

Reporting

MW 12:00-1:50pm, McKee Fisk 241

"Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal."

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Instructor: Reaz Mahmood

Office Location: The Collegian (primary), McKee Fisk 230 (secondary)

Office Hours: TTH 2pm-6pm, and by appointment

Office Phone: 278-8180 (Collegian), 278-1160 (McKee Fisk)

Email: rmahmood@csufresno.edu

Catalogue Description

Analysis of news sources; techniques of interviewing applied to specific reporting situations; coverage of campus and community functions in the preparation of articles for the media. Meets the upper-division writing skills requirement for graduation.

Prerequisites: pass Department Qualification Exam, MCJ 10, satisfactory completion (C or better) of the ENGL 1 graduation requirement, to be taken no sooner than the term in which 60 units of coursework are completed. (2 lecture, 2 lab hours)

Course Overview

You will primarily produce content for *The Collegian* and *The Collegian Online* as general assignment reporters. The course will underline and extend the essentials of news writing and reporting: analyzing news forms and stories, brainstorming for original story ideas, effectively gathering and synthesizing information, writing and structuring a news story, using proper grammar and style, and dealing with deadlines. Stories will meet a minimum standard for publication in *The Collegian* and elsewhere.

This course has a frequent writing component. You will complete some writing assignments outside of the classroom and other assignments will be conducted exclusively in the lab. You should be prepared to complete a graded assignment on any given class day. Classes will be a combination of lectures and activities—both formal and informal.

Learning Outcomes & Course Objective

Having gone through this course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate sophisticated critical thinking skills that will allow you to question assumptions, collect and analyze information, and synthesize and write that information in the form of compelling news stories for *The Collegian*.
2. Develop comfort and finesse at newsgathering and interviewing, which includes demonstrating confidence with deadline pressure, collaborative work and people skills.
3. Hone your awareness of news values and assess how they affect media audiences.
4. Develop a crisp, clear and concise writing style, in addition to demonstrating a command of grammar and *Associated Press* style writing.

The above learning outcomes will be reflected in a professional portfolio, due on the day of the final exam (in lieu of an exam), which will enable you to demonstrate your qualifications for potential internship or employment.

Course Materials & Communication

Readings

1. *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method*, 6th edition, by Carole Rich
2. *The Associated Press Stylebook*, 2009 edition
3. *The Collegian* and *The Collegian Online*
 - o You will be expected to read and observe both *The Collegian* and *The Collegian Online* regularly as part of your training for potential publication in these campus news sources.

Blackboard

Additional course materials, announcements, and assignment details will be provided on Blackboard at: <http://blackboard.csufresno.edu/>

Email

You must have an email account to allow for proper communication during the semester. The university provides a free email account to all students at: <https://zimmer.csufresno.esu/csuf/index.html>

Assignments & Assessment

The following is a summary of the evaluation categories for this course. Greater detail on specific assignments, including grading rubrics, will be provided on blackboard during the semester.

1. Each of the story assignments will be due electronically by midnight of the listed due date. Even if the assignment is turned in at 12:01 a.m., it will not be accepted. So please, please, please, don't cut it close. Plan to make the submission several hours ahead.
2. Additionally, the submitted files must be Microsoft Word documents. Files of other types will not be accepted. You will need to make the submission on turnitin.com. I will walk you through the procedure in class prior to the first assignment to make sure you know exactly what to do. Your file for each story should be named in the following format to make it efficient for editors at *The Collegian* to identify after I forward them on for publication consideration: 102m_firstname_lastname_slug. The "m" after 102 indicates "Mahmood" to identify me as the instructor. This is followed by your name and a brief "slug" that identifies the most essential topic of your story.
3. All submitted work must be exclusively for this course. Submission of the same work for this and another course will be considered cheating and will result in removal from the course with a grade of F.

News Stories 60%

Six stories on guided topics, suitable for a campus audience and publication in *The Collegian*, will comprise the largest portion of your course grade. Stories will be two full pages long (about 500 words), unless otherwise assigned.

"Stress Busters" Story 10%

You will write a non-journalistic article for a special insert within an issue of *The Collegian* that is based on *advertising aims* rather than journalistic aims. This assignment is intended to help you understand the difference between journalistic and non-journalistic writing even when they appear on the surface to be similar in form.

Activities and Quizzes 30%

In-class activities and pop-quizzes will assess your basic knowledge of course material from the class sessions, required readings, and current events. As reporters, you will need to be aware of the world beyond your immediate scope at the campus, local, state, national, and international levels. Recommended sources include *New York Times*, *Fresno Bee*,

National Public Radio, BBC News, CNN, and *The Collegian*. All of these news sources are available online if you cannot access the print or broadcast versions. The current events questions will not be on excessively obscure information, but rather, on information that would be considered common knowledge among professional reporters who are attuned to the world around them. **Missed activities and quizzes, including when a student shows up too late to do them for the day, cannot be made up.** However, your lowest grade in this category will be dropped and will not factor in your average.

Course Grading Scale	
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

General Description of Grades:

A: Student has demonstrated mastery of course content and proven to be among the most outstanding in the course.

B: Student has demonstrated above average work and ability with strong potential for continued development in the field.

C: Student has demonstrated average work and ability that is acceptable for the course, but that suggest the need for overall improvement to meet expectations in the field.

D: Student has demonstrated work and ability that are fundamentally lacking in one or more areas and that suggest the need for significant improvement to meet expectations in the field.

F: Student has not demonstrated work and ability adequate for receiving course credit.

