

# MCM 132W WRITING FOR MASS MEDIA

**Classes:** This class meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8 to 9:20 in Room 205 of the Dan Rather Communications Building

**Instructor:** Cheryl J. Eschenfelder, adjunct instructor of Mass Communication

**Office:** Room 209, Communications Building

**Office Hours:** 9:30-10:30, Tuesdays and Thursdays, or by appointment

**Phone:** 936-581-0405 (cell); 936-295-3066 (home)

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## Required Materials

Writing for the Mass Media (Sixth Edition) by James Glen Stovall

When Words Collide by Lauren Kessler and Duncan McDonald

Access to a daily newspaper and/or daily newspaper Web site

## Class Description

This class is designed to introduce students to a wide range of writing skills and hands-on exercises that can be applied in newspaper, broadcast, Web and public relations fields. Emphasis is placed on the enhancement of language and grammar skills. Credit: 3 hours. Prerequisites: C or better in Eng 164 or equivalent.

## Purpose

Whether you plan to pursue a career in broadcast, public relations or print news, this class will provide you with a strong foundation that you can build on as you work toward your degree in mass communication. Objectives for this class include:

- Mastering basic forms of writing for print, public relations and broadcast;
- Reviewing and reinforcing proper grammar and AP style;
- Achieving a broader understanding of American media; and
- Developing a personal voice and style that will define you as a writer.

## My Approach

I believe that a good writer has to utilize the following tools. He or she has to read, and read a lot. A good writer has to write and be critiqued in order to learn his or her own strengths and weaknesses. And finally a good writer has to be interested in people, to listen to their stories, to observe their behaviors and to study their responses. A good writer has to want to tell a story and tell it well.

In this class we will practice all of these points and talk about our results. Attendance is essential as we will be covering a lot of ground and moving quickly. You will be writing everyday. We will discuss and work on class assignments every class period. You will need to read the newspaper everyday (in print or online) and monitor television and/or radio news broadcasts. Current events will be included on quizzes and tests. (Free copies of national and local newspapers are available on campus Monday through Friday.)

## **Class Structure**

This course includes lectures, discussion, class assignments, quizzes, lab work and exams. Your grade will reflect your commitment to this class. I do not keep attendance records. If you come to class you will learn what you need to know to make a good grade, and I will be available to you at any time to help you with problems or questions pertaining to this class. If you choose not to attend class, you will probably receive a failing grade.

The world of news is based on meeting strict deadlines. This class will provide you with a realistic experience of that environment. Late assignments will not be accepted without advance permission from me or official documentation of an emergency. The same rule applies to make-up exams.

## **Grading**

Your grade for this class will be based on the standard 10-point scale:

- 9.0-10 = A
- 8.0-8.9 = B
- 7.0-7.9 = C
- 6.0-6.9 = D
- 5.9 or below = F

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

- Class exercises/quizzes/homework -- 50 percent
- Mid-semester exams -- 20 percent
- Three projects -- 20 percent
- Final exam -- 10 percent

*Plagiarizing or cheating will not be tolerated on any assignment and will result in disciplinary action and possible failure of this course.*

## **Equipment and Supplies**

This classroom is equipped with Dell computers. You will have some storage space on the lab server, but you may want to purchase a USB drive for backup storage. You will need a ready and working supply of both red and black pens for each class meeting.

**No eating, drinking or use of tobacco products is permitted in this classroom.**

## **Classroom Etiquette**

Professionalism in the classroom dictates that students refrain from using or accessing materials, equipment or personal items that might provide distraction or disruption during scheduled class time. Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, iPods and other electronic devices before entering this class. Please refrain from text messaging, computer play or other disruptive activities.

## **Sam Houston Writing Center**

The writing center provides free services to SHSU students, faculty and staff. It is located in Farrington Building, Room 111. Use this resource to improve your writing skills and your grades.

## **University Policies**

Students who wish to miss class in order to observe religious or holy days may do so in accordance with Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code and university policy 861001. If you wish to miss class to observe a religious holiday or holy day, you must submit your request to me in writing and arrange in advance a reasonable time frame for completing missed assignments and/or exams.

Students with disabilities will not be denied access to this class or any benefits of this class or subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Offices of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. Students should then meet with their instructors to ensure that proper accommodations are made to ensure their success. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept confidential.

## **Q-Drops**

A Q-drop is a class dropped after the last date for tuition refunds but before the date for which a drop would result in a grade of F. For Spring 2007, Friday, **January 26**, is the last day to drop without a “Q” and receive a 100 percent refund. Friday, **March 2**, is the last day for dropping Spring Semester courses without a grade of F (Q-drop). It is the last day for resignations without receiving WP or WF marks. Monday, **April 16**, is the last day for resignations.

Note: SHSU students are allowed only five Q-drops during their academic careers.

## **Visitors**

If you want to bring a visitor to class, please clear it with me in advance. Do not bring pets to class.