HU3629 Special Topics in Professional Writing: In-Depth Journalism

Room: 116 Walker
Time: 4:05-4:55 MWF
Semester: Spring 2006
Instructor: Associate Professor Craig Waddell
Office: Room 302 Walker
Office Hours: 3-4 p.m. MWF;
other times by appointment
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E-mail: cwaddell@mtu.edu
Class List: journalism-l@mtu.edu (Replies to messages to this list are posted only to the message originator.)

Required Texts


You will also need an Ampad Reporter’s Notebook (available in the Campus Store) and a tape recorder (preferably a micro-cassette recorder).

Course Description

After a brief review of journalistic style and editing and legal and ethical issues in journalism, this course provides an introduction to in-depth journalism.

Class time will be spent discussing assigned readings, viewing and discussing videos about journalism, and completing various journalism exercises. The course also includes a laboratory component with the *Daily Mining Gazette*. 
In-Depth Reporting: Investigative, Explanatory, and Beat Reporting

In 1973, the Washington Post won the Pulitzer Prize for Meritorious Public Service for its coverage of the Watergate case. This case called national and international attention to investigative reporting. Such reporting, however, long predates Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein, tracing back at least to those early twentieth-century journalists—such as Lincoln Steffens—whom President Teddy Roosevelt called "muckrakers."

The second (1918) Pulitzer Prize for Reporting was awarded to Harold Littledale of the New York Evening Post for a series of articles exposing abuses in the New Jersey State Prison. Over the next four decades, the title of the reporting category changed several times, but prizes continued to be awarded for what today we would call investigative reporting.

In 1964, the Pulitzer Prizes added as an awards category "Local Investigative Specialized Reporting." In order to better recognize the diverse forms that in-depth journalism might take, in 1985, this category was divided into "Investigative Reporting," "Explanatory Journalism," and "Specialized Reporting." In 1991, the "Specialized Reporting" category was renamed "Beat Reporting."

A Taxonomy of In-Depth Reporting

There are many ways to taxonomize the various types of in-depth reporting. One way is to construct a matrix of six types of in-depth reporting divided by location (local vs. remote) and intention (to blame, to praise, or to inform).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Remote</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blame</td>
<td>Local Blame</td>
<td>Remote Blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Local Praise</td>
<td>Remote Praise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Local Inform</td>
<td>Remote Inform</td>
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Journalists and aspiring journalists should not think of local blame as the only form of in-depth reporting. It is certainly the most risky form—especially for novice journalists—given the nature of libel law. Hence, novice reporters who are interested in in-depth reporting would do well to begin with one of the other forms before tackling in-depth stories of this sort.

General topic areas for in-depth reporting include the following:

News (local, regional, state, national, international)  
Sports  
Outdoors  
Features  
Health and Wellness  
Home  
Business  
Entertainment  
Education
Daily Mining Gazette Publisher Mike Bird and Managing Editor Bud Sargent have agreed to establish a collaborative relationship between this course and the Daily Mining Gazette. This will include visits by Gazette staff to our class, shadowing Gazette writers or editors as they pursue their daily assignments, and submitting your work to the Gazette.

Early in the semester, Gazette Managing Editor Bud Sargent will provide a list of Gazette reporters who will be available for you to shadow as they go about their daily activities. Together, we will arrange a one-on-one session for each of you with one of these reporters. After your session, you will submit to me a brief (1-2 paragraph) summary of this experience, indicating which reporter you shadowed, when you did this, what you did, what you learned, and any suggestions you might have for improving this process.

Over the course of the semester, you will develop three non-breaking, in-depth pieces. (Non-breaking pieces are pieces that do not lose their relevance in a matter of days; hence, they can be published even weeks after they have been submitted.) None of these pieces will be opinion pieces. Your pieces should average about 800 words each; however, "in-depth" journalism is probably best defined in terms of the in-depth research required, not necessarily in terms of the final length of the story. (One of the best research tools for many stories is the Advanced Search option of Google http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl;;;;;;en.)

For each of your final pieces, submit to me one double-spaced hard copy. On the same due date, also submit to Gazette Managing Editor Bud Sargent <bsargent@mininggazette.com> (and simultaneously to me) a copy of your final piece via email as a Word attachment.

Be sure to include at the top of each story your byline, the assignment number (1-3), a word count, the section for which your piece is intended (news, features, sports, entertainment, etc), and the date. Also offer a suggested headline and a suggested pull quote.

Please give your attachments file names that indicate the topic of your article and the version of your draft; for example, BrewPub3, RipleyExpands2, GundlachShelter2, Libraries&Internet1.

Work submitted to the Gazette is subject to editing for length, grammar, spelling, factual accuracy, libelous content, and consistency with AP Style.

