

Jour 204, Colloquium
Weinstein 307
Wednesdays, 12:00 to 12:50 p.m.

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This course will allow you to explore your interest in journalism and gain additional exposure to the field through conversations with journalists and other media specialists who will bring a variety of experiences to our class meetings. You will have a chance to ask good questions and actively participate in engaging discussions about contemporary journalism practices.

Two key words here: **actively participate**. This is essential not just to your enjoyment of the course but also to passing it. Passive participation will not work.

Nuts and bolts

Here is what you need to do to pass:

- 1) Score at least a C overall (72 percent) on the weekly quizzes. These are based on reading assignments.
- 2) Participate frequently and meaningfully in class discussions. Attendance and assignments, including developing three written questions for each speaker, are mandatory. Three unexcused missed classes mean you fail the course.
- 3) Pass a final exam that demonstrates your command of written English and your ability to take accurate handwritten notes at a rate of at least 60 words per minute. You must pass **each** of these three parts of the exam to pass this course: a grammar, punctuation and usage test; a writing test; and a note-taking test.

You must master these skills on your own if you have not already done so. You should practice and study each day. As with typing, these skills are not taught in this class because it is assumed that you already have them. They are essential if you wish to continue in the journalism program.

Texts:

- 1) The weekday edition of *The New York Times*. You are responsible to read and remember the issues and the major players in the first 10 paragraphs of stories that begin on the first page of each of these sections, each day they appear: Page 1, and the Business Day, Science, Education, and Health sections.
- 2) The Associated Press Stylebook – this is vital to preparing for the final exam.

- 3) *Shortrite*, by Rae Greenburg, to help with note taking. I have copies. You can also use EasyScript, at <http://www.easyscript.com/learnshorthand.html>. Let me strongly suggest that you not take for granted your handwriting speed.
- 4) Subscribe to AI's Morning Meeting at www.poynter.org. You'll get a daily email about various trends and news related to journalism.
- 5) Grammar tutorials at <http://owlet.letu.edu/grammar.html>. Again, don't take for granted your grammatical expertise.

Some Colloquium FAQ, thanks to Steve Nash and past students

Q: Do I have to learn the Shortrite system for note-taking?

A: No. Any system you already know or decide to learn that enables you to transcribe spoken English accurately at 60 words per minute is fine. Your copy of Shortrite is only provided for your convenience.

Q: How will my note-taking be tested?

A: During final exam we'll play a 5-minute audiotape of a speech, or someone will read, and you'll take notes and then transcribe them. You must pass this test to pass the course. You can easily have someone read to you, or find spoken words on the Internet, to test your ability and to practice. Most students will need to practice all semester, starting immediately, to polish this skill.

Q: What about the English test?

A: It will be given at the same time, during final exams. You'll show that you know how to write competent English -- NOT journalism, you'll learn that later. You should review a grammar text -- *Under the Grammar Hammer* by Douglas Cazort is useful, but there are many others. And in all cases, closely study the list of entries from your AP Stylebook that follow this FAQ.

Q: Why learn to take notes when I could use an audio recorder?

A: By all means use your recorder. But know how to take accurate notes, because handwritten notes are far more reliable and much faster for retrieving information for a news story. Recorder batteries burn out, or the tape or disk fails, or some extraneous sound overwhelms the microphone -- and you aren't even aware of these things until it's too late. Only use a recorder to back up your notes.

Q: The on-line version of the New York Times is free, easy to use, and saves me a trip. Why use the ink-on-paper version?

A: The Internet is wonderful for many things, but the technology does not yet equal the speed, convenience and efficiency of good old paper. May the day come soon! For now:

computer screens are too small, and refresh too slowly to allow you to scan and browse as fast as you need to, to read even the small portion of the whole paper that's required for this class. Many people get headaches and nausea when they attempt close, extensive reading on a computer screen. All these are disincentives to reading the news.

Q: I'm not all that interested in reading the news, though.

A: This is important to know, and a good reason to think hard about pursuing one of the two dozen other liberal arts disciplines available at UR instead of journalism. The Colloquium course is, in part, just an easy way to earn credit for doing what informed people, including journalism students, do anyway. They keep up with the news.

Q: How much of the Times do I have to read?

A: You are responsible to read and remember the issues and the major players in the first ten paragraphs of stories that begin on the first page of each of these sections, each day they appear: Page 1, and the National Report, Business Day, Science, Education, and Health sections. You are also required to read the first ten paragraphs of each of the editorial-opinion columns, to know the names of the op-ed columnists and what their opinions are.

STUDY THESE ENTRIES IN YOUR ASSOCIATED PRESS STYLEBOOK

Crucial: A guide to punctuation -- begins on page 325 -- especially commas, quotation marks, hyphens

a, an
ad nauseam
adverse, averse
affect, effect
agnostic, atheist
aid, aide
allege
allusion, illusion
almost never
altar, alter
among, between
annual
arbitrate, mediate
author
boy
boycott, embargo
brussels sprouts
collective nouns

colloquialisms
compared to, compared with
complacent, complaisant
complement, compliment
compose, comprise, constitute
convince, persuade
couple of
demolish, destroy
drunk, drunken
ecology
essential phrases, nonessential phrases
farther, further
faze, phase
fewer, less
figuratively, literally
flail, flay
flair, flare
flaunt, flout
-ly
majority, plurality
mantel, mantle
pore, pour
rack, wrack
ravage, ravish
rebut, refute
squinting modifier
dust storm
who, whom
women
