

Syllabus

ENGL 460.01: Hard News to Blogs: Post-1800 Journalism
Spring 2015, TTh 1:35-2:50pm, University Hall 3316

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4:15pm, Thursdays 3-5:45pm

Course Description and Objectives:

This course will focus on the work of a diverse group of 19th-, 20th-, and 21st-century journalists. We will concentrate on the ways in which their work reflected the unique concerns of society at the time they were writing, shaped how journalism was defined in the period, and contributed to a tradition of journalism that remains important today. In addition, we will consider our own position as active or aspiring journalists, discuss how we might highlight and influence the concerns of our own society, and write essays that will contribute to our own bodies of journalistic work.

In keeping with the goals of the undergraduate program in English, we will take as our objectives: enhancing our knowledge of the history of literature in the English language, reading texts closely and carefully, writing creatively and effectively, and examining the ways in which literature represents the human experience. In addition, since this course fulfills a requirement for the English Minor in Journalism and the Journalism Certificate, we will focus on building a writing portfolio that prepares students for future study of and work in the field of journalism.

Required Course Materials:

Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. ISBN 9781603290241.
The Missouri Group. *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid: Effective Writing for Newspapers, Magazines and Specialized Publications*. New York: St. Martin's P, 1993. ISBN 031204058X.

Articles available through MyLMU Connect. You are responsible for either printing out the readings and bring them to class or bringing a device (laptop or tablet, not your phone) on which you can view the readings in class. It is not enough to read the articles online before you come to class and work from memory while in class. You must have either electronic or hard copy of the articles with you in class, and you must bring to class notes (either on the articles or on a separate piece of paper or in a separate file on your device) with your ideas about what is important and what needs to be questioned. If you do not bring the articles and notes to class on the day we are discussing them, I will count you absent, and you will not receive credit for class participation.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation	15%
Journalist's Notebook/Blog	15%
Essay #1	15%
Essay #2	20%
Essay #3	20%
Assessment Essay	15%

Course Requirements:

Participation: In upper-level undergraduate courses, participation is an absolute must. I expect you to come ready to discuss the readings for the day with enthusiasm, and I expect everyone

to contribute to the discussion. Attendance is also a must. Because this course meets twice a week, you are allowed only four absences. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in very unusual circumstances, so you should save your absences for emergencies (death in family, illness, work commitments, etc.). Coming to class late or leaving early counts as a partial absence. If you miss more than four classes, there will be a significant reduction in your participation grade.

Journalist's Notebook/Blog: Every good journalist has a place where he or she writes down, in an informal manner, his or her reactions to the happenings of the world. Some journalists still keep a traditional spiral notebook, while others have embraced the new technology and keep a blog. You may do either this semester, but your notebook or blog will need to include eight entries, which reflect your thoughts as an active or aspiring journalist. I will show you some samples in class, to give you an idea of what I'm looking for. Each entry must be at least 250 words.

Essays: This semester, we will work on four essays: two journalistic essays (1500 words each), a critical essay (1750 words) analyzing the work of one of the journalists we're reading in its historical context, and a shorter essay (750 words) assessing your body of work as an active or aspiring journalist within the tradition of journalism we have been studying. All of these essays must be written for this class only, not for other classes, co- or extra-curricular organizations you already write for, or internship/work organizations you're a part of. Rough drafts of the journalistic essays will be workshopped in class, so you will be expected to bring extra copies for several of your peers. You must have a *complete* draft in order to participate in the workshop and get credit for the final, graded draft.

Grading Scale and Criteria:

The grading scale is based on the grading system approved by LMU. I will assign numerical grades for all assignments, and I will use the final grade sheet attached to this syllabus to figure final grades. The numerical/letter grade correlation is as follows: 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 60-69=D, and 0-59=F. My primary grading criterion is this: for all major assignments, I am looking for writing that expresses a complex idea or argument via specific examples and does so in an engaging, sophisticated manner. See attached handout for more about this.

Late Assignments:

Expect deductions for late assignments. Typically, I deduct 10 points per 24 hours; for example, a paper that earns 90 points and is a day late will drop to an 80. No papers will be accepted via email, and no double submissions (same project submitted for another class) allowed.

