation, and excused absences will be rare, so plan accordingly. Participation points for missed sections can only be made up for excused absences as noted above and not for personal schedule conflicts. See the homework section on Page 4 for further information on missed deadlines. For details about University policies, please refer to https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-student-absences
Grading:

A = 93 percent to 100 percent
A- = 90 to 92 percent
B+ = 87 percent to 89 percent
B = 83 percent to 86 percent
B- = 80 percent to 82 percent
C+ = 77 percent to 79 percent
C = 73 percent to 76 percent
C- = 70 percent to 72 percent
D = 60 percent to 69 percent
F = 59 percent and below

Percentages will be rounded to the nearest whole number when grades are assigned at the end of the semester.

Quizzes 20 points X 3 = 60 (23 percent)
Homework 15 points X 4 = 60 (23 percent)
Attendance and in-class participation 5 X 2 and 10 X 3 = 40 (15.4 percent)
Final exam = 100 points (38.5 percent)
Total = 260 points

General expectations

- Read assigned materials before class.
- Be prepared to share assignments with others in class.
- Electronic devices may be used when permitted by the instructor for classroom work only. Turn off or store devices out of sight during closed-book tests and assignments. Failure to comply with this policy may be considered academic dishonesty and subject to disciplinary action.
- Check ICON and campus email before each class period for announcements or last-minute schedule changes. Chrome is the recommended browser for ICON.
- Announcements will be posted on ICON and sent through campus email. Students are responsible for checking both.

Academic honesty and grading: Professional communication is fact-based. Aside from selected mock assignments given by the instructors, students’ work will be original and factual. Plagiarism and fabrication are treated with the utmost seriousness in professional workplaces and will be regarded the same way for this course. Any student who plagiarizes or fabricates information will receive a “zero” on the assignment and will be reported to the college for further disciplinary action. See the paragraph on Academic Honesty in the last section of the syllabus for further information. In addition, collaboration is not permitted unless the instructor gives specific assignments that require teamwork. In situations where students are writing about the same event or issue, they must work independently and may not share notes, recordings, or any other material or information related to that assignment. Students who engage in collaboration will receive a “zero” on the assignment.
Rubric for attendance and participation:

**Week 1 and 5** will be worth 5 points based on attendance for the full class period and participation on the pretest and post-test.

**Weeks 2, 3 and 4** will be worth 10 points each – 5 points for attendance for the duration of the class period and 5 points for participation on in-class exercises and discussions.

**Quizzes and exams**
Twenty-point quizzes will be given at the beginning of Weeks 2, 3 and 4. The quizzes will cover lectures and materials covered in class the previous week. **Students must be in class to take the quizzes and cannot take them outside the classroom.** The quizzes cannot be taken on cell phones or small tablets. They must be taken on laptops or desktop computers where the screens are visible to the instructor.

Following a review period during the last class session (Week 5), a 100-point final will be given. Students must be in class to take the final and cannot take it outside the classroom. The final cannot be taken on cell phones or small tablets. It must be taken on laptops or desktop computers where the screens are visible to the instructor.

**Homework**
Assignments will be given for the following week and must be completed outside class. These assignments will be turned in by the start of class time each week (Weeks 2-5). Points will be deducted for late turn-ins, and the homework will not be accepted after 24 hours past the deadline. Students who provide evidence of illness or an emergency (see the “missed assignment policy” on Page 2 for information about excused absences) may be granted up to 72 hours past the deadline to turn in the assignment. Homework will be graded based on instructions given with each assignment and will be worth 15 points each.

Students are responsible for checking to make sure their assignments have been turned in. Technology failures, mistakes or lack of access to Wi-Fi cannot be used as an excuse for missed deadlines.

**Pretest**
Students will take a test during Week 1 to assess their grammar skills as the course begins. They will retake the test during Week 5 to see their progress and determine which grammar skills they should continue to work on after they complete the course. The scores on these tests are not counted toward students’ quiz or exam grades, but failure to complete the tests or put in good effort will result in a reduced participation grade.

**Tentative course schedule:** The instructor may extend discussion of certain topics if needed for the students’ benefit. Check ICON before each class period for assignment updates.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>• Introductions</td>
<td>• Pretest</td>
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<td>• Syllabus review</td>
<td>• In-class exercises</td>
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<td>• Spelling and style</td>
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<td>• Sentence structure</td>
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<td>• Pretest</td>
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<td>• In-class exercises</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>• Nouns</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over last week’s presentation</td>
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<td>• Pronouns</td>
<td>• Homework posted in ICON</td>
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<td>• Prepositions</td>
<td>• Read before class: “Understanding in More Depth” pp. 133-139, Chapter 7 pp. 141-151 and Chapter 8 pp. 152-169.</td>
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<td>• Verbs</td>
<td>• Homework posted in ICON</td>
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<td>• Adjectives</td>
<td>• Read before class: Chapter 9 on verbs, Chapter 10 “Making the Parts Agree,” Chapter 11 “Modifiers and Connecting Words.”</td>
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<td>• Adverbs</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over last week’s presentation</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>• Conjunctions and interjections</td>
<td>• Homework posted on ICON</td>
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<td>• Punctuation</td>
<td>• Read before class: Chapter 15 on punctuation.</td>
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<td>• Conjunctions and interjections</td>
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<td>• Punctuation</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Reinforcement and review</td>
<td>• Read before class: “Commonly Confused Words” and “One Word or Two” posted on ICON.</td>
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<td>• Final exercises posted on ICON.</td>
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<td>• Retake pretest to measure your improvement.</td>
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<td>• In-class final exam.</td>
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The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: Policies and Resources

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Electronic Communication
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. (https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies.)
Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.