Stony Brook University
School of Journalism
JRN 115 – News Reporting & Writing I
Fall 2017

Section 01
Melville Library W4545
Monday, Wednesday 10 a.m.-11:20 a.m.
Professor Barbara Selvin
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516-242-1100 (cell)

Office hours: Mondays, 11:30-1; Thursdays, 2-4 and by appointment.
Office: Library N4012, opposite School of Journalism office

I. Purpose of the Course:
This is the second course in the School of Journalism’s three-course Fundamentals of Reporting and Writing sequence. Applying the habits of thought explored in JRN 105, The Mind of a Reporter, students learn to write straightforward news ledes and basic types of news stories, such as speech and meeting stories, crime and fire stories, obituaries. Along with the corequisite JRN 111, Writing Immersion Lab, this course emphasizes writing accurately, clearly and concisely, using Associated Press style. Students are required to read The New York Times daily, along with other media sources, to keep up current events. While the emphasis is on writing, students also will report stories outside the classroom.

II. Intended Outcomes
- **Reporting:** Report effective “daily” hard-news stories, going beyond chronological stenography and adding context.
- **Writing:** Write news stories that meet professional standards of clarity, accuracy, fairness and verification and conform to AP style guidelines. Write to a specific word length.
- **Numeracy:** Understand basic numerical concepts that frequently appear in news stories. Effectively and accurately use numbers in a news story.
- **Research:** Understand and demonstrate the importance of fact-checking.
- **Diversity:** Demonstrate an openness to sources different from themselves and the ability to think critically about their own personal biases when seeking sources.
- **Ethics/Journalistic Values:** Demonstrate an understanding of ethics regarding newsgathering.
- **News Engagement:** Compare coverage across multiple news sources.
III. Required Texts and Materials:

- **AP Stylebook.** When you're on campus, you can access the searchable AP Stylebook online through the following link: [http://www.apstylebook.com/stonybrook_edu/](http://www.apstylebook.com/stonybrook_edu/), and the alphabetical version at [http://www.apstylebook.com/stonybrook_edu/?do=chapter](http://www.apstylebook.com/stonybrook_edu/?do=chapter). For off-campus access, go to [library.stonybrook.edu](http://library.stonybrook.edu). Select DATABASES. Search for AP Stylebook. You will need to log in with your netID and password.

You are expected to use AP style and proper grammar in all written work for this course. I may deduct points for style and grammar errors.

- **New York Times** subscription (see Newspapers, online news sources under Course Requirements and Policies)


- **Reporter’s notebook.** Reporter’s notebooks are long and thin, 8 inches by 4 inches, making it possible to hold them in one hand while writing with the other. They fit in pockets and purses. Buy at least one from Shop Red or Staples or order some online. If you prefer a Moleskine or other small notepad, that’s fine. But steno pads and larger notebooks are unwieldy for on-your-feet reporting and look unprofessional.

**Recommended:** Harrower, “Inside Reporting,” or another basic journalism textbook. This is for your reference. We will be using online materials. If you can find a used basic text, get one. You can also see me. The SOJ has some in its library.

IV. Course Requirements and Policies:

Prerequisite: JRN 105
Corequisite: JRN 111

**Policies are listed alphabetically.**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.
Assessment record: As part of the ongoing internal assessment of the School of Journalism, and in keeping with accreditation requirements, examples of student work are retained for review as a measure of course-by-course progress. These are archived electronically and are for reference only.

Assignments: Posted on Blackboard.

Attendance: If circumstances prevent your attending class, you must inform the instructor by phone or email on the day of class or within 24 hours afterward. The policy of the journalism program is as follows: For courses that meet twice a week, two unexcused absences are permitted. A third or fourth such absence may result in the loss of one-third of a letter grade per absence. Five may result in an F. Consistent tardiness may result in a reduced final grade.

