Instructor: Ellada Gamreklidze, Ph.D.
Office: LIB 306H
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. to noon and/or by appointment. If you would like to schedule an appointment beyond office hours, please, email me at least a day in advance. If you prefer to have an online session, please let me know about it in the email, and I will accommodate.

E-mail: ellada.gamreklidze@angelo.edu

You can order it online at https://www.apstylebook.com/?ref=google&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIyc2Q_J3N1QIVhGh-Ch3ExA5MEAAYASAAEgIgD_BwE

You can purchase either print or digital version. Which one you choose makes no difference for the purposes of this course. The important thing is that you get the latest (currently, it is the 55th) edition and that you always have access to it when you are in class or working on the course assignments.

Additional reading materials are available for rent at ASU and/or will be provided by the instructor.

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“In the English language, it all comes down to this: Twenty-six letters, when combined correctly, can create magic. Twenty-six letters form the foundation of a free, informed society.”
John Grogan

“News is something someone wants suppressed. Everything else is just advertising.”
Lord Northcliff

“All the words I use in my stories can be found in the dictionary—it’s just a matter of arranging them into the right sentences.”
Somerset Maugham
Source: http://www.writersdigest.com/writing-quotes

Writing for mass media is different from other types of writing in many ways. Even if you excelled in English essay courses, you may not necessarily find media writing easy. It does not mean you won’t be able to master it; it just means you will need to break all your writing habits and start anew. Conversely, if essay writing is not your forte, do not despair; you can be an
excellent media writer if you are willing to learn.

Writing for mass media has its quirks, it has standards, it has procedures and it has rules. It is storytelling, so good writing skills are essential. Writing for mass media means presenting and interpreting important reality as accurately as possible, so adherence to facts, proper research and information gathering are a must.

This course will cover all of the above. It will tell you about writing for mass media and it will teach you writing for mass media.

**With this in mind, the course objectives are:**

  To develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course;
  To develop skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing;
  To gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).

**Now, how are we going to accomplish this?**

**Course Structure**

This is a writing-intensive course, duh… It will also involve reading, maybe occasional synchronous online sessions (about which I will inform you in advance), a lot of practice and a number of assignments.

In case of synchronous sessions your attendance will be graded (please, see the relevant policy below).

**Responsibilities**

We all have responsibilities and have to be active contributors and proactive inquisitors. My responsibility is to supply you with all the necessary knowledge, information and pedagogical support. Yours, on the other hand, is to complete all reading assignments, ask questions if you do not understand anything, study diligently and complete your work according to instructions and on time. I will not make content accommodations for this course, so you need to be open-minded and respectful to diverse viewpoints and your peers.

**Some more expectations**

Because you are preparing to be professionals, you are also expected to demonstrate professional conduct. For example, professionals must timely, clearly and cordially communicate with others (the instructor, the classmates and other relevant individuals), complete assignments by the deadline, meet their obligations and effectively manage their time.

I expect you to have read the assigned (if any) material and complete your assignments and practice.

I expect and encourage you to ask questions and let me know right away if you are having
problems, do not understand something, are overwhelmed or just want to talk. I am always there to talk/listen/help. My goal is your success. See me during the office hours or make an appointment. We will discuss your issue and think of a solution. I check and answer my emails from the time I wake up until the time I go to bed (with the exception of the times when I eat, drive, am in a meeting or in a store).

Email me. If I know the answer, I will email back right away. If I don’t know the answer, I will email as soon as I know it. Do not wait until it is too late to do something about anything (examples include but are not limited to waiting a day or several days to email me after you missed an assignment deadline or had technical issues either uploading or having access to an assignment; not getting back to me after I email you that we need to meet to discuss your current situation and find a solution; waiting until all the deadlines pass to meet with me; and other similar situations).

Keeping up with ALL the deadlines (including the ones for assignment makeup opportunities) is YOUR responsibility. The syllabus informs you about everything and provides instructions on when and how; your job will be to follow, accordingly. I will NOT be reminding you about the deadlines and the opportunities. This is why it is ESSENTIAL that you read the syllabus and all other instructions closely and carefully and check Blackboard regularly (several times a day). Having said that, I am ALWAYS open and available to answer any questions about both the opportunities and the instructions and find solutions (if possible) to your situation.

**Attendance and Making Up Assignments**

If I schedule any synchronous sessions, your attendance is mandatory (by attendance I mean logging in on Collaborate through Blackboard; I will send the schedule and the instructions in advance).

