COJO F202 UX1

News Writing for the Media
3 credits

Brian Patrick O’Donoghue
Professor

Office: 101 Bunnell
Hours: Wednesday, 2-4 p.m. & by appointment
(907) 474-6247
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Course Description: Identifying and focusing news stories, writing the lead, developing story structure, meeting deadlines, copy editing, writing headlines and captions. Introduction to AP Style and news writing for print, broadcast and digital journalism.

Course goals: Students learn to distinguish fact from opinion, and develop skills needed to identify and report newsworthy developments on deadline.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students completing COJO 202 should possess basic news-writing skills needed for print, and familiarity with writing conventions for broadcast and digital-platform reports. Students gain introductory-level skill in copy editing and applying Associated Press Stylebook guidelines.

COURSE READINGS/MATERIALS

REQUIRED: Inside Reporting, 3rd edition, by Tim Harrower
REQUIRED: The Associated Press Stylebook (and libel… or media law, etc.), any edition from 2014-forward is acceptable.

RECOMMENDED: The Elements of Style, Strunk & White, any edition, offers good points you can use improving your own writing. The book is not long. You can find cheap copies used, or easily find free PDFs on the internet.
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE

- Students must have regular access to a computer and the Internet to access online materials in Blackboard. Students will be expected to download course material as well as upload assignments.
- Stories and writing assignments must be submitted in Word-compatible formats.
- Google spreadsheets, or compatible formats, are used logging sources. Make sure to allow editing on any Google document shared with the instructor.
- Students need a digital camera or cell phone capable of shooting photos. An audio recorder is recommended for interviews.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Interviewing, writing and rewriting. The three news story assignments require field reporting and rewrites. One of those stories calls for covering a live event and filing the story about it by the midnight deadline. Weekly quizzes test retention of assigned reading and build familiarity applying AP Stylebook guideline. Take advantage of “ASK ME ANYTHING” sessions to get answers clarify expectations with the professor.

**Submiting work:** Quizzes, exams and most short writing assignments are completed within the COJO 202 Blackboard assignment interface. Longer writing assignments and broadcast scripts should be emailed directly to the instructor as Word-compatible documents.

Note the assignment # when submitting or referring to assignments in email. For example, “A3 question”

Assignments that are poorly identified or submitted incorrectly may be overlooked, lost, or deemed late.

Pace yourself: Most stories, weekly discussion posts and other assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. Thursday. Quizzes are due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Keep your AP Stylebook handy. As in newsrooms, students are encouraged to consult the Stylebook open book working on all writing exercises, including exams. The goal in this class is building familiarity with the Stylebook’s organization and content, so you can quickly apply the guidelines.

Students are responsible for logging contact info for anyone interviewed and other sources in a Google spreadsheet shared with the instructor. These Source Logs will be updated throughout the semester. A template with instructions is found in Blackboard’s “Course Materials” tab.

RESPONSE TIME:
During the work week, I strive to respond to queries within 48 hours. Edits on drafts and other work submitted Thursday will be returned by Monday. Quiz results are posted in Blackboard’s Grade Center.

E-mail is the best way to reach the professor. Use descriptive subject lines! If it is a question about "Story2," for example, reference “Story2” in the email subject line.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
See the News-Writing sked, found in the Blackboard menu buttons, for roadmap of the Learning Modules, weekly topics, assignment deadlines and reading. This schedule is subject to revision. *Check sked weekly for updates.*

**EVALUATION POLICIES**
All assignments are evaluated on a 10-point scale. Final overall grade components are weighted thus:

- **News stories:** 30 percent*
- **Other exercises:** 20 percent
- **Quizzes:** 20 percent
- **Midterm:** 05 percent
- **Final exam:** 10 percent
- **Discussion Hall:** 10 percent
- **Source logs:** 05 percent

*Rewrites are weighted more heavily than initial story drafts.

