Writing Fundamentals (JMC:1600:0005)  
Fall 2017  
9:30 a.m.-noon Fridays  
W332 Adler Journalism Building

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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.”

This class offers an intensive review of the fundamentals of grammar and punctuation, so you can move forward in your major knowing you have mastered the basics you need to steadily improve your writing skills and communicate clearly.

Required text:

- Other readings assigned throughout the session.

The textbook is available at the University of Iowa Bookstore and will be useful not only for this class but for future reference. Each student must buy the textbook and bring it to every class session as it will be used extensively. Students who do not purchase the text will not be able to complete certain assignments and risk failing the course.

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, but 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 instructors 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 instructors 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 (24 percent)
Homework 15 points X 4 = 60 (24 percent)
Attendance and in-class participation 15 points X 4 = 60 (24 percent)
Final exam = 70 points (28 percent)
Total = 250 points

General expectations

- Read assigned materials before class.
- Be prepared to share assignments with others in class.
- Turn off cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices during lectures. Students who violate this policy will lose participation points and may be asked to turn in their devices until the end of the class period. Electronic devices may be used when permitted by the instructor for classroom work only.
- 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: Attendance for the full class period, attentiveness and good effort on in-class work will be worth 5 points.

Week 5: Attendance, attentiveness, participation and good effort on the in-class work will be worth 10 points.

Weeks 2, 3 and 4 will be worth 15 points each.

- **Attendance**: 3 points for attendance with points deducted for arriving late and leaving early.

- **Verbal participation**:
  
  0 = lack of attentiveness to the instructor or peers, checking social media, working on the computer during presentations or discussions, checking cell phones or similar behavior.
  
  1 = Occasional attentiveness; the student contributes once or twice to the discussion.
  
  2 = The student pays attention most of the class and contributes an average amount to the discussion.
  
  3 = The student is attentive throughout the class period, contributes often to the discussion and shows leadership.

- **In-class work and team participation**:
  
  0 = The student does not participate.
  
  2 = The student puts minimal effort into in-class work.
  
  5 = The student contributes an average amount to in-class work.
  
  7 = The student puts good effort into assignments and works well with peers.
  
  9 = The student turns in superior in-class work and shows leadership with peers.

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 and readings assigned for the week of the quiz. Students must be in class to take the quizzes and cannot take them outside the classroom.

Following a review period during the last class session (Week 5), a 70-point final will be given. Students must be in class to take the final and cannot take it outside the classroom.

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’ grades, but failure to complete the tests or put in good effort will result in a reduced participation grade.

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**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: Nov. 3</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>• Parts of speech</td>
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<td>• Spelling and style</td>
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<td>Week 2: Nov. 10</td>
<td>• Sentence structure</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over material from last week and assigned readings</td>
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<td>• Verbs</td>
<td>• Homework posted on ICON</td>
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<td>• Nouns</td>
<td>• Read before class: pp. 2-11, 13-19 and 26-29 in “Writing Fundamentals” and reading on nouns posted on ICON.</td>
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<td>Week 3: Nov. 17</td>
<td>• Pronouns</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over last week’s presentation and assignment material</td>
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<td>• Prepositions</td>
<td>• Homework posted in ICON</td>
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<td>• Adjectives</td>
<td>• Read before class: pp. 20-25 in “Writing Fundamentals.” Check ICON for other readings.</td>
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<td>• Adverbs</td>
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<td>Week 4: Dec. 1</td>
<td>• Conjunctions and interjections</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over last week’s presentation and assignment material</td>
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<td>• Punctuation</td>
<td>• Homework posted on ICON</td>
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<td>• Read in text: pp. 30-45.</td>
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<td>Week 5: Dec. 8</td>
<td>Reinforcement and review</td>
<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 is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
The University of Iowa is committed to providing an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (which includes but is not limited to mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related conditions). A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between the student, instructor, and SDS. See https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for information.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
The University of Iowa 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, diversity@uiowa.edu, or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to
the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS

**CLAS Final Examination Policies**

The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

**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 have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.