



Course Syllabus: Media Writing and Reporting
Lamar D. Fain College of Fine Arts
MCOM 2243 Section 101
Fall 2025

Contact Information

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Office hours: Mondays: 2pm – 4pm | Wednesdays: 10am – 11:30am | Fridays:
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Course Description

- MCOM 2243 is designed to further students' skills in writing and reporting for the mass media.
- Emphasis will be placed on key characteristics of good writing: spelling, grammar, sentence structure, style, punctuation and clarity.
- Students will gain additional experience in essential writing and reporting skills for print and broadcast media.
- Students will gain a better understanding of some of the legal and ethical issues they may encounter during their mass communication careers.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

The Associated Press Stylebook 57th Edition (required)

Any paperback dictionary (required)

Any Thesaurus (recommended)

Please also note that numerous handouts will be given throughout the semester to supplement the lectures.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes: cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Students are expected to uphold academic integrity. The Office of Student Conduct governs academic misconduct policy and procedures.

AI Policy

AI may be used for pre-task activities such as brainstorming, outlining and initial research. You may use AI for planning, idea development, and initial research. Your final submission should show how you developed and refined these initial ideas into the final submission (AI Level 2 Policy adopted from VinUniversity Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale).

Moffett Library

The Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information.

Grading

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Weighting
Tests	25%
Writing and Reporting for Print Media and Broadcast Media	50%
Final Project	25%

Final Project

In lieu of a final exam, you will be required to produce an in-depth article that should be suitable for publication. The article should have multiple sources.

You will be provided with further details on this project as the semester progresses. We will spend the final exam period analyzing the projects. The final project will account for 25% of overall course grade.

Tests/Assignments

Tests and Writing Assignments will make up the graded components of the course. Students will be given ample time to prepare for each test/assignment.

Extra Credit

I do not typically give or accept extra credit assignments. Students are expected to take advantage of my office hours, utilize handouts, keep abreast with readings and all other course material to earn the best possible grade.

Late Work

Students are expected to turn in all assignments on time, at the beginning of class, on the assigned due date. Late work will not be accepted, unless there are extenuating circumstances that led to the work being late. I reserve the right to determine whether or not the reason given by the student is legitimate.

Make-up Work/Tests

A student who misses an assignment/test will only be allowed to do a make-up assignment/test if they missed the original date because of a legitimate reason. Once again, I will determine whether or not the reason is valid.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact me or the technicians listed for the program.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Given that this is a communication class, class participation is especially important. If your absence is due to extenuating circumstances, the absence will be excused, at my

discretion. However, students with excessive absences will be dropped from the course by the instructor.

Being more than ten minutes tardy will be counted as late. Three times tardy will count as an absence.

Instructor Class Policies

Students are expected to be respectful of both their peers and the instructor and conduct themselves in a manner that is in accordance with the university's Code of Conduct. Cell phones should be kept off or on silent for the duration of class. Texting and using social media are not allowed during class. Students are expected to bring their writing materials to each class in order to take notes during lectures.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

****Notice: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.****

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 08/25 to 08/29	Course Overview Definition of News Elements and Values of News	N/A
Week 2 09/01 to 09/05	Language: Tone and Mechanics	N/A
Week 3 09/08 to 09/12	AP Style Copy Editing	N/A
Week 4 09/15 to 09/19	Organizing News Articles	Test – September 16 th
Week 5 09/22 to 09/26	Quotation, Attribution and Interviewing	N/A
Week 6 09/29 to 10/03	Writing and Reporting for Print Media	Test – September 30 th
Week 7 10/06 to 10/10	Writing and Reporting for Print Media	Writing Assignment - October 9 th
Week 8 10/13 to 10/17	Police, Fire	N/A
Week 9 10/20 to 10/24	Obituaries, Features, Weather	N/A
Week 10 10/27 to 10/31	Writing and Reporting for Broadcast Media Sports	N/A
Week 11 11/03 to 11/07	Speeches and Press Conferences	Writing Assignment - November 4 th
Week 12 11/10 to 11/14	Public Affairs Reporting	Draft of Final Project – November 10 th
Week 13 11/17 to 11/21	Life in Journalism	N/A
Week 14 11/24 to 11/25	Legal and Ethical Problems in Journalism	N/A
Week 15 12/01 to 12/05	Review Coursework	Final Project – December 4 th
Week 16 12/08 to 12/12	Final Exam Session: Discussion/Analysis of the Final Project	Analysis of Final Project – December 9 th at 8am – 10am