**Extra Credit:** Publication of any news story resulting from this class earns extra credit commensurate with the outlet and significance of the report. Stories published in the **UAF Sun Star** earn a modest bonus, publication in a commercial newspaper, magazine or digital publication may raise the writer’s final grade by a full letter or more.

Final grades will be calculated using UAF's plus-minus formula applying this philosophy:

- A+: Honor grade, indicates originality, thorough mastery of the subject
- A: Excellence and completion of more work than is regularly required
- B: Above average effort
- C: Satisfactory performance
- D: Lowest passing grade
- F: Failure

C– (1.7) is the minimum acceptable grade that undergraduate students may receive for courses to count toward the major or minor degree requirements, or as a prerequisite for another course. A minimum grade of C (2.0), however, MAY be required by specific programs for prerequisite and/ or major / minor courses. Please consult specific program listings in the UAF Catalog.
This course adheres to the UAF regarding the granting of NB Grades. The NB grade is for use only in situations in which the instructor has No Basis upon which to assign a grade. In general, the NB grade will not be granted.

Your instructor follows the University of Alaska Fairbanks Incomplete Grade Policy:
“The letter “I” (Incomplete) is a temporary grade used to indicate that the student has satisfactorily completed (C or better) the majority of work in a course but for personal reasons beyond the student’s control, such as sickness, he has not been able to complete the course during the regular semester. Negligence or indifference are not acceptable reasons for an “I” grade.”

FIRST STEPS
Successful, timely completion of this course depends on committing yourself early and maintaining your effort. To this end, this course adheres to the following UAF eLearning Procedures:

1. The first contact assignment-- a required introductory post in the class Discussion Hall-- is due one week after the first day of instruction. Failure to submit this assignment within the first two weeks of the course could result in withdrawal from the course.

2. The first content assignment-- A1-Benchmark-- is also due one week after the first day of instruction. Failure to submit this assignment within the first two weeks of the course could result in withdrawal from the course.

Failure to submit the first three content assignments (A1, A2 & A3) by the deadline for faculty-initiated withdrawals (the ninth Friday after the first day of classes) could result in instructor initiated withdrawal from the course.

COURSE POLICIES
Deadlines: Unless prior arrangements are made, most homework assignments are due by midnight Thursday. Late work is marked down at least one grade and may be rejected. If there is a valid excuse, I want to hear it ASAP.

Accuracy & corrections: Check and double check proper names, job titles, dates and all other facts before turning in assignments. AP Style errors flagged in story drafts must be corrected in rewrites.

“DANGER, DANGER WILL ROBINSON!”

Plagiarism is appropriating someone else’s words and presenting it as your own. It's fair game to quote newspapers, magazines, TV reports or material obtained from any other credible published source. HOWEVER, it's plagiarism to do so without proper attribution. Evidence of plagiarism warrants an "F" on the assignment. Further sanctions may follow.
**Fabrication** is making up a quote, a source or an event; in other words presenting as real a fictitious person or thing that did not occur or does not exist. This is a firing offense, a likely career ender. Potential penalties range from an "F" for the course on up to expulsion from the COJO Digital Journalism program.

Other institutional penalties may apply: For more information go to [Student Code of Conduct](#).

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN COJO 202**

If you haven’t done so already, look for the **START HERE** tab on the course Blackboard site. You’ll find a one-stop overview of how the course site is organized. **Seriously, do that RIGHT AWAY!**

---NEW THIS SEMESTER---

Jot down any questions you have about news-writing concepts or specific assignments. Email these with “AnythingQ” in the subject line. I will do my best to address these in the weekly “ASK ME ANYTHING” video-conference forum. Through eLearning “magic” the session videos will be posted in for those who couldn’t take part or want to refer back to particular discussions later.

