COM 302 Principles of Journalism

Credit Hours: 3
In-Class Instructional Hours: 2        Labs: 2        Field Work: 0

Catalog Description:
Prerequisite. SPC 205, COM 210, COM 215

Overview of journalism and its historical, ethical and professional base; focus on news sources, with practice in information-gathering techniques.

Reasons for Revision:
(2007) This course, formerly called Information Gathering, was last revised in 1999. This new proposal combined the previous focus on news and the news-gathering process and adds to it a foundation in the profession of journalism. This revision is part of a general program review, through which Communication seeks to update its courses in light of departmental experience with the previous program version, evolving departmental needs, and expanding scholarship in the field. Additionally, the department is undertaking this revision to position itself for accreditation by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate an understanding of the history and contemporary role of American journalism
2. Explain the role of technology in the development of print, electronic (broadcast) and online (Internet-based) media
3. Demonstrate appreciation for the ethical underpinnings of news reporting
4. Conduct effective interviews for print and electronic media
5. Assess and interpret information for inclusion in news reporting
6. Understand and interpret data from social science research for inclusion in news reporting

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Course Content:

I. Journalism Profession
   A. History
   B. Social role
   C. Professional organizations
   D. Ethical codes
   E. Regulation
   F. Careers
   G. Technology

II. Journalistic Venues
   A. Newspaper
   B. Magazine
   C. Radio
   D. Television
   E. Internet

III. News Standards
   A. Criteria of newsworthiness
   B. Accuracy and precision in reporting
   C. Balance v/ accuracy

IV. News Sources
   A. Public officials
   B. Organizational officials
   C. Private citizens
   D. Public relations sources
   E. Surveys and polls
   F. Advocacy groups and think tanks as news sources
   G. Online data

V. Interviewing
   A. Questions of fact v/ opinion
   B. Note-taking
   C. News conference and group interviewing
   D. Ethics of interviewing

VI. Online research
   A. Internet databases
   B. Government sources
   C. Organizational sources
Resources:

Classical Scholarship:

Current Scholarship in the Field.

Periodicals:
Editor & Publisher
Columbia Journalism Review
Washington Journalism Review