Writing Fundamentals (JMC:1600:0006)  
Fall 2019  
12:30 - 3 p.m. Fridays (November 8 - December 13)  
W236 Adler Journalism Building

• **Instructor:** Jeff Charis-Carlson  
• **Email:** jeffrey-charis-carlson@uiowa.edu  
• **Phone:** 319-330-3321  
• **Office location and drop-in hours:** I will be available for drop-in discussions during the hour before class and by appointment. My office is officially listed as E350D AJB, but I usually will be in the classroom.  
• **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.”

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 five-week session.

The textbook is available at the University of Iowa Bookstore as well as Iowa Book and Supply and will be useful not only for this class but for reference in any discipline. Students continuing in the journalism program may need the textbook in future classes.

---

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

**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 your 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. Although each week’s Powerpoint presentations will be posted on the class ICON site, the instructor will not be repeating 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. (For details about university policies, please refer to [https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-student-absences](https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-student-absences).)

---

**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.
Grading:

Most of the grading for this class is done through quizzes and a final exam that test each student’s ability to identify and correct non-standard syntax, sentence construction, punctuation and word use. Students also will earn points through attendance, participation in class discussions, in-class written assignments and weekly homework assignments.

The **275 total points** for the five-week session divide as follows:

- **Quizzes:** 25 points X 3 = 75 points
- **Homework:** 40 points
- **Attendance, participation:** 10 X 5 = 50 points
- **In-class assignments:** 25 points
- **Final exam:** 85 points

Letter grades will be assigned by the following scale:

- **A** = 93 percent
- **A-** = 90 percent
- **B+** = 87 percent
- **B** = 83 percent
- **B-** = 80 percent
- **C+** = 77 percent
- **C** = 73 percent
- **C-** = 70 percent
- **D** = 60 percent
- **F** = Less than 60 percent

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.
**Attendance and participation**

Attendance for the full class period, attentiveness and good effort on in-class work will be worth up to 50 points of the course of the five-week session. Points will be deducted for 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.

Everyone should expected to be called on to speak several times throughout each class period.

**Quizzes and exams**

Quizzes will be given at the beginning of Weeks 2, 3 and 4. The majority of the questions on the quiz will cover lectures and materials covered in the previous class, but a few of the questions will focus on the reading for that class. **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 final exam 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” 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.

---

**SJMC Learning Outcomes**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to students’ academic and professional success. As such, 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:
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.

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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1: Nov. 8</td>
<td>• Introductions</td>
<td>• Pretest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Syllabus review</td>
<td>• In-class exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Spelling and style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2: Nov. 15</td>
<td>• Sentence structure</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over material from previous week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Nouns</td>
<td>• Homework posted on ICON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pronouns</td>
<td>• Read before class: “Understanding in More Depth” in Chapter 6 (pages 133-139),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prepositions</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (pages 141-151) and Chapter 8 (pages 152-169).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3: Nov. 22</td>
<td>• Verbs</td>
<td>• In-class quiz over previous week’s presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adjectives</td>
<td>• Homework posted in ICON.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adverbs</td>
<td>• Read before class: Chapter 9 (pages 173-204), Chapter 10 (pages 205-216) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 11 (pages 217-228).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Absences and Attendance

Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused (https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf).

### 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 (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

### 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 is

| Week 4: Dec. 6 | • Conjunctions and interjections • Punctuation | • In-class quiz over previous week’s presentation • Homework posted on ICON. • Read before class: Chapter 15 (333-355) |
| Week 5: Dec. 13 | • Reinforcement and review • Final exam. | • Final homework exercises posted on ICON. • Read before class: Chapter 6 (119-133) • Retake pretest to measure improvement. • In-class final exam. |
then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

**Administrative Home of the Course**
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 related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

**Communication and the Required Use of UI Email**
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

**Complaints**
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

**Final Examination Policies**
The final exam schedule 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 information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. Visit https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

**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 (diversity.uiowa.edu).

**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, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.