**Housekeeping & other good stuff**

**FILE NAMES and document headings:** When an assignment calls for creating and saving a document, name it: “**YourLastName**+**Specific-assignment.**”

**If it’s a rewrite, rename the file as appropriate:** For example: Smith-Story2-draft, Smith-Story2-rewrite

**Note the assignment title, your last name and date on the upper left side of the document.**

Story 2 rewrite
Adams
9/24/18

**Turning in work:** Write or cut and paste short writing assignments into the space provided within the Blackboard assignment itself. Email or upload longer submissions in appropriate file formats: .doc, .docx, jpeg (for images) Don’t submit assignments as PDFs through Blackboard, which prevents editing. Double space news stories for easier editing.

If you sharing work by Google Drive, make sure to grant editing privileges.
VIRTUAL CLASSROOM: This course makes use of a companion Wordpress site for weekly discussions of news writing concepts and feedback on select assignments.

Every student is expected to post two weekly Discussion Hall comments, responding to the professor’s prompt and at least one fellow classmate’s comment.

HOW TO USE AP STYLEBOOK:
Start by skimming the chapters. Look at what is covered in the A-Z listing, and subject areas. Pay attention to commonly misused terms, for example, bazzar and bizarre. Note the broad issues covered in longer listings, such as possessives, abbreviations and military titles. Depending on your own interests and professional goals, flip through the chapters on “Sports,” “Weather,” and other specialized areas. Circle, star or highlight listings you recognize are worth double checking.

Get names and other facts right the first time!

IF YOU WAKE UP DREAMING ABOUT GREAT STORY IDEA, WRITE IT DOWN!

And remember:
"DEADLINES ARE LIBERATING!"

HOW TO CHECK YOUR GRADE
To check your grades for assignments/quizzes and find comments from your instructor, click on the My Grades link in the sidebar menu. All assignments and any due dates are listed. Following the Midterm, I will post a “Ballpark” grade column, letting students know where each stands overall. Due to the additional weight given later assignments and consideration given “extra credit” for publication of your news stories, there is a lot of room to improve down the stretch.

If the score is for an assignment, the title of the assignment is a link and by clicking this link you'll be taken to your submission, grade and comments.

If you see a green exclamation point, your assignment has not been graded yet.

WORKLOAD:
Students should expect to spend 10-12 hours per week on this class. Make deadline on the weekly assignments. Writing exercises and discussion posts are due overnight Thursdays. Finish Quizzes by Sunday night. If circumstances arise that cause you to need extra time on any assignment(s), e-mail your instructor for guidance. Extensions of due dates may be granted, but your instructor expects to be informed in advance if you are not able to submit your assignment on time. (Emergency situations will be dealt with
as needed.)

**PLAN FOR THE WORST:** Students are expected to maintain a working backup plan to be implemented in the event of a computer malfunction or an interruption of their normal Internet service during the course.

---------------------------SUPPORT SERVICES---------------------------------------

**UAF Help Desk**
Go to [http://www.alaska.edu/oit/](http://www.alaska.edu/oit/) to see about current network outages and news.
Reach the Help Desk at:
- e-mail at helpdesk@alaska.edu
- fax: 907.450.8312
- phone: 450.8300 (in the Fairbanks area) or 1.800.478.8226 (outside of Fairbanks)

**UAF eLearning Student Services** helps students with registration and course schedules, provides information about lessons and student records, assists with the examination process, and answers general questions. Our Academic Advisor can help students communicate with instructors, locate helpful resources, and maximize their distance learning experience. Contact the UAF eLearning Student Services staff at 907.455.2060 or toll free 1.800.277.8060 or contact staff directly – for directory listing see: [http://elearning.uaf.edu/contact](http://elearning.uaf.edu/contact)

**SPECIAL NEEDS OR ACADEMIC CHALLENGES?**

Take advantage of UAF’s free support services. We have several walk-in coaching centers. Some of these offer alternative forms of help for distance students.

**Speaking Center**
COJO
507 Greuning Bldg.
(907) 474-5470
[mailto:uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu)

**Writing Center**
Dept. Of English
801 Gruening Bldg.
(907) 474-5314

The above centers provide this and more:

**The Writing Center**, a student-staffed, student-oriented service of the English Department, assists with any phase of the writing process -- planning, drafting and revising. Discover ways of improving grammar, mechanics, and punctuation.

