



SYLLABUS

- [Course Overview](#)
- [Required Materials](#)
- [Assignments and Grading](#)
- [Course Policies](#)
- [Academic Policies and Services](#)
- [Accreditation](#)

COURSE OVERVIEW

MEJO153: Writing and Reporting is an introductory laboratory course that teaches journalistic skills essential to writing across platforms. In this course, students will gain practice in using news gathering tools, such as sourcing and interviewing techniques. Students will learn to write leads, understand writing organization, quotations, and data. Students will also learn to edit for grammar, punctuation, brevity, style, and accuracy; and think critically about news values and audiences.

MEJO153 concentrates on teaching students how to gather and organize information. Students will also learn how to write news articles, press releases, broadcast scripts and digital stories, on deadline, according to acceptable professional standards. The course emphasizes respect for, and correct use, of language. There will be a particular stress on spelling and grammar, style consistency, accuracy and clear writing. Attention is also paid to bias, libel and ethical considerations. Students will also use research and interviewing in their work.

COURSE GOALS

journalism in any field.

Writing ability — Grammar and spelling; ability to tell a good story well; use of quotes, anecdotes and descriptive detail; use of active voice and strong verbs; ability to write leads that are inviting and that get to the point; ability to write tightly; ability to organize information in logical, compelling sequence.

Reporting ability — Pursuit, digging, enterprise, diligence; ability and eagerness to see and pursue promising angles; ability to seek and obtain anecdotes, details, and quotes that provide documentation and add liveliness to copy; ability to see the need for all sides of a story; ability to cultivate good sources.

Speed, productivity and efficiency— Speed on deadline; speed and efficiency in completing non-deadline assignments; ability and willingness to manage more than one assignment at a time; ability and willingness to make frequent, substantive contributions to the organization.

Accuracy — Skill with basic factual information such as names, addresses, dates and figures; ability to identify and make use of the best sources, whether they are documents, references or people.

Work habits — Punctuality, reliability, and readiness to go beyond the minimum requirements of the job; interest in assuming and ability to assume, more than minimum responsibility; ability and willingness to anticipate and fulfill the demands of an assignment without prompting; ability to deal even-handedly with peers and supervisors, to accept constructive criticism and to offer constructive suggestions; interest in all areas of the operation; knowledge of community, regional, national and international events; regular and thorough reading of the news.

Judgment — Commitment to fairness and balance; ability to recognize and assess possible adverse consequences of actions; knowledge of, respect for and observance of the organization's policies.

The work accomplished in this course will be the basis for students in subsequent courses in the Hussman School, whether they are skills or conceptual courses. At the end of the course, students will be better writers and better able to gather and evaluate information.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

TEXTBOOKS

The following texts are required

- Yopp and McAdams, [Reaching Audiences: A Guide to Media Writing, Sixth Edition](#)
- [The Associated Press Stylebook Online](#)
- [UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media Stylebook](#)
- Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition

You will also need access to the following news sites:

- [New York Times \(free to UNC students\)](#)
- [WRAL](#)
- [The Daily Tar Heel](#)

Other readings specific to each lesson are listed on Sakai. Any readings not found in the required textbooks are available either through the Course Reserves tab or through links to free online versions.

LIBRARY SERVICES AND COURSE RESERVES

Students enrolled in this course have access to the UNC Library System. Visit [Distance Education Library Services](#) to access a wide array of online services and resources including Course Reserves, online databases, online journals, online books, and live help with research and library access. **Most online resources require you to log in with your Onyen and password.** If you have any trouble finding the resource that you need or logging in to a resource, you can contact the library through the contact information at Distance Education Library Services. You can chat live about your problem or send an email to request assistance.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

During the course of the semester you will have three comprehensive exams.

- Comp 1 will be a writing assignment given during the fourth week of class
- Comp 2 will be a test or reading comprehension, grammar and AP style given during the 12th week of class
- Comp 3 will be a reporting and writing assignment due at the end of the Final Exam period

QUIZZES: 10 PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE

Giving throughout the semester, these quizzes will test your understanding of AP style and the concepts presented in reading materials.

DAILY NEWS READING: 10 PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE

Developing a habit of regularly reading journalism with a critical eye for the writing craft is a key component for developing professional writing skills.

To develop this habit you need to **read and discuss news 30 minutes a day, at least five days a week**. Much of this time will be spent just skimming headlines and articles you find interesting. But it also will be spent using the concepts you learn in class to reflect on why you find some articles interesting and other articles uninteresting ... as well as the reasons that not everyone finds the same articles interesting.

The news literacy component of your course grade will consist of the following.

News Forum Participation

From January 26 through April 20, you will need to post a new thread or reply to an existing thread in the News Discussion forum on Sakai at least five times each week.

Every four weeks you will receive a grade that will be a percentage of the 20 possible

the writer did what they did.