Electronic Equipment and Visitors in the Classroom:

Laptops and tablets are permitted for the purpose of referring to and discussing assigned readings. They should not be used for other purposes while in class, unless directed by me. No cell phones, pagers, tape recorders, or other electronic equipment in the classroom.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own. It is a serious academic offence and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and/or university disciplinary action. For more details about the university's policy on this issue and other forms of academic dishonesty, see the Undergraduate Bulletin. If you are

unsure about how to integrate others' ideas or words into your work without plagiarizing, consult your English handbook and/or come talk to me. I'll be glad to help you avoid plagiarism!

Drop policy:

If you do not want a "W" on your record and want a full tuition refund, you must drop the course before the end of the first week of classes. From week 2-10, you may drop, but you will receive a "W" and will not receive a full tuition refund.

Resources for Students:

Tutoring Center: The Tutoring Center is located in the Academic Resource Center, on the second floor of Daum Hall. Experienced tutors are available to help students who wish to improve their writing. For an appointment, call 338-2847.

Advising: For questions about the undergraduate English curriculum, see an adviser in the English department. If you are an English major and you haven't talked to your assigned adviser yet, you should do so as soon as possible. BCLA also has Student Ambassadors, who can help with certain aspects of advising.

Disability Support Services: Persons with disabilities are welcome in this classroom. If you have a disability and need specific accommodations, please register with DSS as soon as possible and then come talk to me. DSS is located in the Academic Resource Center, room 224 in Daum Hall. The phone number is 338-4535.

Class Schedule

The workload expectations for this course follow LMU's credit-hour policy. In a three-credit course, students are expected to spend at least 2.5 hours per week in class and at least 6 hours per week studying outside of class. The dates and activities listed below are subject to change, but I will do all I can to keep us on schedule. You are responsible for noting any changes in the syllabus.

T, 1/13: Introduction to the course

Th, 1/15: Introduction to the course continued

19th-century Beginnings: Hard News and Exposé

T, 1/20: MyLMU Connect material: Horace Greeley

Th, 1/22: Chapters 1-3 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
Discuss Essay #1 assignment in class

T, 1/27: MyLMU Connect material: W. T. Stead

Th, 1/29: Chapters 4 and 6 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
Focus on interviewing techniques in class

T, 2/3: Continue discussion of interviewing techniques in class

Th, 2/5: MyLMU Connect material: Women Editors

- T, 2/10: Chapters 7, 9, and 10 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
20th-century New Journalisms: Op-Eds and Literary Journalism
- Th, 2/12: MyLMU Connect material: H. B. Swope and F. P. A.
- T, 2/17: Chapter 14 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
- Th, 2/19: No classes—University Holiday
- T, 2/24: MyLMU Connect material: Rebecca West
- Th, 2/26: Rough draft of Essay #1 due
- T, 3/3: Comments on peers' drafts due; in-class workshop
- Th, 3/5: MyLMU Connect material: Tom Wolfe
- T, 3/10: Chapter 8 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
 Discuss Essay #2 assignment in class
- Th, 3/12: No class--open office hours to discuss last-minute questions and concerns about Essay #1
- T, 3/17: Final draft of Essay #1 due; watch clips from *All the President's Men*

**Late-20th and Early-21st Century Specialties:
 Investigative Reporting, Entertainment News, Sports Commentary, and Blogs**

- Th, 3/19: MyLMU Connect material: Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein
- T, 3/24: Chapters 5 and 13 in *Beyond the Inverted Pyramid*
 In-class activity on investigative journalism
- Th, 3/26: Rough draft of Essay #2 due
 Discuss Essay #3 assignment
- T, 3/31 and Th, 4/2: No classes—University Holidays
- T, 4/7: Comments on peers' drafts due; in-class workshop
- Th, 4/9: MyLMU Connect: Touré and Dave Zirin
- T, 4/14: Blogging Panel
- Th, 4/16: MyLMU Connect material: Riverbend, Iraqi Girl Blogger
- T, 4/21: Discuss assessment essay assignment and do in-class activity related to this assignment
- Th, 4/23: No class—open office hours to discuss last-minute questions and concerns about Essay #2

T, 4/28: Final draft of Essay #2 due; course wrap-up

Th, 4/30: No class—open office hours to discuss last-minute questions and concerns about Essay #3, Journalist's Notebook, and Assessment Essay

Journalist's Notebook/Blog, Essay #3, and Assessment Essay due on Thursday, May 7 by 2:00pm.