**COJO’s Speaking Center** is a student-oriented service that helps preparing public presentations. Assistance areas include refining topics, organizing material and practicing presentation. The Center makes it possible to digitally record and to watch one's practice presentation, receiving constructive feedback from a Speaking Center coach.
Any student I suspect may benefit will receive mandatory referrals.

I will do what I can to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities. See Disability Services for a letter recommending the kind of assistance you need to be successful.

Disability Services
e-mail. fydso@uaf.edu
tel. 907-474-5655
tty. 907-474-1827
Whitaker Building Room 208
uaf-disabilityservices@alaska.edu

More options are open early in the semester. Alert me to concerns within the first two weeks.

FACING HARASSMENT OR WORSE?

If, for ANY reason, you feel you are a victim of sex discrimination on campus or in the course of association as a UAF student, reach out for help.

UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual:
www.alaska.edu/titleIXcompliance/nondiscrimination.

The University of Alaska Board of Regents have clearly stated in BOR policy that discrimination, harassment and violence will not be tolerated on any campus of the University of Alaska. If you believe you are experiencing discrimination or any form of harassment, including sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, you are encouraged to report that behavior. If you disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to faculty members or university employees, they must notify the UAF Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident. Your choices for disclosure include:

1. You may confidentially disclose and access confidential counseling by contacting the UAF Health and Counseling Center at 474-7043.

Or write:

UAF Title IX Coordinator
739 Columbia Cr., Fairbanks, AK 99775

E-Mail: uaf-tix@alaska.edu

You may also file a criminal complaint by contacting the UAF Police Department at 474-7721.
More general resources:

**UAF Academic Support Services** supports students with academic advising, tutoring and academic support, disability services, computing and IT support. Contact the **Registrar's office** for things like: enrollment, registration, petitions, transcripts, graduation and more.

Alternately, contact **UAF Student Support Services** for first-generation and those with disabilities or low income who may be eligible for additional student support.

UAF maintains an academic environment in which the freedom to teach, conduct research, learn and administer the university is protected. Students enjoy maximum benefit from this environment by accepting responsibilities commensurate with their role in the academic community. Visit **UAF Student Policies**.

Enough?

Let’s get going on COJO 202 News Writing for the Media

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**ABOUT THE PROFESSOR**

In 2016, Brian Patrick O'Donoghue received Alaska Press Club’s highest honor, the Tom Snapp-Howard Rock **First Amendment Award**, for “dogged persistence in pursuit of the truth.” The recognition followed more than a decade of student-assisted reporting that helped exonerate the Fairbanks Four. The local men, including three Native Alaskans, were wrongfully incarcerated 18 years for a white teen’s 1997 murder.
O'Donoghue’s long career spans print, broadcast and mobile journalism. He’s taken readers soaring in an F-16, accompanied Stryker Brigade soldiers sweeping palm groves for weapons in Iraq, chased oil slicks and rock scrubbers across Prince William Sound and reported on pipeline construction out on the Arctic Ocean ice in 70-below conditions.


His news photos document Mid East peace talks, political campaigns, disasters, tribal gatherings and jazz greats. His books, *My lead Dog was a Lesbian,* and *Honest Dogs,* recount his own misadventures mushing the distance in both Alaska’s *Iditarod* and the *Yukon Quest* International 1,000-mile sleddog races.

O'Donoghue spent 2012-13 teaching and researching digital media trends as Fulbright-Nehru Scholar in residence at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, in Pune, India.

He is past president of Alaska Press Club and a dedicated member of Investigative Reporters and Editors. He began teaching journalism at UAF in 2001, and served as journalism department chair from fall 2009- spring 2015.

O'Donoghue and his wife, former journalist Kate Ripley, have three children, Rory, Rachel and current UAA Seawolf Robin.