

Fall 2023 South Plains College Syllabus M. Kirby
Newswriting COMM 2311-001 M/W 11 – 1245 p.m. /
Newswriting COMM 2311-601 T/TH 11 – 1245 p.m.

Course Number: 2311-001 + 2311.601

Format: Face to Face

Instructor: Margaret Kirby **Office:** CM 154 Levelland Campus

Phone: 716-2451

e-mail: mkirby@southplainscollege.edu The fastest way to reach me, other than coming to my office during office hours, is to e-mail me at the above address. I should respond within 24 hours unless you e-mail me on a Friday. In that case, it may be Monday before I can respond to you.

Office Hours: Face to face hours are held in my Levelland office, CM 154. Virtual meetings can be scheduled on Collaborate by appointment only.

- Mondays 830- 9 am; 230- 430 pm
- Wednesdays 830 - 9 am; 230 – 430 pm
- Fridays 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**** I will be available at the Lubbock Downtown Center, in the main lobby area, for the hour before class each Tuesday and Thursday. Please just ask if you need help with something or need to go to another area for a more formal meeting.

Prerequisites: None **Credit:** 3 semesters hours

Description: Fundamentals of writing for the mass media. Includes instruction in professional methods and techniques for gathering, processing, and delivering content.

The first half of the semester will concentrate on the basics of news and reporting as well as online news writing. The second half will concentrate on broadcast news writing.

Supplies Needed: Items used to take notes; folder or notebook where you will save syllabus, schedule, notes, handouts, and graded stories.

Course Requirements: Students should attend all class/ lab meetings and complete all assignments.

Required Textbook: Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.
NY: The Associated Press

Evaluation: Students' grades in this class will be determined by the following:

Classwork and Homework Assignments = 50% of your final grade. This will include writing assignments, exercises, and stories. A 100 -point participation grade will be included in this bracket of grading. The 100 points will be determined by using the chart below.

Participation

Missed (Classes for semester)	Class Contributions	Grade Range
0-2	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	90-100
0-2	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	80-90
0-2	Rare or no comments	70-80
2-3	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	70-80
2-3	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	60-70
2-3	Rare or no comments	50-60
3-4	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	50-60
3-4	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	40-50
3-4	Rare or no comments	30-40
More than 4		30

You will write 2 big online stories this fall. The goal is to publish as much of your writing as possible on the SPC online newspaper.

www.TexanMosaic.com

The story topic, along with many of the parts of the first big online story, will be given to you. Each student will write their own story using the parts given. Only one story will be submitted to the managing editor of the school's online site.

You will write your second big online story yourself. Each of these will be sent to the school's online site after copyediting revisions.

There will be several shorter stories you will write as well throughout the semester.

Once we pass midterm, you'll start working on broadcast stories. You will all help to shoot and gather information for the first video story.

Midterm Exam and AP Quizzes = 25% of your final grade; the midterm exam will be a traditional exam covering material learned at the beginning of the semester including writing a short Internet news story under deadline pressure. Associated Press Style Quizzes are

scattered throughout the first half of the semester.

Final Exam = 25% of your final grade. Your final exam will be the completion of one digital news story- much like a news package for TV. Your topic will be assigned. You will choose what interview clips to use from each, help choose what video you want to include in the story.

Tutoring Info

SPC Tutors

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations.

<http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/teacheredtutoring.php>

Tutor.com

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Tutor.com each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, click on the tools option from the left-hand menu bar. Click on the Tutor.com link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access tutor.com tutors during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am

6pm Friday – 8am Monday morning

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806-716-2538.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate proper media writing and editing styles.
2. Modify writing styles to fit various media platforms.
3. Demonstrate effective information gathering skills and techniques.
4. Demonstrate understanding of laws, ethics, and responsibilities of media writing.

Technical Requirements: It is in your best interest to have reliable access to Internet service and a computer so that you can send and receive e-mail, access lectures, write stories as long as 3 pages, submit assignments, participate in Collaborate sessions, and take exams. Please do NOT try to complete this class using on the SPC app on your smartphone.

Please visit with me about computer issues! I can't help you if I don't know what your issues are.

Technical Skill Requirements. Be comfortable with the following:

Microsoft Word or being able to save Word compatible files (.doc); an alternative is to convert assignment files to .rtf or .pdf

Using email for communication, attaching documents

The ability to download video files, or to stream files

The ability to take digital photographs and upload them as .jpg files into assignment windows on Blackboard

Absence Policy: Students are expected to attend all classes and labs in order to be successful in this course.

I'm sure there will be multiple reasons why you might be absent this semester this semester, such as quarantine, isolation, illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity.

Please do **NOT** assume that I will contact you to tell you about missed work. It's safe to assume there will be multiple classwork assignments given each day of class.

Do NOT assume that I will move deadlines for you unless you contact me and offer reasons why you cannot meet deadlines that are already in place.

In the event that you miss an exam, you must notify me within 48 hours about why. You may or may not be able to “make up” the missed exam. If you miss an exam due to COVID-19, you will take the exam the day you return.