Molly Youngkin
Grading Criteria—Essay #3
English 460

Below are the grading criteria for Essay #3. Below, when I refer to the paper's thesis, I am referring to the main statement of your argument, which I expect to see early in the essay. When I refer to the argument, I mean the way in which the thesis is developed in the rest of the essay, through clear statements about where the argument is going at key points in the essay. Finally, when I refer to supporting evidence, I mean the specific examples from the text you are using to flesh out your argument. If you have not written this type of paper before, feel free to come talk to me about how to go about it.

A= All material required for the assignment is present. The paper's thesis goes way beyond the obvious, and the argument presents a precise, informed, incisive, and satisfying critical investigation of the topic. The implications of the thesis are fully developed through the use of supporting evidence. The ideas within the essay are well-organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

B= All material required for the assignment is present. The paper's thesis goes beyond the obvious, and the argument presents a clear and accurate investigation of the topic. There is some strong supporting evidence for the thesis, but the ideas may not be fleshed out as fully as they might be, or some readings may not be as precise as they could be. The ideas within the essay are well-organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

C= All material required for the assignment is present. The essay has a thesis and details to support that thesis. The argument is adequate, but does not fully explore the implications of the topic or does not present a critical viewpoint that goes very far beyond the obvious. The supporting evidence for the argument may be adequate but not as fully developed as it could be and less convincing than it could be. The ideas within the essay are appropriately organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

D= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The essay has a weak thesis, and details to support the thesis are not developed adequately. The thesis does not go beyond the obvious or is more descriptive than analytical. Supporting evidence for the thesis may be missing or is so far off-base to be unconvincing. The ideas within the essay are not well-organized, and the language used in the essay may not be appropriate to the audience. The essay may lack items related to MLA format.

F= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The essay has a very weak thesis or no thesis, and details to support the thesis are not developed adequately or are missing. The thesis does not go beyond the obvious or is more descriptive than analytical. Supporting evidence for the thesis may be missing or is so far off-base to be unconvincing. The ideas within the essay are not well-organized, and the language used in the essay may not be appropriate to the audience. The essay may lack items related to MLA format.

Molly Youngkin
Grading Criteria—Essays #1 and #2
English 460

The grading criteria for Essays #1 and #2 are similar to those for Essay #3, except that I will use principles appropriate to journalistic writing. Again, if you have not done this type of writing before, feel free to come talk to me about these principles.

A= All material required for the assignment is present. The journalistic vision of the story goes way beyond the obvious, and the story presents this vision in a precise and compelling manner. The complexity of this vision is fully developed through the use of specific journalistic conventions. The ideas within the story are well constructed, and the language used is inventive.

B= All material required for the assignment is present. The journalistic vision of the story goes beyond the obvious, and the story presents this vision in a clear manner. The journalistic vision of the story is well developed through the use of specific journalistic conventions, but some aspects of the story may not be fleshed out as fully as they might be, or some aspects may not be as precise as they could be. The ideas within the story are well constructed, and the language used is interesting.

C= All material required for the assignment is present. The story has a journalistic vision and uses journalistic conventions to present this vision. The vision and the conventions used to express this vision are adequate, but the vision is not strong enough and/or the conventions are not crafted well enough to present this vision in more than an obvious way. The ideas within the story are appropriately constructed but not well constructed, and the language used is appropriate but not interesting or inventive.

D= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The story has a weak journalistic vision, and the journalistic conventions to support this vision are not developed adequately. The work may be an unthoughtful use of journalistic conventions rather than use of these conventions in connection with a journalistic vision. The ideas within the story are not well constructed, and the language used in the story may not be appropriate to the audience.

F= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The story has a very weak journalistic vision or no journalistic vision, and the journalistic conventions are not developed adequately or are missing. The work may be an unthoughtful use of journalistic conventions rather than use of these conventions in connection with a creative vision. The ideas within the story are not well constructed, and the language used in the story may not be appropriate to the audience.

Molly Youngkin
Grade Calculation Sheet
English 460

Student _____

	Numerical Value		Percentage Weight	Total Weight
Essay #1	_____	x	____.15____	= _____
Essay #2	_____	x	____.20____	= _____
Essay #3	_____	x	____.20____	= _____
Assessment Essay	_____	x	____.15____	= _____
Journalist's Notebook/Blog	_____	x	____.15____	= _____
Participation	_____	x	____.15____	= _____
			Numerical Total	_____
			Final Grade	_____

Final Grade Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Directions

1) Fill in the appropriate numerical value for each assignment; 2) Multiply that value by the percentage weight in the second column; 3) Add the amounts in the "total" column; 4) Use the "final grade scale" to calculate your final letter grade.