Course Policies

Class Relationship to *The Collegian* and *The Collegian Online*

All stories produced in the class will be offered to *The Collegian* for publication. Submission does not guarantee publication; editors are not directly connected with the class. All published stories become property of *The Collegian*. Because publication is your ultimate aim, you are expected to adhere to the highest of standards in your writing. Therefore, you will need to pay particular attention to the following crucial items for each story:

1. Misspelled names – automatic F for the assignment.
2. Major factual errors – automatic F for the assignment.
3. Stories that contain more than 3 careless errors (such as typographical errors, missing words, ending a sentence without punctuation, etc.) will receive an automatic F. You MUST proofread.

4. Each story must be submitted with a listing of your sources and their contact information (first and last name, title, phone, and email). Stories without this information will not be accepted for grading and will result in an automatic F.

Late Work

Due to the nature of the course and your training for a career with strict deadlines, late work will not be accepted.

Attendance and Participation

We will not take formal attendance. However, it is in your best interest to attend each class session and show up on time. Take note of the “activities and quizzes” portion of your evaluation in the course, since poor attendance and tardiness are very likely to have an adverse impact in that area. Please be prepared to play an active role in this course. This includes contributing to class activities and partaking in thoughtful discussion within the classroom as well as on our discussion board online.

Students with Disabilities

Upon identifying themselves to me and to the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (278-2811) in Suite 1202 of the Madden Library. If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to discuss the options that may be of help to you. I want you to get the most from this course that you can, and I will work with you as much as possible to make that happen. It may interest you to know that I myself am legally-blind.

Computers

"At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. The minimum and recommended standards for the workstations and software, which may vary by academic major, are updated periodically and are available from Information Technology Services (<http://www.csufresno.edu/ITS/>) or the University Bookstore. In the curriculum and class assignments, students are presumed to have 24-hour access to a computer workstation and the necessary communication links to the University's information resources."

Disruptive Classroom Behavior

"The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this

learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. ... Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop and understanding of the community in which they live . . . Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class."

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

All such devices should remain off throughout each class session, unless specifically authorized. Use of such devices detracts not only from your educational experience during class, but also that of other students. Violations of this expectation may result in removal from the course.

Honor Code

The university's Honor Code states, "Members of the CSU Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities." Please familiarize yourself with this requirement. For this course, you may study and discuss assignments with other classmates, but all work submitted must be your own. In-class exams must be completed without the aid of books, notes, or other unauthorized sources of information. Furthermore, if you are aware of academic dishonesty by other students, you must report that to me or another university official. Violations of the honor code may result in severe consequences, including (but not limited to) expulsion from the course with a grade of F.

Cheating and Plagiarism

"Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term 'cheating' not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of others by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work." Penalties for cheating and plagiarism range from a 0 or F on a particular assignment, through an F for the course, to expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Class Schedule (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) or the University Catalog (Policies and Regulations).

Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to the Turnitin.com plagiarism prevention service, and I reserve the right to submit your written assignments to Turnitin.com to ensure the integrity of our course and program. Your work will be used by Turnitin.com for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. You may indicate in writing to me that you refuse to participate in the Turnitin.com process, in which case I can use other electronic means to verify the originality of your work. Turnitin.com Originality Reports will be available for your viewing at your request.

Copyright policy

Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. The copy in this course has been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the copyright holder. The user of this work is responsible for adhering to copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright web page:

<http://www.csufresno.edu/library/libraryinformation/campus/copyright/copyrtpolicyfull.pdf>

Digital Campus course web sites contain material protected by copyrights held by the instructor, other individuals or institutions. Such material is used for educational purposes in accord with copyright law and/or with permission given by the owners of the original material. You may download one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you (1) do not modify it, (2) use it only for the duration of this course, and (3) include both this notice and any copyright notice originally included with the material. Beyond this use, no material from the course web site may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material placed on the web site.

Tentative Weekly Schedule

The following schedule is subject to minor modifications under extenuating circumstances. It is your responsibility to keep up with the most up-to-date schedule on a file that will be provided on Blackboard. I will make every attempt to give ample time for you to make any necessary adjustments, but I suggest checking the updated class schedule online at least once per week.

Week Of	Topic	Reading/Assignment
8/23	Course Introduction; Overview of Reporting; Enrichment Activity	Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4
8/30	Collecting Information	Ch. 5, 6, 7
9/6	9/6: Labor Day, NO CLASS; Constructing Stories	Ch. 8, 9, 10, 11 News Story #1 Due 9/8
9/13	Tips for Effective Writing	
9/20	Breaking News & Online Journalism; Broadcast News Writing	Ch. 12, 13 News Story #2 Due by 9/22
9/27	Non-Journalistic Content in News (Public Relations Writing & Advertising); Beat Reporting; Profiles & Obituaries	Ch. 14, 18,19
10/4	Speeches & Conferences; Government & Statistical Stories	Ch. 20, 21 News Story #3 Due 10/6
10/11	Crime Stories; Breaking News; Disasters, Weather, & Tragedies	Ch. 22, 23
10/18	Work on Stress Busters Story	Stress Busters Story Due 10/20
10/25	Recovery Days	
11/1	Media Law	Ch. 15 News Story #4 Due 11/3
11/8	Movie; Media Ethics	Ch. 16
11/15	International News; Multicultural Sensitivity	Ch. 17 News Story #5 Due 11/17
11/22	Enrichment Activity; 11/24: Thanksgiving Break begins, NO CLASS	
11/29	Beyond Reporting: Seeing the Big Picture	News Story #6 Due 12/1
12/6	12/8: Last Class, Media Jobs & Internships	Ch. 24

I have read, understood, and agreed to all facets of this syllabus, including sections on the Honor Code and other university policies.

Name (Please print legibly.)

Signature

Date