I don't expect you to spend more than about five minutes on each post, so I'm not looking for perfection. And I'm not grading here on spelling and AP style. If it's good enough for Twitter, it's probably good enough for this assignment. Basically, don't give me a reason not to give you less than an A on this.

Class News Discussion

Each class session will have time set aside to critique and discuss professional news writing. Starting with the Jan. 26 class I will randomly select a student to share an article they've read and lead a 15-minute discussion on it. Each student will do this at least once over the course of the semester. If your name is randomly selected more than once, your best presentation will be the one that counts for a grade.

Students every class should come prepared to share a link to their story in the Zoom chat, and reflect on the components of "How to Read the News"

If you are not in class on a day you are selected you will receive a zero on this assignment unless you've pre-cleared your absence with me.

GRADING SCALE

Percentages will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Meaning

C-	57-59%	Minimum level of attainment. Shows growth but falls below standard
D	60-66%	
F	0-59%	Failing: Deficient. Unacceptable performance

MEJO majors must receive a C- or better in this course in order to meet the graduation requirement.

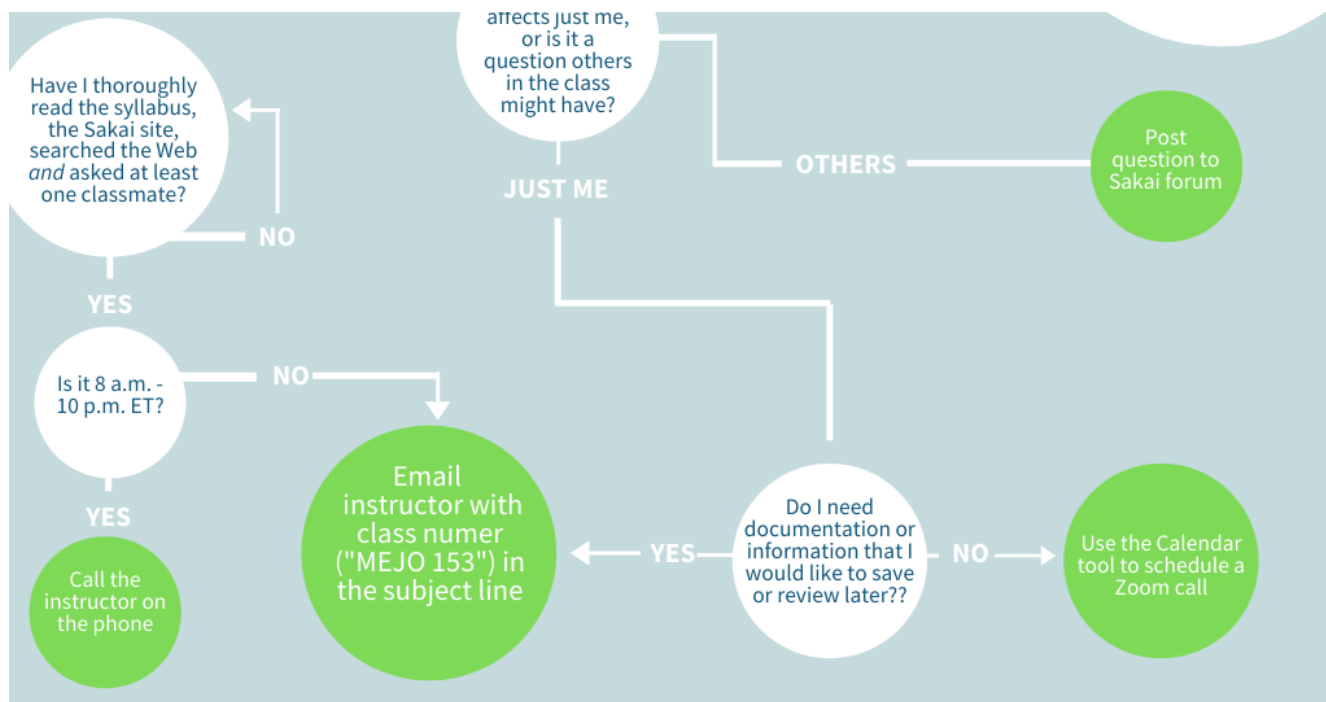
COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Much of the work for this class will be done asynchronously to accommodate remote learning across time zones. Synchronous class sessions will be announced in advance and held via Zoom. Recordings of the Zoom meetings will be recorded and made available for students.