Blackboard: There is a Blackboard account for this course. Check daily for announcements. Failure to check e-mail will not be accepted as an excuse for missing announcements or assignment changes. If you have not done so already, you must set up a Blackboard account. Please verify your email address on Blackboard. For help, call 631-632-9602.

Conferences: There will be two required conferences during the semester. Class will not meet during conference weeks.

Copyright: Copyright is the exclusive legal right of a creator or owner to reproduce, publish, adapt, sell or distribute his or her original work of authorship. It covers literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works. The published or broadcast work of student journalists, just like any other author, is protected by copyright. The School of Journalism diligently protects its own copyrighted materials and respects the copyrights of others. The SOJ expects students to abide by all SUNY, Stony Brook University and SOJ copyright policies. When in doubt about the use of any materials created by a third party, always consult with your instructor.

Deadlines: All work is due on time. Work not turned in on time will lose a letter or number grade, unless the instructor makes an exception based on circumstances, and will receive an “F” or 0 thereafter.

Disruptive Behavior: “Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty members are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn.”
E-mail: All university email communications use your primary campus address (firstname.lastname@stonybrook.edu). If you are not using that address, you will not receive any university email, including via Blackboard.

Food and drink: Food and drink are banned in all computer rooms. I don’t care what other professors have let you do. I enforce this ban.

Format: Only work submitted in approved format will be accepted. For work filed electronically, use single spacing. For the occasional work requested as hard copy, I require work to be typed, triple-spaced, with copy starting halfway down the first page.

Library resources: The library’s subject guide for journalism is at http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/c.php?g=35381

“My Life As …” Students are required to attend one “My Life As…” program. Extra credit will be given for each additional “My Life As…”

Newspapers, online news sources: Students are required to read campus and professional newspapers and online news sources daily to develop a good grasp of current events. Discount subscriptions to The New York Times may be obtained at www.nytimes.com/collegereate or call 888-NYT-COLL. You may choose basic digital access, ($1/week for unlimited access to NYTimes.com and the New York Times smartphone and tablet apps), all access ($1.50/week for basic plus web/mobile crossword) or home delivery plus digital access ($7.75/week, 50 percent off regular price).

I strongly recommend that you cough up the money for the print paper. You will retain more if you read ink on paper. And why not enjoy the experience of newsprint while you still can? You can rationalize the expense this way: The course has no other required text.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Any form of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Committee and can result in a failing grade for the course. As journalists, we bear a special responsibility to attribute others’ words accurately. Here is the University’s statement on academic dishonesty:

“Plagiarism is the use of others’ words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. As students, you are learning about other people’s ideas in your course texts, your instructors’ lectures, in-class discussions, and when doing your own research. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, it is of the utmost importance that you give credit where it is due. Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is considered academic dishonesty and all instances will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. To avoid plagiarism, you must give the original author credit whenever you use another person’s ideas, opinions, drawings, or theories as well as any facts or any other pieces of information that are not common knowledge. Additionally quotations of another person’s actual spoken or written words; or a close paraphrasing of another person’s spoken or written words must also be referenced. Accurately citing all
sources and putting direct quotations – of even a few key words – in quotation marks are required.”

For further information on academic integrity and the policies regarding academic dishonesty, go to Academic Judiciary at www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary

Other examples of cheating include:

Using sources for stories or assignments that are known to the student. Journalism students must not use friends, family members, roommates, classmates or business associates – anyone they know – as subjects. If you believe an exemption is warranted, you must receive prior approval from your instructor.

Copying answers or assignments from someone else or allowing someone to copy from you.

Cheating in any form on an exam.

Unpermitted collaboration on work.

Multiple submissions of the same work.

Fabricating or altering an excuse note.

Making up quotes, facts or references

**Press Pass:** All majors and minors in reporting courses will be issued an SOJ Press Pass. These cards are intended to identify student reporters to sources and authorities and to facilitate their movements around campus. Students will sign for the cards, on forms to be provided, agreeing to comply with the rules or forfeit the card. They will be worn or carried and displayed at all SOJ assignments.

