

Spring 2021

South Plains College

News Writing Class Syllabus

Course Number: 2311-151 Format: Online

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. Virtual meetings are on Collaborate.

- Mondays & Wednesdays 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. virtual only
- Tuesdays & Thursdays 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. virtual and face to face
- Fridays 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. face to face only; 12 p.m. – 1p.m. virtual and face to face

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 and 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 final grade.
This will include writing assignments, exercises, and stories. You will write 3 “Beat” Stories throughout the semester which will be submitted to the Plainsman Press, SPC’s online newspaper.
<https://plainsmanpress.com/>
- Midterm Exam and AP Quizzes** = 25% of 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 final grade. Your final exam will be the completion of one television news package script.

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. In the event that the school is forced to go fully online sometime during the semester, you must try to find access to a remote computer without relying only on a smart phone.

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

Please do NOT assume that I will contact you to tell you about missed work.

In response to Covid concerns, all class materials will be available on Blackboard so you can keep track of all materials week by week.

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

There will be multiple reasons for class absences to arise this semester, such as quarantine, isolation, illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official

activity. But since all class material is available online through Blackboard, you are able to access all assignments on your own.

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

If you do not participate in class, in any form, for a minimum of 3 weeks without any communication, and you are earning a solid “F”, you may be administratively withdrawn from the class. You may contact me by phone, e-mail, or Collaborate. But you must stay in contact with me.

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.

Deadlines- ALL projects will have deadlines. While many of these may change because of Covid 19, the goal is to work within them. You need to get used to deadlines that exist in the working world. Late assignments may or may not be accepted depending on the assignment and the reasons for missing the deadlines.

SPC Face Covering Policy:

It is the policy of South Plains College for the Spring 2021 semester that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the SPC community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings while in SPC buildings including in classrooms, labs, hallways, and restrooms. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violation. Students who believe they have been exposed or may be COVID-19 positive, must contact Health Services, DeEtte Edens, BSN, RN at (806) 716-2376 or dedens@southplainscollege.edu.

Kirby Face Covering Policy:

It is my policy that **students must properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings masks in my classroom at all times. No exceptions.** If our class meeting extends beyond 30 minutes, we will take a break in the middle of class so you can go outside and remove your mask for 5 minutes as long as you maintain your social distance. Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Dean of Students on the Levelland campus or the Dean/Director of external centers for Student Code of Conduct Violation.

Disabilities Statement

Students with disabilities, including but not limited to physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities, who wish to request accommodations in this class should notify the Disability Services Office early in the semester so the appropriate arrangements may be made. In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodations must provide acceptable documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Services Office. For more information, call or visit the Disability Services Office at Levelland (Student Health & Wellness Office) at 806-716-2577, Reese Center (Building 8) 806-716-4675, or Plainview Center (Main Office) 806-716-4302 or 806-296-9611.

Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination Statement

South Plains College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national

origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Vice President for Student Affairs, South Plains College, 1401 College Avenue, Box 5, Levelland, TX 79336. Phone number 806-716-2360.

Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement (updated 6/2019)

If you are pregnant, or have given birth been within six months, under Title IX you have a right to reasonable accommodations to help continue your education. To activate accommodations you must submit a Title IX pregnancy accommodations request, along with specific medical documentation, to the Director of Health and Wellness. Once approved, notification will be sent to the student and instructors. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor to arrange accommodations. Contact the Director of Health and Wellness at 806-716-2362 or e-mail cgilster@southplainscollege.edu for assistance.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement- Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to the SPC policy at:

(http://www.southplainscollege.edu/human_resources/policy_procedure/hhc.php)

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

Diversity Statement-In this class, the teacher will establish and support an environment that values and nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engagement and interaction. Understanding and respecting multiple experiences and perspectives will serve to challenge and stimulate all of us to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves. By promoting diversity and intellectual exchange, we will not only mirror society as it is, but also model society as it should and can be.

Civility Code:

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.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to do their own work on all projects, quizzes, assignments, examinations, and papers. Failure to comply with this policy will result in an F for the assignment and can result in an F for the course if circumstances warrant.

Plagiarism violations in this class include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Turning in a paper or story that has been purchased, borrowed, or downloaded from another student, an online term paper site, or a mail order term paper mill;
2. Cutting and pasting together information from books, articles, other papers, or online sites without providing proper documentation or attribution;
3. Using direct quotations (three or more words) from a source without showing them to be direct quotations and attributing them.

Cheating violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Obtaining an examination by stealing or collusion;
2. Discovering the content of an examination before it is given;
3. Using an unauthorized source of information (notes, textbook, text messaging, internet, apps) during an examination, quiz, or homework assignment;
4. Entering an office or building to obtain unfair advantage;
5. Taking an examination for another;
6. Altering grade records;
7. Copying another's work during an examination or on a homework assignment;
8. Rewriting another student's work in Peer Editing so that the writing is no longer the original student's;
9. Taking pictures of a test, test answers, or someone else's paper.
10. Making up quotes for a story; falsifying sources for a story.