

Reporting 1

Course code: JRN 200

Semester and year: Fall 2024

Day and time: Mondays 14:45 – 17:30

Instructor: Michael Kahn

Instructor contact: Michael.kahn@aauni.edu, (420) 724 706 501

Consultation hours: One hour before class or by appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Intermediate
Length	14 weeks	Pre-requisite	TOEFL iBT 71
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	HSC el, PS el, JC Required, CEA

1. Course Description

Journalism is in the throes of massive changes, as information delivery systems continue to evolve and influence the speed, format and content of news coverage. Several elements are necessary to thrive and be successful in this environment. One is a mastery of core journalism skills – knowing how to develop, report and write stories that are accurate, balanced and informative. Another is presentation, knowing how to package and disseminate information across a variety of media platforms. The third is an awareness of the dynamic forces shaping journalism in the 21st century, not only in technology, but in critical areas such as freedom of the press, transparency, privacy and ethics. Students will receive instruction in all these areas, and demonstrate the skills during in-class and out-of-class writing assignments. Throughout the course, special emphasis will be devoted to grammar, spelling and other fundamentals of communicating clearly and effectively in written English.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Research, report and write a variety of stories in clear, standard English
- Apply the additional skills necessary to work as professional journalists
- Critically evaluate print and electronic news media
- Conduct interviews and do reporting
- Write better than they did at the start of the course

3. Reading Materials

Required Materials:

- Bender, John R., Davenport, Lucinda, Drager, Michael W. and Fedler, Fred. (2015) *Reporting for the Media*. Harcourt College Publisher
- O'Donnell, Michael and Ryan, Buck. (2001) *The Editor's Toolbox: A Reference Guide for Beginners and Professionals*. Iowa State University Press

- The Missouri Group. (2014) *News Reporting and Writing*. Bedford/St. Martin's

Recommended Materials:

1. A variety of topical articles distributed during the semester
2. Other books and resource materials:
 - Goldstein, Norm: *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*, Perseus Books Group, 2004
 - Machin, Anne Marie and Ward, Russ. (2001) *Tools of the Writing Trade: Crafting Thoughtful Paragraphs and Essays*. Harcourt College Publishers
 - Murray, Donald M. (2000) *Writing to Deadline: The Journalist at Work*. Heinemann Publishing
 - Ramsey, Janet E., Smith, Ronald D. and Whitaker, Richard W. (2000) *Media Writing: Print, Broadcast and Public Relations*. Addison-Wesley Educational Publisher
 - Scanlan, Christopher, ed. (2000 – 2015) *Best Newspaper Writing*. The Poynter Institute and Bonus Books, Inc.

4. Teaching Methodology

A combination of reading, lectures, discussion, interactive analysis and critiques, and writing assignments. The class will also include field trips and guest speakers. Each student will be required to write a minimum of four articles for publication in the school newspaper, and to work as a member of the publishing team by doing ancillary work in editing, photography, advertising, promotion or other support activities. A longer writing assignment utilizing the methods and models taught in class will comprise the final exam.

Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis. Some classes will begin with a quiz about the reading material to reinforce fundamental concepts.