**Sources:** Students will provide contact information for all sources in a story, no matter what the platform. This list includes names, telephone numbers and email addresses. Instructors will make random checks to verify sources and information. An assignment without a full list of sources will not be accepted.

Sources for news stories must be individuals unknown to the reporter. SOJ reporters must not use friends, family members, roommates, or business associates – anyone they know – as subjects. The key question is: “If I wrote something that this source didn’t like, could that affect my relationship with the source?” If the answer is **yes** or **maybe**, find another source.

When reporting, students are obligated to make clear they are working on material that may be published. Students may not say tell a source: “Don’t worry, this is just for a class.” A reporter’s sources must understand that information and quotes provided may appear in a print or online publication.

**Special considerations:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may affect your coursework, please contact Disability Support Services in room 128 of the Educational Communications Building, 2-6748. They will work with you in confidence to determine the necessary accommodations. Students requiring emergency evacuation should discuss this need with their professors and DSS. For procedures and info, please visit http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu/fire/disabilities/asp.

**Stress:** Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has a free service available to all Stony Brook students that provides counseling support 24 hours a
day, 365 days a year. Students can call CAPS After Hours at (631) 632-6720 any
time, day or night, to speak with a counselor about anything of concern such as anxiety
about classwork, stress over a relationship, or if they are just having a bad day and need
to talk with someone.

V. Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major reporting projects:</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class work and homework:</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes:</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation, effort</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Grading scale is as follows:
- A : 93 and above
- A-: 90-92
- B+: 87-89
- B : 83-86
- B-: 80-82
- C+: 77-79
- C : 73-76
- C-: 70-72
- D+: 67-69
- D : 60-66
- F : 59 and below

"A" work is superior; dramatically surpasses minimum requirements
"B" work is good; exceeds minimum requirements
"C" work meets minimum requirements
"D" work is poor; does not meet minimum requirements
“F” work is not acceptable or not turned in.

Important: Only semester grades of C or above count for credit toward the journalism major or minor. Any student earning a C-minus or below who intends to continue in the journalism program must retake the class and will not be able to continue in other journalism skills classes.

This course may be repeated only once.

VI. Class Schedule:

Schedule is subject to change.
All readings and assignments will be posted in Blackboard.
All class meetings involve class discussions: Be Prepared.
Important dates:
- Monday, Sept. 4: No class
- Tuesday, Sept. 12, 4 p.m.: Add/Drop deadline
- Friday, Oct. 27, 4 p.m.: GPNC deadline
- Wednesday, Nov. 22: No class

Topics for the first four weeks are included here. Going forward, the pace will depend on students’ work. The class schedule will be updated on Blackboard.

WEEK 1 Aug. 28, 30
Introductions
Syllabus
Ledes

Assignment: Watch your assigned Sunday morning news show. Assignment will be emailed via Blackboard on Saturday. Write a lede about the show and post it on Discussions/Sunday1

WEEK 2 No class Sept. 4. Sept. 6
Ledes

Assignment: Watch your assigned Sunday morning news show. Write a lede about the show and post it on Discussions/Sunday2

WEEK 3 Sept. 11, 13
The “inverted pyramid”

Assignment: Watch your assigned Sunday morning news show. Write an inverted-pyramid story about the show and post it on Discussions/Sunday3

WEEK 4 Sept. 18, 20
In-class writing drills

Assignment: Watch your assigned Sunday morning news show. Write an inverted-pyramid story about the show and post it on Discussions/Sunday4

WEEK 5 Sept. 25, 27

WEEK 6 Sept. Oct. 2, 4
WEEK 7  Oct. 9, 11
WEEK 8  Oct. 16, 18
WEEK 9  Oct. 23, 25
WEEK 10 Oct. 30, Nov. 1
WEEK 11 Nov. 6, 8
WEEK 12 Nov. 13, 15
WEEK 13 Nov. 20. No class Nov. 22
WEEK 14 Nov. 27, Nov. 29
WEEK 15 Dec. 4, 6