

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**MCM 132 WRITING FOR MASS MEDIA**  
**Spring 2008**

Class meeting: Section 06, TTh 8-9:20 a.m., LDB 407

Instructor: Mrs. Carol Cooper  
Office: Dan Rather #308  
Office hours: by appointment, TTh between 10 a.m. and noon  
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**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

James Glen Stovall, *Writing for the Mass Media*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Pearson Education 2006)  
Kessler and McDonald, *When Words Collide*, 7e

**CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to introduce writing for media across a wide spectrum of disciplines; this course will provide hands-on practice in basic writing skills for news, broadcast, the web, public relations and advertising. Emphasis is placed on the enhancement of language and grammar skills. Prerequisite: 'C' in ENG 164 or equivalent. Credit 3.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To develop creative capacities in writing for print and broadcast media, online, PR and advertising;
- To learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view
- To develop a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
- To reinforce effective, grammatical use of the English language
- To achieve a broader understanding of the American media environment.

**METHODS**

This is a beginning level Mass Communication core course. We will write every day we meet. Much of the homework will involve writing as well. This means a lot of work for the student (as well as for the instructor, who must read it all). You **MUST** organize your life to handle the workload and not fall behind in the class.

Weekly quizzes and discussion topics mean that you must do the required reading **PRIOR** to class, and that you be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. I do not "teach the book". Each of the texts is a supplement.

**CLASS STRUCTURE**

This course will include a combination of short lectures, drills, quizzes, projects, written work and a final exam. Since this is an almost entirely writing lab, you will have the opportunity for individual attention if you need help. Do not hesitate to ask questions about material you do not fully understand. This course is the basis for all of your future writing classes and it is essential that you master these skills during this course.

- No handwritten work will be graded.
- Incorrect formats will not be graded.
- There are no extra credit assignments.

- 3 points will be deducted each time for incorrect spelling, incorrect punctuation, and incorrect use of grammar and lack of evidence of proof reading. *Spellcheck will only help you a little bit.*

Learning to write is like a sport: the more you do it, the more you will improve. You will get a lot of practice, and you must make time in your personal schedule to do the work. You should expect to spend at least two out-of-class hours of preparation for every hour you spend in class.

**STUDY TIPS:** it is your responsibility to go to the university writing center to correct and improve any spelling, grammar, punctuation and writing style deficiencies that you may have.

**website:** <http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>

The SAM Center is available to help you with other academic challenges:

The Writing Center is also available to help improve your writing skill:

website: <http://www.shsu.edu/~wctr/>

## **BLACKBOARD**

Communication will be via Blackboard. The syllabus and course schedule are posted there. Timed quizzes will be posted on BB as well as supplementary information to help you with the course. Grades will be posted on Blackboard. The instructor will email students via Blackboard. Class cancellations and subsequent assignments will be posted on Blackboard Announcements and students will be emailed via Blackboard by 7 a.m. on the day of class.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK BLACKBOARD. Students should NOT use the digital drop box to send me work, but email me directly. If you use an email account other than your SHSU account, it is essential that you give me those details if you want me to communicate with you.**

**Student Syllabus Guidelines:** Online detailed description of the following policies: [www.shsu.edu/syllabus/](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/) These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure:

**Attendance:** Late arrival beyond 10 minutes is treated as an absence.

Friday, February 1st= 12th Class Day, the last day to drop without a “Q” and receive 100% refund. Degree Applications to be filed in Registrar's Office by students graduating May 2008.

**Excused absences** are outlined in the **Student Syllabus Guidelines:**

[http://www.shsu.edu/~slo\\_www/absence.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/absence.html)

It's your responsibility to find out what you have missed. If you fail to seek such a makeup on the day you return to class, a 0 will be entered into the grade book. **Late homework and/or assignments due to an unexcused absence will NOT be graded under any circumstances. Please do not email it to me and don't try to negotiate.**

**Classroom Rules of Conduct:**

[www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html](http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html)

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university.

Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. No ipods, MP3s, etc. **NO ONE SHOULD BE USING THE COMPUTER WHEN THE INSTRUCTOR OR**

**ANOTHER STUDENT IS PRESENTING.** If you are asked to stop typing and to pay attention, please do so! You will lose 2 daily writing exercise points if you are using the computer when you should be listening. I will not address you publicly, but will send you an email notification.

Students are prohibited from eating or drinking in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Discrimination according to gender, ethnicity religion or race will not be tolerated, in class discussions, or foul language. Anyone who in my judgment over-steps the bounds of propriety will be asked to be quiet and/or leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

### **Academic dishonesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Students should be aware, specifically, that the instructor reviews all assignments and exercises for evidence of non-sanctioned collaborative work. While it is sometimes appropriate and encouraged for students to discuss concepts and ideas, it is never permissible to share or swap. *ANY PLAGARISM WILL RESULT IN FAILING THE CLASS. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL NOTIFY YOU WHICH WORK WILL NEED SUBMITTING TO TURNITIN.COM*

### **Visitors in the Classroom**

No visitors are allowed in class. We don't have the room!