Format of Pieces

Your work should be word processed and printed on 8.5" x 11" white paper in a 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides. Put your name in the upper right corner of the fist page, skip one line (i.e., single space) and put the course title (Introduction to Journalism); skip another line, and put the date; skip one more line and put your proposed headline (centered), then skip two lines and begin your double-spaced article. Number your pages, and staple your papers in the upper left corner.
Late Assignments

I won’t accept any assignment that’s more than two days late. There’s no penalty for one late assignment (as long as it's not more than two days late); subsequent late assignments, however, will be lowered by one part of a letter grade (e.g., from a BC to a C).

Evaluation

Your final grade will be determined approximately as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 100 points for participation in class</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 100 points for participation in 3 brainstorming sessions</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Up to 100 points for participating in 3 draft-review sessions</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 100 points for shadowing a Gazette reporter or editor and reporting on the results</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 50 points for each of 3 drafts</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 100 points for each of 3 final pieces</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 50 points for each of 3 quizzes</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Extra credit: 25 points for bringing to class before the end of week 3 the required texts with your name permanently marked in or on them.

A: 930-1000 points  
AB: 880-929 points  
B: 830-879 points  
BC: 780-829 points  
C: 730-779 points  
CD: 680-729 points  
D: 600-679 points  
F: 599 or fewer points

Course Portfolios

Please keep a portfolio of all of the work you have completed for the course: the hard copies of your articles as I’ve marked and returned them to you, and copies of everything you have had published in the Gazette. You may need these portfolios later in the semester.
The Michigan Tech Writing Center

Michigan Tech has an excellent Writing Center, which is located in Walker 107. I encourage you to schedule, regular weekly appointments with a writing coach. Establish a schedule early in the semester, because appointed times (as opposed to drop-in times) tend to get booked quickly. For more information, call 487-2007 or check the Center’s Web page at www.mtu.edu/wc.

Attendance Policy (“I must be cruel only to be kind.” Hamlet III.iv.178)

“Ninety percent of success is just showing up.” Woody Allen

Unexcused absences from more than 10 percent of the regularly scheduled classes can be grounds for failing this course. Excused absences include a medical excuse signed by your physician or a personal emergency authorized in writing by the Dean of Students. For a more detailed description of what constitutes an excused absence, see the below excerpt from the Michigan Tech Student Handbook:

“Students are expected to attend all classes, including recitation and laboratory sessions, beginning on the first day of regular instruction as stated in the University academic calendar. This date can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog and in the Time Schedule Booklets.

Students having excused absences are permitted to make up graded work. Whenever possible, students should contact the instructor prior to the absence and arrange a mutually acceptable make-up procedure. Otherwise, the students should account for the absence at the first opportunity.

Students who are unable to notify instructors concerning their absence from class or who must notify several instructors on short notice should contact the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

An absence is excused under the following conditions:

1. A student is participating in off-campus, University-sponsored activities, such as field trips, fine arts performances, intercollegiate athletics, judging teams, etc. The faculty or staff members supervising the off-campus activity will send a notice via e-mail to all academic departments and the Office of Student Affairs before the activity takes place. The notice will include the name and date of the activity, the name of the supervising person, and a list of all participating students.

2. The instructor is assured that a student’s absence from class was due to circumstances beyond the student’s control. The student must provide verification of the special circumstance if the instructor requests it.

3. Excuses are usually given in the following circumstances: illness, funeral of any relative or close friend, military duty, court appearance, and personal emergencies.
4. The instructor deems it excusable. Some examples might include professional and graduate school interviews, plant trips, job interviews requiring travel, and professional society meetings."

**Academic Dishonesty (from the Michigan Tech Student Handbook)**

“Academic integrity and honesty are central to a student’s education. Ethical conduct in an academic context will be carried forward into a student’s professional career. Academic honesty is essential to a community of scholars searching for and learning to seek the truth. Anything less than total commitment to honesty undermines the efforts of the entire academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University.

In their academic work, students are expected to maintain personal academic integrity; treat all academic exercises as work to be conducted privately, unless otherwise instructed; ask faculty to clarify any aspects of permissible or expected cooperation on any assignment; and report any cheating activity.

Definitions of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty, can be found in the Academic Integrity Policy [see below]. Copies of the policy can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs and chairs of academic departments.

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive a sanction ranging from academic integrity warning to expulsion. Please refer to Student Rights and Responsibilities in the University Community or the Academic Integrity Policy for more information.”

**Definitions of Academic Dishonesty (from the Michigan Tech Academic Integrity Policy)**

“A. Plagiarism: Knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation. This includes reading or hearing another’s work or ideas and using them as one’s own; quoting, paraphrasing, or condensing another’s work without giving proper credit; purchasing or receiving another’s work and using, handling, or submitting it as one’s own work."