Your attendance is graded. Every unexcused absence will result in a five-point deduction from your grade for this course.

If you are more than 10 minutes late to log in or sign off before it is over, it will count as an unexcused absence. If you think you will be late for more than 10 minutes or have to leave early, you need to talk to me in advance. Depending on the reason, I will or will not excuse you. Some of you might experience internet or other issues and find yourselves not being able to log in while trying to do so or in the middle of a class session. Email me immediately and let me know what is going on. We will act according to the situation.

If you are sick (see the relevant policy), or there is another excused reason listed in the University policy [https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/community-policies/class-absences.php](https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/community-policies/class-absences.php), you will not lose any points, but you are responsible for TIMELY informing me of your absence (based on the above policy), completing the assignments (if any are due at that time), catching up on the missed material, making up practice, and bringing yourself up to date with the class progress.

You may find yourself falling behind on the assignments regardless of any possible synchronous sessions. I am here to help and guide you in this process. Catching up or keeping
up can be overwhelming, especially under the current circumstances. You don’t need to go through this alone. Let me know, ask for help, email me if you are in a tough spot. I am here for you. Please, also check the following webpage for the circumstance-specific university policies: https://www.angelo.edu/covid-19/

The above policy is in place to help us all stay on track and successfully complete this course. I am here to see that your specific situation is accommodated as best as possible and you do not fall behind. If at any point during the semester you find yourself in a position where you cannot be “present” or complete other course requirements for some time, please, do let me know ASAP. I will do everything possible to help you and find a solution to your situation that will allow you to come out of it with best possible result.

Course Requirements:

Assigned Readings and Other Material
Although writing-intensive, this course involves reading and watching and/or listening to the course-related educational content. I will assign those at the beginning of each week, so check Blackboard regularly. This content and reading is how you will learn what you need to know to successfully complete the course assignments (as mentioned above, I am always here to answer any questions if you are not sure about anything, explain and clarify; I may also schedule synchronous sessions for some topics, but you are responsible for reading and watching and/or listening to the course material and completing the assignments based on the knowledge acquired through it).

Assignments
You will have 10 assignments to complete throughout this semester. Each is worth 100 points:
- AP Style I
- AP Style II
- Assignment I
- Assignment II
- Assignment III
- Assignment IV
- Assignment V
- Assignment VI
- Assignment VII
- Assignment VIII

Why are we doing this?
To develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course;
To develop skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing;
To gain a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories).

I will distribute detailed instructions for each assignment on Blackboard. Unless I tell you otherwise, ALL completed assignments need to be uploaded on Blackboard. I will NOT accept
assignments over the email. If you experienced technical difficulties and thus failed to upload your assignment, you need to let me know right when it happened. You also need to call the eLearning Center as soon as you can after the problem occurred and ask for the proof of your upload attempt. Send it to me, and I will accept your assignment for full credit.

My general advice is to try to upload a file (even if your assignment is not yet complete) before the eLearning closes on the day when your assignment is due. You will have unlimited upload attempts until the deadline, so your new file will just override the one already uploaded. If you have problems during your trial upload, you will be able to call eLearning and get help before the deadline hits and it is too late to do anything about it.

**AP Style:**

When writing, you must follow AP style. I will distribute an AP style study sheet that will guide you through the most common problem areas. It is your job to make sure you do not make mistakes in these areas. You should also make a habit of referring to the AP Stylebook even beyond the areas included in the study sheet. *Every AP style error in your assignments (after the AP style part of the course is over) will result in a two-point deduction.*

There may be other knowledge-based deductions in your assignments as we go and learn. I will introduce those in the assignment rubrics.

**Opportunities:**

Throughout the semester, you will have an opportunity to “revise and resubmit” one take-home assignment of your choice. You will have a week from the day you let me know you want to revise an assignment. The letting me know should take place via email and receive a clear “go ahead” from me in response. I will stop accepting requests for “revise and resubmit” at noon on December 6, 2021.

You will have some extra credit opportunities as well. There may be a few or one that will come as we go. One is discussed in one of the following sections.

There is no midterm and no final.