Community Standards for Online Video Sessions

- Students are expected to be online and ready to begin class prior to the start of each session.
- Students should begin sessions with video on if possible. They may turn video off



- **Office Phone:** (919) 537-3681 (It will forward to my mobile if I'm not in my office.)
- **Email:** ryan.thornburg@unc.edu

- 2 for each AP style error
- 2 for each sentence in passive voice
- 5 for each spelling error, and a typographical mistake (a typo) is considered a spelling error
- 5 for each punctuation error, such as incorrect use of a comma, semicolon, colon or dash
- 5 for each grammatical error, such as improper subject-verb agreement or noun-pronoun agreement, or misplaced modifier
- 5 for each misused word
- 10 for each minor factual error, such as an inaccurate street address or the time element if the effect on the story is relatively insignificant. Repeating the same fact

- 2 for each unnecessarily complex or compound sentence
- 2 for each unnecessary adjective
- 2 to -5 for each redundancy
- 5 to -50 for incomplete story that misses important context

VERIFICATION (during stories completed in the second half of the semester)

These reporting criteria apply to stories for which you gather the information:



Academic Policies and Services



ACADEMIC POLICIES AND SERVICES

- [Honor Code](#)
- [IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [Data Security and Privacy](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Student Support](#)

HONOR CODE

Remember that as a student of UNC-Chapel Hill, you are bound by the University's [Honor Code](#), which states that "It shall be the responsibility of every student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity." An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. You may wish to take a [tutorial on plagiarism](#) that was developed by librarians at UNC, Duke, NCSU, and NCCU. If you have questions, please consult your instructor. Please note that downloading or printing out the quizzes or exams in Sakai is prohibited; doing so is considered a violation of the Honor Code.

Plagiarism

[Plagiarism](#) is a serious violation of the Honor Code. To become more familiar with the issues surrounding plagiarism, and how to best avoid this academic issue, view this brief [Plagiarism Tutorial](#) created by the librarians of UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke University, NC State University, and NC Central University. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to properly cite a source, please contact your instructor.

IT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

By enrolling as a student in this course, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. You may be asked to participate in online discussions or other online activities that may include personal information about you or other

Consult the University website "[Safe Computing at UNC](#)" for information about the data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY

University and LMS Privacy Policies

- [UNC-Chapel Hill Privacy Statement](#)
- Sakai's Discussion Forum, Assignments, DropBox, Gradebook, and Tests & Quizzes tools are designed to share FERPA-protected information privately between instructors and individual students.

UNC-Supported Vendor Privacy Policies

Add/Remove vendors as needed for the course, here and in the External Vendor section below.

- [Microsoft](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [VoiceThread](#)
- [Warpwire](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Adobe Creative Cloud](#)

External Vendor Privacy Policies

When using online resources offered by organizations not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Google or YouTube, please note that the terms and conditions of these companies and not the University's Terms and Conditions apply. These third parties may offer different degrees of privacy protection and access rights to online content. You should be well aware of this when posting content to sites not managed by UNC-Chapel Hill. When links to sites outside of the unc.edu domain are inserted in class discussions, please be mindful that clicking on sites not affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill may pose a risk for your computer due to the possible presence of malware on such sites.

ACCESSIBILITY

help create an accessible environment.

The office is located in Suite 2126 of the Student Academic Services Building (SASB), 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC, and is open from 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday. You can contact them by phone at 919-962-8300 or 711 (NC-RELAY), or by email at accessibility@unc.edu.

Accessibility Statements

Add/remove as needed for the course.

University and LMS Accessibility Statements

- [UNC-Chapel Hill Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Sakai Voluntary Product Accessibility Statement](#)

External Applications integrated into the LMS Accessibility Statements

- [VoiceThread Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Warpwire Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Cengage Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Lumen Learning Accessibility Statement](#)
- [McGraw-Hill Education Accessibility Statement](#)
- [Pearson Accessibility Statement](#)
- [RedShelf Accessibility Statement](#)
- [WebAssign Accessibility Information](#)
- [WileyPLUS Accessibility Statement](#)
- [W.W. Norton Accessibility Options](#)

Supporting Sites and Technologies Accessibility Statements

- [Adobe Accessibility Statement](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning Accessibility](#)
- [Microsoft Office Accessibility Statement](#)
- [OER Commons Terms of Use: Accessibility](#)

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination

If a student is experiencing harassment or discrimination, they can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#).

Any administrator or supervisor, including a department chair, associate dean or other administrator, who receives notice of a student's complaint of alleged prohibited harassment, including sexual misconduct, or discrimination must contact the Equal Opportunity/ADA Office as soon as possible upon receipt of the complaint at 137 E. Franklin St., Suite 404, 919-966-3576.

Faculty and staff who experience discrimination or harassment can file a complaint on the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) web site (look for the "Make a report" link on that page).

Gender-Inclusive Language

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community.

HELP email: security@unc.edu.

- To report IT acceptable use problems at UNC-Chapel Hill, call **919-962-HELP** or email: abuse@unc.edu.
- For issues involving copyrights or other policy concerns, call **919-445-9393** or email: copyright@unc.edu.

