



Fall 2017

## Syllabus

**Course Number:** 2311.003

**Course Title:** News Writing T & Th 1-215 pm

**Department:** Communications

**Campuses:** Levelland

**Instructor:** Margaret Kirby

**Office:** CM 154 **Phone:** 716-2451

**e-mail:** [mkirby@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:mkirby@southplainscollege.edu) The fastest way to reach me, other than coming to my office during office hours, is to e-mail. Please do **NOT** e-mail me using Blackboard.

**Instructor Office Hours:**  
Mon & Wed 830 – 930 am; 1215 – 345 pm  
Tu & Thur 830 – 930 am; 11am – 1pm  
Friday 9 - 12pm or by appointment

**Prerequisites:** None

**Credit:** 3 semesters hours

**Description:** This course teaches the fundamentals of writing news for the mass media. It includes instruction in methods and techniques for gathering, processing and delivering news in a professional manner.

**Supplies Needed:** Some way in which to take notes; folder or notebook where you will save syllabus, schedule, notes, handouts, and graded stories.

**Course Requirements:** Students should attend all class and lab meetings and complete all assignments.

**Required Textbook:** None. Various materials will be used in class. Students will be required to take notes in class and save handouts.

**Evaluation:** Students' grades in this class will be determined by the following:

- **Classwork** = 50% of final grade. This will include group projects, in-class writing assignments and exercises, some homework, and broadcast stories written under deadline pressure.
- **Midterm Exam** = 25% of final grade. You will write one radio and one television story under deadline pressure.
- **Final Exam** = 25% of final grade. This will consist of writing broadcast stories, in the correct format, under deadline pressure, following a news conference.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to demonstrate proficiency in:

- Critical thinking in determining what is news
- Interviewing for print and broadcast
- News gathering and verification of facts
- Covering news conferences and breaking or developing news
- Legal and ethical issues facing reporters
- Convergence of news media (print, broadcast and online)

**Tardiness and Attendance Policy:** I generally will not allow you to enter class after the first 5 minutes because it is disruptive. I will take attendance after the first 5 minutes of class. If you repeatedly come to class after the 5 minute cut off, you will be asked to leave.

Attendance in this class is required. Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. The student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive as defined in the course syllabus.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the student's responsibility to find out about and complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor.

Some work cannot be made up. I generally do not allow exams to be made up. In the event that a makeup exam is allowed, the highest grade available on it will be an 89.

**Students with more than 4 absences \*in a row\* automatically will be dropped from the class with an F or X without further warning. If a student misses more than 4 classes \*throughout the semester\*, I consider this to be excessive. At that point, I reserve the right to drop the student with an X or an F. I will warn you if you reach the 4 class limit. That will be your only warning.**

Students who enroll in a course but have "Never Attended" by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of "X" or "F" as determined by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for clearly stating their administrative drop policy in the course syllabus, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of that policy.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

### **ADA Statement**

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so that the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office at Levelland Student Health & Wellness Center 806-716-2577, Reese Center (also covers ATC) Building 8: 806-716-4675, Plainview Center Main Office: 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611, or the Health and Wellness main number at 806-716-2529.

**Diversity Statement**-In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

**Campus Concealed Carry Statement-** Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.)

authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at: ([http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human\\_resources/policy\\_procedure/hhc.php](http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php))

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

**Deadlines-** ALL deadlines are absolute. You need to get used to deadlines that exist in the working world. All assignments in this class will have absolute deadlines. Late assignments may or may not be accepted depending on the assignment. If an assignment is accepted late, it will be penalized harshly.

**Civility Code:**

- As future professionals, you are to communicate with each other in a professional and civil manner. At all times we will treat each other with dignity and respect. That means no profanity or conversations that I feel are inappropriate. As the professor for the class, I have the final say for what may be considered “inappropriate”. If there are problems in this area, you may be asked to leave.
- Disruptive behaviors such as cell phones ringing, leaving and returning to class while in session, arriving late to class, talking with others during lectures/discussions, checking your e-mail or Facebook, sending/receiving text messages, eating or drinking in class, etc...may result in a request that such students leave the class. Cell phones must either be turned off or put on vibrate only.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

- Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism and other forms of cheating behavior. Academic dishonesty is unacceptable. Students committing acts of academic dishonesty will be penalized with failing grades on assignments and/or for the entire course, depending upon the instructor’s evaluation of the severity of the dishonest act.

**What is plagiarism?**

- Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own. The following are all examples of plagiarism:
  - Quoting or paraphrasing material without citing the source of that material. Sources can include Web sites, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, journals, TV and radio programs, movies and videos, photographs and drawings, charts and graphs; any information or ideas that are not your own.
  - Quoting a source without using quotation marks -- even if you do cite it.
  - Buying a paper online or downloading a paper from a free site.
  - Copying or using work done by another student.
  - Citing sources you didn't use.