B. Cheating: Intentional, unauthorized use of any study aids, equipment, or another’s work during an academic exercise. This includes unauthorized use of notes, study aids, electronic or other equipment during an examination; copying or looking at another individual’s examination; taking or passing information to another individual during an examination; taking an examination for another individual; allowing another individual to take one’s examination; stealing examinations. All graded academic exercises are expected to be performed on an individual basis unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

C. Fabrication: Intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation during an academic exercise. This includes changing or adding an answer on an
examination and resubmitting it to change the grade; inventing data for a laboratory exercise or report.

D. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Knowingly allowing or helping another individual to plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate information.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, your department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

Schedule of Assignments and Class Activities

Dates indicate when reading and writing assignments are due, not when they are given. I’ve used the following abbreviations for our texts: IJ = Introduction to Journalism (IJ); BIP = Beyond the Inverted Pyramid; BNW = Best Newspaper Writing 2003. The Associated Press Stylebook is for reference. Please bring to class each day the book we are currently reading.

Week 1

Monday: Overview of course and syllabus; self-introductions

Wednesday: IJ Sections I.A and I.B “A Short Course on Journalistic Writing” (pp. 12-18); BIP Preface and Chapter 1 “Qualities of Good Writers”; discuss in class

Friday: BIP Chapter 2 “Knowing Your Audience” and Chapter 3 “Finding Ideas”; discuss in class; schedule conferences to brainstorm for story #1

Week 2: Meet in conferences this week to brainstorm for story #1

Monday: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No classes after noon

Wednesday: Class visit by Daily Mining Gazette Managing Editor Bud Sargent; IJ Section IV “In-Depth Reporting” (pp. 44-46)

Friday: IJ Sections I.C – I.F “A Short Course on Journalistic Writing” (pp. 18-24); BPI Chapter 4 “Human Sources: Observing and Interviewing”; discuss in class; schedule conferences to brainstorm for story #1
Week 3

Monday: IJ Section II “Media Law” (pp. 25-37);
Wednesday: BIP Chapter 5 “Documentary Sources: Following Paper (and Computer) Trails”; IJ Section III “Media Ethics” (pp. 38-43); discuss in class
Friday: BIP Chapter 6 “Ensuring Accuracy”; discuss in class; schedule conferences to review draft of story #1

Week 4: Meet in conferences this week to review draft of story #1

Monday: BIP Chapter 7 “The Essence of Good Writing”; IJ Section V “Beyond the Summary Lead” (pp. 47-50); discuss in class
Wednesday: BPI Chapter 8 “Creative Writing techniques”; IJ Section VI “Style” and Section VII “Editing” (pp. 51-61); discuss in class
Friday: BIP Chapter 9 “Structuring the Story” and Chapter 10 “Revising for Publication”; discuss in class

Week 5

Monday: BIP Chapter 13 “Writing Project and Investigative Stories”; discuss in class; submit final draft of story #1
Wednesday: BNW Amy Ellis Nutt: Non-Deadline Writing pp. 63-88; discuss in class; schedule conferences to brainstorm for story #2
Friday: Winter Carnival: no class

Week 6: Meet in conferences this week to brainstorm for story #2

Monday: BNW Amy Ellis Nutt: Non-Deadline Writing pp. 89-116; discuss in class
Wednesday: BNW Barry Horn: Non-Deadline Writing pp. 117-134; discuss in class
Friday: BNW Elizabeth Leland: Non-Deadline Writing pp. 135-143; discuss in class

Week 7
Monday: BIP Chapter 11 “Writing Service Journalism”; discuss in class

Wednesday: BIP Chapter 12 “Writing for Organizations”; discuss in class

Friday: BNW Jonathan Tilove: Diversity Writing pp. 145-162; discus in class; schedule conferences to review draft of story #2

Week 8: Meet in conferences this week to review draft of story #1

Monday: BNW Jonathan Tilove: Diversity Writing pp. 163-184; discus in class

Wednesday: BNW Kelly Bouchard: Diversity Writing pp. 185-196; and Stu Whitney pp. 197-206; discus in class

Friday: BIP Chapter 14 “Writing Opinion and Persuasion; discuss in class

March 4 - March 12: Spring Break

Week 9

Monday: BIP Chapter 15 “Writing Humor”; discuss in class

Wednesday: BNW Deadline News Reporting: Dan Barry pp. 287-308; discuss in class; submit final draft of story #2

Friday: BNW Deadline News Reporting: Deanna Boyd pp. 309-314; discuss in class; schedule conferences to brainstorm for story #3

Week 10: Meet in conferences this week to brainstorm for story #

Monday: BNW Team Deadline News Reporting: Engelhardt, Clarke, Stapleton, and Kane pp. 315-342; discuss in class;

Wednesday: BNW Team Deadline News Reporting: Schmemann and Price pp. 343-355; discuss in class;

Friday:

Week 11

Monday:
Wednesday:

Friday: schedule conferences to review draft of story #3

Week 12: Meet in conferences this week to review draft of story #1

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

Week 13

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

Week 14

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday: submit final draft of story #3; course evaluations