### **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner to obtain the documentation required. Students are responsible for initiating the process of documenting the need for an accommodation under the ADA act.

### **Student Absences On Religious Holy Days Policy**

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor.

### **GRADING:**

Daily writing exercises 5 pts each

Daily quizzes 5 pts each

Weekly homework 20 points each

Projects: newspaper, interview, weblog, PR, radio script, TV script 50 points each

**Grade Scale:** The maximum number of points for each Gradebook entry we have managed to accrue by the he end of the semester will be the A and everything else will be calculated form there. For example, if we have completed 476 worth of points, then an A would be between 476-418, etc. At any point in the semester you can figure out your grade by looking at the total possible points on BB and multiplying x .9 for A, x.8 for a B, etc.

**Instructor Evaluations:** You will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the course.

**Spring 2008 Semester Schedule** (subject to change)

KEY: Stov=Stovall book

WWC= When Words Collide book

	DATE	Quiz/tests	CLASSWORK	HOMEWORK
1 <sup>st</sup> day	1/17		Ex. 1.12	Read Chapter 1 Stov
Week 1	1/22	Chapter 1 Stov	Ex 1.1 autobiography	Read Chapters 1- 2 WWC
	1/24	Chapter 1-2 WWC	Ex 1.9, 1.10, 1.13, 1.14	Read Ch. 2 Stov & Read Chapter 3 WWC EX. 1.12
Week 2	1/229	Chapter 2 Stov	Ex. 2.1, 2.2, 2.4	Read Chapter 3 WWC
	1/31	Chapter 3 part 1 WWC	2.5, 2.9, 2.11	Read Chapter 3 Stov
Week 3	2/5	Chapter 3 Stov	Ex 3.4, 3.5, 3.9	Ex 3.18 & re-read Chapter 3 WWC
	2/7	Chapter 3 part 2 WWC	Preparing for Interviews	Read Chapter 4 Stov & Ex 4.5 (adapted)
Week 4	2/12	Chapter 4 Stov	INTERVIEWS	& Read Chapter 4 WWC
	2/14	Chapter 4 WWC	Ex.4.2, 4.6	Read Chapter 5 Stov
Week 5	2/19	Chapter 5 Stov	Ex 5.1, 5.2, 54.4	Ex 5.8 & Read Chapter 5 WWC
	2/21	Chapter 5 WWC	Ex 5.	21Ex 5.22 <i>Hiker</i> & Read Chapter 6 Stov
Week 6	2/26	Chapter 6 Stov	Ex. 6.1, 6.3	Ex. 6.7 Read Chapter 6 WWC
	2/28	Chapter 6 WWC	Ex. 6.2 (adapted)	Weblog
Week 7	3/4		Class project that reviews Chapters 1-6	Weblog & Read Chapter 7 WWC
	3/7	Chapter 7 part 1 WWC	Present class projects	Raed Chapter 7 Stov
*****	*****	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	*****
Week 8	3/18	Chapter 7 Stov	RADIO TBA	Re-read Chapter 7 WWC
	3/20	Chapter 7 part 2 WWC	RADIO TBA	
Week 9	3/25		RADIO TBA	Re-read Chapter 7 WWC
	3/27	Chapter 7 part 3 WWC	RADIO TBA	
Week10	4/1		TELEVISION TBA	Read Chapter 8 WWC
	4/3	Chapter 8 WWC	TELEVISION TBA	TBA
Week 11	4/8		TELEVISION TBA	Read Chapter 9 WWC
	4/10	Chapter 9 WWC	TELEVISION TBA	Read Chapter 9 Stov
Week 12	4/15	Chapter 9 Stov	Ex 9.1	Ex 9.3 Fund-raising Letter ONLY & Read Chapter 11 WWC
	4/17	Chapter 11 part 1 WWC	Ex 9.4	Ex 9.5 & Raed Chapter 10 Stov
Week 13	4/22	Chapter 10 Stov	TBA	
	4/24	Chapter 11 part 2 WWC	TBA	
Week 14	4/29		Reviewing formats & writing styles	Chapter 12 WWC
	5/1	Chapter 12 WWC	Media writing Project TBA	TBA
Week 15	5/6		Media writing Project TBA	Study for FINAL
	5/8		Review for FINAL	Study for FINAL
<b>FINAL</b>	<b>5/15</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>2-4-pm</b>	