Lectures will focus on the mechanics of journalism: generating story ideas, doing accurate and thorough reporting, how to structure and develop a story, writing effectively in different formats and genres (news, features), and fundamentals of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Readings will include story samples that will be discussed in class, with students encouraged and expected to evaluate content and structure, identify strengths and weaknesses, and assess the stories' impact in a publishing context. As the semester progresses, reading samples will include the students' own work, considered in a positive atmosphere to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Every class may also include a full-group discussion and update on the school newspaper: status reports from individual students on the progress of their stories, with the instructor and classmates providing support and suggestions when necessary; updates from section editors and department heads about their progress, problems and needs; photography and graphics planning; and continuing discussions about story ideas and assignments to keep up with current events both in and outside of AAU.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Lesson 1 September 2	Topic: Introduction/What do journalists do/Elements of a News Story Description: Course overview, methodology, goals and expectations Reading: N/A Assignments/deadlines: In Class writing
Lesson 2 September 9	Topic: Fundamentals of good writing Description: Writing tips and tricks to produce clear copy Reading: Assigned chapters from textbooks Assignments/deadlines: In class writing
Lesson 3 September 16	Topic: Starting a Story: The Lede Description: The nuts and bolts of news stories Reading: On Writing Well Chapter 8, 9, 10 Assignments/deadlines: Writing a lede
Lesson 4 September 23	Topic: Structuring a Story Description: Writing practice on ledes and short news stories Reading: Assigned textbook chapters, handouts Assignments/deadlines: Six-paragraph news story
Lesson 5 September 30	Topic: Ethics/AP Style Description: Guidelines to producing clear copy/Ethics of journalism Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: Writing Assignment 1 due
Lesson 6 October 7	Topic: Beyond the basic news lede Description: Different approaches to starting a story Reading: Assigned textbook chapters Assignments/deadlines:
Lesson 7 October 14	Mid-term exam
Lesson 8 October 21	Topic: Feature stories and nut graphs Description: Different kinds of features and introduction Reading: Assigned textbook chapters Assignments/deadlines: Generating and analyzing feature stories/Writing Assignment 2 due (Beyond the basic lede)
Lesson 9 October 28	Mid-Term Break
Lesson 10 November 4	Topic: Headline Writing Description: How to grab the reader's attention Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: Headline Writing Assignment
Lesson 11 November 11	Topic: Financial News Description: Why it Matters Reading: Assigned textbook chapters and handouts Assignments/deadlines: Writing Assignment 3 due (Headlines)
Lesson 12 November 18	Topic: Public Relations and the media Description: How to work with the media and write a news release

	Reading: Assigned handouts Assignments/deadlines: Writing Assignment 4 (Pr News Release)
Lesson 13 November 25	Topic: Writing about Food, Arts and Culture Description: Applying basic writing to other topics Reading: Assigned handouts Assignments/deadlines:
Lesson 14 December 2	Topic: Reporting trip Description: Field reporting Reading: Assigned handouts Assignments/deadlines: In class story due
Lesson 15 December 9	Final Exam

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade%	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	20	Active involvement in class discussions and dependable participation in the team effort of planning and publishing the school newspaper is critical to learning the material and completing course requirements. Final grades will be adjusted based on students' preparation, attendance and participation.	1, 2, 3
Stories/in-class writing	60	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demonstrated knowledge of how to report, structure and write various types of newspaper stories. • A demonstrated knowledge of fundamentals and improvements in writing skills, reporting abilities, generating ideas and applying creative problem-solving skills. 	2, 3
Mid-term	30	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A demonstrated knowledge and understanding of material covered. • Critical reading and evaluation skills. 	1, 3
Final Exam	18	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final News or Feature story participation in assigned support 	3
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Participation

Active involvement in discussions of assigned textbook and supplementary readings; constructive critical assessment of assigned readings, in particular student work; contributions to newspaper planning, in particular story ideas, social media, promotion and other community outreach.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Discussing and analyzing the assigned reading material.	50
Offering thoughtful critiques of both professional and student writing work.	20
Contributing solid story ideas and helpful suggestions to newspaper planning sessions.	30

Stories

Generating story topics that will be of interest to the AAU community; working with the instructor and student editors on story development and revising drafts; meeting all editorial and production deadlines; successfully completing work that reflects class instruction and shows consistent improvement.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Generating interesting story ideas.	10
Collaborating with the instructor and section editors through the reporting and rough draft phases.	10
Turning in completed assignments on deadline.	60
Writing a final story that reflects the reporting and writing methods taught during the semester.	20

Quizzes

Arriving promptly for class and demonstrating detailed familiarity with the assigned homework reading.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Demonstrating a knowledge and understanding of the assigned reading material.	100

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Participation in group planning activities.	20
Individual performance in ancillary job.	60
Support for other students and group goals.	20

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc. Examples are:

- **Verbatim plagiarism:** verbatim use of another's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** paraphrasing someone else's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **Data plagiarism:** use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **False quotation:** publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Fictitious citation:** quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
- **Inaccurate citation:** citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
- **Ghostwriting:** commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own,
- **Patchwriting:** using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
- **Self-plagiarism:** unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
- **Collaborative plagiarism:** delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating

circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make the plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback in order to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above). AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance. A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author’s work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality, and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited. If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations and contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

1. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	

C+	77 - 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 - 76	
C-	70 - 72	
D+	65 - 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 - 64	
F	0 - 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Michael Kahn

Date: June 2, 2024

Approved by: Seth Rogoff

Date: June 3, 2024