

PELLISSIPPI STATE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MASTER SYLLABUS

**NEWSWRITING**  
**JOU 2000**

**Class Hours: 3.0**

**Credit Hours: 3.0**

**Laboratory Hours: 1.0**

**Date Revised: Fall 06**

**Catalog Course Description:**

Writing for print and electronic media under deadline. Gathering information by using records, documents, observation and interviewing. Emphasis on library resources and current events. Basic style and editing based on AP Stylebook and Libel Manual.

**Entry Level Standards:**

Minimal typing skills are also required (student cannot have others do the typing). Unless otherwise specified for a given assignment, all work must be done on computer; some assignments may be handed in on disk, but computer printouts will be the usual means of completing an assignment.

**Prerequisites:**

CMN 1500 and ENGL 1020 and keyboarding skills

**Textbook(s) and Other Course Materials:**

J.J. Yopp & K.C. McAdams, *Reaching Audiences: A Guide to Media Writing*, 2nd ed. (Allyn & Bacon, 1999); and the latest edition of the *AP Stylebook & Libel Manual* are the required textbooks for the course. Students should also have a copy of *Webster's New World Dictionary* and two standard 3.5 inch floppy disks.

**I. Week/Unit/Topic Basis:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Writers and journalists on the job. An overview of professional demands. Introduction to basic computer and word processing procedures.
2	Journalism as the basis for mass media writing. Use of stylebook. Grammar review. Chapter 1.
3	Connecting with media audiences. Chapter 2.
4	Getting the story started. News values. Lead formats. Chapter 3.
5	Story structures and organization. Chapter 4.
6	The elements of good writing. Clarity. Chapter 5.
7	Rewriting, editing, copyediting. Chapter 6.
8	Overcoming bias and stereotyping in writing. Chapter 7.

- 9 Practical grammar concerns. Chapter 8.
- 10 Research and observation. Practical, purposeful reporting. Chapter 9.
- 11 Interviewing, attribution, covering meetings and speeches. Chapter 10.
- 12 Newswriting for electronic media. Chapter 11.
- 13 Public relations writing. Chapter 12.
- 14 Laws and codes: libel, privacy, ethics, and taste.
- 15 Review and evaluation.  
Final exam

## II. Course Objectives\*:

- A. Understand the news industry. I.2, I.5
- B. Know the history of the news industry. IV.3
- C. Understand the psychology of the reader/viewer. I.1, IV.2
- D. Know how to gather news. I.5
- E. Understand and write news stories and feature stories for print and broadcast. I.3
- F. Understand and write copy for public relations use. I.3
- G. Understand legal and ethical considerations of writing for the news media. III.2, IV.2

\*Roman numerals after course objectives reference TBR's general education goals.

## III. Instructional Processes\*:

Students will:

1. Write news stories using word processing software. *Communication Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Technological Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
2. Collaborate in teams for peer review of news stories to analyze audience and message, to develop and organize ideas, and to evaluate stories as to news value, accuracy, brevity, and clarity. *Communication Outcome, Personal Development Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*
3. Develop research skills using interviews, observation, the Internet, and library resources to find information pertinent to news and feature stories requiring attribution. *Communication Outcome, Problem Solving and Decision Making Outcome, Technological literacy Outcome, Informational Literacy Outcome, Transitional Strategy, Active Learning Strategy*

\*Strategies and outcomes listed after instructional processes reference Pellissippi State's goals for strengthening general education knowledge and skills, connecting coursework to experiences beyond the classroom, and encouraging students to take active and responsible roles in the educational process.

## IV. Expectations for Student Performance\*:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain the nature and structure of the news industry. A
2. Describe the historical background of the news media. B
3. Identify special interest newspapers. A
4. Explain the role of the reader/viewer in shaping the news industry. C
5. Explain the importance of news values in shaping story selection, focus, and organization. C
6. Demonstrate news gathering skills. D
7. Interview story sources with confidence. D
8. Write stories that are clear, concise, and concrete. E
9. Write news copy according to accepted journalistic conventions as exemplified in the *AP Stylebook*. E
10. Demonstrate basic editing skills. A, E
11. Adapt newswriting skills and formats to produce news releases. F
12. Write a standard news release. F
13. Research, write, and present a news broadcast. A, E
14. Explain the Freedom of Information Act. G
15. Describe defenses against libel actions. A, G

\*Letters after performance expectations reference the course objectives listed above.

#### **V. Evaluation:**

##### A. Testing Procedures: 40-50% of grade

There will be a comprehensive final exam constituting 20 to 30 percent of the student's final grade.

Grammar, style, and current events quizzes and quizzes on the reading assignments constitute 20 percent of the student's final grade.

##### B. Laboratory Expectations: 40-50% of grade

Writing assignments constitute 40 to 50 percent of the student's final grade.

The instructor will designate at least one writing assignment per month to be submitted to the school's student newspaper for consideration for publication.

##### C. Field Work: 10% of grade

Participation in class, including discussion groups and teams, constitutes 10 percent of the student's final grade.

#### **VI. Policies:**

A. Attendance Policy:

Pellissippi State Technical Community College expects students to attend all scheduled instructional activities. As a minimum, students in all courses must be present for at least 75 percent of their scheduled class and laboratory meetings in order to receive credit for the course. Individual departments/programs/disciplines, with the approval of the vice president of Academic and Student Affairs, may have requirements that are more stringent. Accordingly, the journalism/mass communication program has received approval for the following: four unexcused absences are permitted without a grade penalty. A fifth absence will reduce the final grade by one letter. More than six absences for any reason will result in a grade of "F".

B. Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. A student guilty of academic misconduct, either directly or indirectly through participation or assistance, is immediately responsible to the instructor of the class. In addition to other possible disciplinary sanctions which may be imposed through the regular Pellissippi State procedures as a result of academic misconduct, the instructor has the authority to assign an F or a zero for the exercise or examination, or to assign an F in the course. Plagiarism is either the copying or the paraphrasing of someone else's work while claiming it as one's own original work. Plagiarism can be a particular problem in a writing class; if you are found to be plagiarizing, you could possibly be expelled from the school.

C. Accommodations for disabilities:

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform the instructor immediately. Please see the instructor privately after class or in his/her office. Students must present a current accommodation plan from a staff member in Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) in order to receive accommodations in this course. Services for Students with Disabilities may be contacted by going to Goins 127 or 131 or by phone: 694-6751(Voice/TTY) or 539-7153.