**Some Important Policies (you do want to read them!):**

**Factual and spelling errors**

You are expected to get your facts straight and spell the names correctly. Each factual mistake in your assignments will lower your grade for any given assignment by 20 percent. You will have one excused misspelling of a proper name (by excused, I mean it will only take your grade for a given assignment down 20 percent). After that, you will receive a zero if you spell any proper name incorrectly.
Questions and/or concerns about a grade
I will be happy to answer questions about how you are doing in this course. That said, if you have any questions or concerns about a specific grade, contact me in person no earlier than 24 hours and no later than one week after receiving a grade and feedback. You must bring the assignment, due date, date it was turned in and the specific issue that warrants consideration.

Extra credit!
If more than 85% of students complete the student evaluation for this course, I will reward the entire class with a 1-point increase in the individual total grade. For example: if your overall grade averages out to an 89 (a B) and 85% of the whole class fills out the evaluation I award 1 point to your average, giving you a 90 and an A!

ASU Policies:

Student Disability Services
ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting:

Dr. Dallas A. Swafford
Director of Student Disability Services 325-942-2047
dallas.swafford@angelo.edu
Houston Harte University Center

Title IX at Angelo State University:
Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:
Michelle Miller, J.D.
Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.miller@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.
If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic at 325-942-2171, Counseling Services at 325-942-2371 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.
The Office of Title IX Compliance also provides accommodations related to pregnancy (such as communicating with your professors regarding medically necessary absences, modifications required because of pregnancy, etc.). If you are pregnant and need assistance or accommodations, please contact the Office of Title IX Compliance utilizing the information above.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Days
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. See ASU Operating Policy 10.19 Student Absence for Observance of Religious Holy Day for more information.

Incomplete Grade Policy
It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required. See ASU Operating Policy 10.11 Grading Procedures for more information.

Student Conduct Policies
Academic Integrity
Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all work. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious topic covered in ASU’s Academic Integrity policy in the Student Handbook. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism is literary theft.
In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word-for-word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the
reference list.

Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center.

Copyright Policy
Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

General Policies Related to This Course
All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in the syllabus and the following documents:

Angelo State University Student Handbook
Angelo State University Catalog

Course schedule (subject to change):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>August 23</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course introduction; getting to know each other. Watch the introductory video posted on Blackboard in Week 1 folder. Read the syllabus. Email me any questions you have or make an appointment if you would like a meeting (online or face to face). Writing for the media: It's different. Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 1 folder. Complete practice exercises to help you with future assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>August 30</th>
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<tr>
<td>AP Style. Review the AP Stylebook (you should have purchased and received it by now) and the study sheet. Let me know if you have any questions. Complete the practice exercises posted in Week 2 folder to help you with the upcoming AP assignment. I will upload the answer key in the same folder at the end of week 2.</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>September 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>AP Style. AP Style Assignment I distributed. Due on Monday, September 13 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>September 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 4 folder. AP Style Assignment II distributed. Due on Monday, September 20 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>September 20</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accuracy and Balance Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 5 folder.</td>
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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>September 27</th>
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<tr>
<td>Information Gathering Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 6 folder.</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 4</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>October 11</th>
<th>Quotations &amp; Attribution</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 8 folder. Assignment II distributed. Due on Monday, October 18 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>October 18</th>
<th>The Inverted Pyramid: The Lead</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 9 folder. Watch the videos posted on Blackboard in Week 9 folder. Assignment III distributed. Due on Monday, October 25 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>October 25</th>
<th>The Inverted Pyramid: The Second Paragraph</th>
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<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 10 folder. Assignment IV distributed. Due on Monday, November 1 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 11</th>
<th>November 1</th>
<th>The Inverted Pyramid: Story Organization</th>
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<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 11 folder. Assignment V distributed. Due on Monday, November 8 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>November 8</th>
<th>The Inverted Pyramid: Story Organization</th>
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<td>Assignment VI distributed. Due Monday, November 15 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>November 15</th>
<th>Writing for Online Platforms</th>
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<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 13 folder. Watch the videos posted on Blackboard in Week 13 folder. Assignment VII distributed. Due Monday, November 22 by midnight.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>November 22</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 14 folder. Assignment VIII distributed. Due Monday, November 29 by midnight.</td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>November 29</th>
<th>News Releases</th>
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<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 15 folder.</td>
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<th>Week 16</th>
<th>December 6</th>
<th>Writing an Advertising Copy</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete the readings posted on Blackboard in Week 16 folder.</td>
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**Grade Distribution:**
Class total: 1,000 points
Take-home assignments (8): 100 points x 10 = 1,000 points