Deadlines: The assignments in this class will be deadline driven. You must keep track of deadlines and submit work when it is due.

ALL deadlines are absolute. You need to get used to deadlines that exist in the off-campus world. All assignments will be due at the beginning of each class. Late assignments will be penalized harshly if they are accepted at all.

Excuses: Don't bother to try any. I've heard most of them and have used some of them myself. Only deaths of immediate family members (parents, grandparents, siblings – ONLY), or your own, may be considered for an excused absence. Of course, you will need to provide proof (such as the obituary notice). Student athletes or those participating in other college-sponsored activities that require an absence, will be excused, with prior notice to me and appropriate documentation.

Withdrawal Policy: The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of “W” is November

30th. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from this course. Otherwise, students will be assigned their earned letter grade at the end of the course. Course averages will be updated frequently, and guidance will be provided throughout the term to help students decide whether they need to drop the class or not. For more information regarding drops/withdrawals, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/admission-aid/apply/schedulechanges.php>.

Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have "Never Attended" by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the Office of Admissions and Records. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of "X" or "F" as determined by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for clearly stating their administrative drop policy in the course syllabus, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of that policy.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

Tardiness Policy:

I enforce a 5-minute rule. I use the clock in the classroom or on my computer. You may come to class **up to** 5 minutes late. That's the cutoff. If you arrive **after** that 5-minute window, you'll be given one warning. Any time(2) after that, you'll be asked to turn around and leave if you passed the 5-minute window. It will be an unexcused absence. I may or may not have taken attendance already if you arrive 5 minutes late. It's up to you to make sure you are marked present.

COVID-19 Statement

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, please do not attend class and either seek medical attention or get tested for COVID-19.

- Cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing

- Fever or chills
- Muscles or body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste and smell

Please also notify DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN, Associate Director of Health & Wellness, at dedens@southplainscollege.edu or 806-716-2376.

1. SPC will follow the recommended 5-day isolation period for individuals that test positive.
 - a. **Please note that day 0 is the date of positive test. Day 1 begins the first full day after the date of positive result.**
2. COVID reporting
 - a. Please have students and employees notify DeEtte Edens if they have tested positive to verify dates before returning to class or work.
 - b. The home tests are sufficient but students need to submit a photo of the positive result. The date of test must be written on the test result and an ID included in the photo. If tested elsewhere (clinic, pharmacy, etc.), please submit a copy of the doctor's note or email notification. Results may be emailed to DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at dedens@southplainscollege.edu.
 - c. A student is clear to return to class without further assessment if they have completed:
 - The 5-day isolation period, symptoms have improved and they are afebrile for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
3. Please instruct students and employees to communicate with DeEtte Edens prior to their return date if still symptomatic at the end of the 5-day isolation.
4. Exposed individuals will not be required to quarantine. If exposed, SPC does request individuals closely monitor themselves. If an individual does become symptomatic, please do not attend class or work and be tested.

Kirby Face Covering Policy

I may choose to continue wearing a CDC-compliant face covering/mask throughout the semester. You are welcome to do the same.

Intellectual exchange, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE Team, and Campus Concealed Carry:

For information regarding official South Plains College statements about intellectual exchange, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, please visit: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Academic Integrity

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or

her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

Each student is expected to abide by absolute honesty. Infractions will result in penalties subject to an assignment of a grade of “F” for the course or expulsion from the college. Students should also regard civility online as a requirement to remain on the roll in class.

As future professionals, you are to communicate with each other in a professional and civil manner. Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others’ behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, aggressive, or demeaning. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process or is deemed disrespectful or threatening shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

Cheating: Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

Plagiarism: Offering the work of another as one’s own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

Purpose of ChatGPT and other AI:

Chat GPT is an advance language model designed to provide assistance and engage in meaningful conversations. It is intended to supplement learning, stimulate critical thinking, and enhance academic discourse. However, its use comes with certain responsibilities

- **Academic Integrity**
Using ChatGPT to generate academic work, including essays, reports, or assignments, without proper attribution is a violation of academic integrity policies.
- **Collaboration and Consultation**
While ChatGPT can be a valuable resource, it is essential to strike a balance

between seeking assistance and maintaining personal responsibility.

Collaboration with peers, consulting instructors, and utilizing other approved learning resources should be prioritized. Overreliance on ChatGPT as a tool for brainstorming or research is allowed but the writing should be the student's own work and thoughts.

- Ethical Use and Bias Awareness

ChatGPT is trained on large amounts of data from the Internet, which may include biased or inaccurate information. Be mindful of the potential for bias and critically evaluate the responses provided by ChatGPT. Students must verify information from reliable sources, question any potential biases, and ensure that the information and sources used in the paper are neutral.

- Compliance with South Plains College policies

Misusing or violating the guidelines outlined in this syllabus warning may result in disciplinary action, including academic penalties.

Remember, ChatGPT is a tool to support your learning, but it cannot replace the critical thinking, creativity, and independent work that are integral to your academic growth.