

Spring 2020

South Plains College

**News Writing**

**Course Number:** 2311.001    **M & W** 11-1215 pm

**Department:** Communication

**Instructor:** Margaret S. 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:** M, T, W, Th 8 – 930 a.m.

M, W 4 – 430 p.m.

Fri 800 a.m. – 12 p.m. or by appointment

**Prerequisites:** None    **Credit:** 3 semesters hours

**Description:** Fundamentals of writing for the mass media. Includes instruction in professional methods and techniques for gathering, processing, and delivering content.

**Supplies Needed:** Items used 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:** Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual. NY: The Associated Press

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

- ☐ **Classwork and Homework** = 50% of final grade. This will include group projects, in-class writing assignments and exercises, some homework, and stories. You will write 3 "Beat" Stories throughout the semester which will be submitted to the Plainsman Press,
- ☐ **Midterm Exam and AP Quizzes** = 25% of final grade; the midterm exam will be a traditional exam covering material learned at the beginning of the semester including writing a short Internet news story under deadline pressure. AP Quizzes are scattered throughout the semester. (See schedule) There will additional quizzes added randomly as "pop" quizzes.
- ☐ **Final Exam** = 25% of final grade. Your final exam will be the completion of one television news package which will be used in a Television newscast and submitted to the Plainsman Press.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate proper media writing and editing styles.
2. Modify writing styles to fit various media platforms.
3. Demonstrate effective information gathering skills and techniques.
4. Demonstrate understanding of laws, ethics, and responsibilities of media writing.

**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.

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 below.

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 what work was missed, and it is the student's responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. Please come to my office during office hours to find out what you missed. Please do NOT assume that I will contact you to tell you about missed work and do NOT assume you can miss class, not say anything, and then just turn an assignment in late. Some work cannot 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 are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

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.

**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.

### **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.

### **Disabilities 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 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. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) at 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

### **Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination Statement**

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360.

### **Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement (updated 6/2019)**

If you are pregnant, or have given birth been within six months, under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact the Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or e-mail [cgilster@southplainscollege.edu](mailto:cgilster@southplainscollege.edu) for assistance.

### **Civility Code:**

As future professionals, you are to communicate with each other in a professional and civil manner. Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others' behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, aggressive, or demeaning. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process or is deemed disrespectful or threatening shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:** Students are expected to do their own work on all projects, quizzes, assignments, examinations, and papers. Failure to comply with this policy will result in an F for the assignment and can result in an F for the course if circumstances warrant.

Plagiarism violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Turning in a paper that has been purchased, borrowed, or downloaded from another student, an online term paper site, or a mail order term paper mill;
2. Cutting and pasting together information from books, articles, other papers, or online sites without providing proper documentation;
3. Using direct quotations (three or more words) from a source without showing them to be direct quotations and citing them; or
4. Missing in-text citations.

Cheating violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Obtaining an examination by stealing or collusion;
2. Discovering the content of an examination before it is given;
3. Using an unauthorized source of information (notes, textbook, text messaging, internet, apps) during an examination, quiz, or homework assignment;
4. Entering an office or building to obtain unfair advantage;
5. Taking an examination for another;
6. Altering grade records;
7. Copying another's work during an examination or on a homework assignment;

8. Rewriting another student's work in Peer Editing so that the writing is no longer the original student's;
9. Taking pictures of a test, test answers, or someone else's paper.