Office hours: To be announced. You are urged, however, to make an appointment to ensure that I’m in.

Texts: “Telling the Story” and the Associated Press Stylebook

Course Objectives: By the end of this class, you should:
1. Know how to gather information for a variety of situations.
2. Be able to exercise news judgment in such a way as to be able to recognize a good news story and have the skills necessary to commit it to print.
3. Recognize potentially libelous situations and understand the ethical concerns in newspaper reporting as well as the fair and balanced treatment of women and minorities.
4. Develop a professional demeanor and attitude as a future journalist.
5. Develop specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.

The Mass Media Learning Goals will be addressed in this course. They say that students should be able to:
1. Synthesize information for transmission to the public through media channels.
2. Create effective messages for dissemination to the public.
3. Recognize and understand key legal and ethical implications of synthesizing and producing information for transmission to the public through media channels.

While most of LG 3 is addressed more directly in other classes, this class will nonetheless have an element of that learning goal in class discussions and feedback from the instructor.

To excel in this class, students should:
1. Demonstrate initiative in pursuing assignments rather than only waiting for them (they may never come!).
2. Meet ALL deadlines.
3. Cooperate with other members of the newsgathering team.
4. Recognize news, record what is significant and dig from a variety of resources to assure accuracy and fairness.
5. Develop effective interviewing techniques.
6. Write objective articles based upon facts. Conform to grammar, style and spelling rules. Make sure your stories are publishable.
7. Be aware of what is going on at the campus, local, state, national and international level. A journalist must know more than his/her beat.

News Stories: After a short orientation period, you will be assigned a coverage area on campus. You can expect that stories will be due at the rate of one per week. Because the instructor will have to see stories before they appear in print, a story will be due each Friday with a rewrite (if necessary) due on Monday. Each deadline missed will lower the grade by 10 points. You must complete at least 11 stories to pass the class. STORIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE FINAL RAM PAGE HAS GONE TO PRINT. STORIES THAT CANNOT BE USED BY THE RAMPAGE IN A TIMELY MANNER WILL NOT BE COUNTED. In other words, stories with late or out-of-date information will not be counted as part of that week’s output.

In addition to the Ram Page stories, you will be responsible for one major enterprise story. This story should be a news feature on a subject of interest to the ASU student body and will be discussed at more detail in class.

Methods of Evaluation: A news story, which has the depth, scope and balance to be used in the Ram Page, will be due in a timely manner, generally each week that the Ram Page publishes. The instructor will, edit said news story and provide timely information on its quality. If any changes need to be made, they are due the next day, but can be turned in later that period, if possible.

OVER
Examinations on the textbooks as well as grades for each story will be used to evaluate your performance in the class.

**Grading:** Final grades will be percentages of a maximum of 1,000 points. Each news story will be worth a maximum of 100 points. There will be two 50-point exams – a midterm and a final.

Each assignment will be given points on its merits as a professionally written, complete, stylistically correct and accurate chronicle of events. **News stories do not have to be used by the Ram Page to receive high marks! However, they do have to be TURNED INTO the Ram Page before they will be accepted as that week’s output.** Assignments must have the depth and scope as approved by the instructor to count for that week’s output.

The instructor periodically will check news sources, **which should be listed – along with phone numbers – at the bottom of any stories turned in**. If you falsify a story, which includes using the work of others and passing it off as your own or fabricating quotes, you automatically will flunk the course. If you copy a news release or the information from a web site extensively, you’ll be penalized.

The guidelines on academic honesty as put forward in the student handbook will be followed to the strictest letter of the law.

**Attendance:** Staying current is essential. More than three missed deadlines will result in failure of the course.

Each of you will be given a beat to cover on campus and will be expected to generate stories on his/her own, although some stories may be assigned.

**Academic Honesty Code:** Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both the print and web versions for the Student Handbook. The current student handbook is found on the ASU web site under publications at the URL: http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/index.html

**Americans with Disabilities:** Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so appropriate arrangements can be made.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Communication, Mass Media and Theatre require that students meet with a faculty adviser as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Faculty Adviser will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, faculty Adviser, and the department chair. Communication, Mass Media or Theatre majors who have questions about advising or declaring a major in the department, can call 942-2031.
Grade Appeal Process. As stated in Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure (OP 10.03 Student Grade Grievances), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see Operating Procedure 10.03 at http://www.angelo.edu/opmanual/docs/Section_10_Academic_Policies-Students/OP_10.03_Grade_Grievance.doc.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.

-- Mark Twain