

**Loyola University Chicago**  
**Spring 2014**  
**Reporting and Writing Across Platforms**  
**COMM 205-23W**  
**T-TH 2:30 pm-3:45 pm**  
**CMUN Room 15**

**Course Description:**

Reporting and Writing are the most basic and critical elements of journalism. While learning the basics of reporting and writing through textbooks, in-class lectures and guest speakers, students will also spend time doing research and interviews necessary to write stories across all platforms.

The goal of this course will be to not only learn the fundamentals of journalism, such as reporting and writing objectively, but to understand the importance of ethics, legal and social justice issues before, and while, reporting a story. Students will practice and study how to write and edit news stories for print, Internet and broadcast outlets, learning how to do so in an understandable, organized and convincing manner. Students will also study the reporting and writing of others.

Student goals will be accomplished through lectures, guest speakers and reading the textbooks, quizzes and writing/reporting assignments. This is a Writing Intensive Course. Therefore, reporting and writing requires many written assignments. There will be a mix of stories written in class as well as outside of class and students will be asked to conduct interviews or cover events or research topics for their stories.

**Texts**

Inside Reporting, A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism; Third Edition; By Tim Harrower  
Associated Press Stylebook and Webster's Dictionary (recommended)  
Students should follow, read and watch the news. Each Tuesday and Thursday morning, in particular, read the New York Times online and be aware of Chicago news by reading the Sun-Times, Tribune or listening to WBBM NewsRadio 780AM or 105.9 FM. Reading the Wall Street Journal, Politico and ESPN.com is also encouraged. You should also sign up for my Forbes column <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brucejapsen/> which provides e-mail alerts and we can discuss, first hand, the urgency of news and how to develop a story.

**Instructor Office Hours**

By appointment, and Thursdays 4 pm to 6 pm 900 Lewis Towers

**Grading**

Students are expected to know material covered in lectures and textbooks.  
Student grades are based on several things that include writing assignments, quizzes, a midterm and a final project. Grades will be determined in the following manner.

In-class reporting, writing and editing exercises and quizzes: 20 percent

Outside reporting, writing and editing exercises: 15 percent

Midterm reporting and writing assignment: 15 percent

Attendance and participation: 25 percent

Final reporting and writing project: 25 percent (grade based ½ reporting and ½ writing)

### **Deadlines:**

Deadlines are **critical** in journalism. You will be required to file stories on time. **Late assignments will drop at least one letter grade for each day they are past their deadline.**

### **Check your e-mails daily and particularly the morning of class:**

In today's media, developments in the news are reported more promptly than ever before. You should be attuned to the latest news, particularly in the digital age when you can get news reports of all kinds sent to your cell phones, Smart phones and e-mails. In addition, you will often be required to file stories electronically via e-mail, perhaps within hours of the assignment so you experience deadlines of today's journalists.

### **Spelling, style and grammar.**

Learning newspaper style is important and the Associated Press Stylebook can help. Your grades will suffer if copy has spelling, style or grammatical errors.

### **Attendance/Class participation**

It is important to attend class and participate while you are in class. See grading.

### **Plagiarism, cheating and dishonesty**

Plagiarism and cheating on assignments or exams will result in being reported to the Dean of Students. You will also receive a failing grade.

### **Week One (Tuesday, Jan. 14 and Jan. 16)**

Class overview: getting started, writing concisely and choosing topics that people will want to read. What's in the news and why? We will also examine the writing of others. Bring a Red Eye to class on Thursday.

Get started reading the book, The first two weeks of class we will focus on pp. 1-40, which is Chapter 1, 2 and well into Chapter 3. We will sign up for news web sites.

### **Week Two (Tuesday, Jan 21 and Thursday, Jan. 23)**

Writing concisely. The fewer words, the better. What's a lede? Don't tell me how the clock operates; just tell me what time it is. We will do an exercise in-class.

Prepare for this class by reading pp. 1-66 of Inside Reporting, which is through Chapter 3.

**Week Three (Tuesday, Jan. 28 and Thursday, Jan. 30)** (WBBM newsradio tour, if we do it this week, we may meet at the station)

Writing news leads and covering an event, speech, sports story or press conference. P. 40 is critical to all news stories. The inverted pyramid. You should be through Chapter 4, "Reporting Basics," and Chapter 5 "Covering the News" by this week. Students will be asked to cover an evening lecture this week.

**Week Four (Tuesday, Feb. 4 and Thursday, Feb. 6)**

Covering an event, speech or conference. We escalate our efforts to learn how to gather information. You should be through Chapter 6, “Beyond Breaking News” at this point in your reading.

**Week Five (Tues. Feb. 11 and Thursday, Feb. 13)**

Interviewing techniques, press conferences and finding stuff on the Web. An invited guest is scheduled who you will not only get to interview but will explain searches on the Internet. Read Chapter 8, Digital Journalism.

**Week Six (Tuesday, Feb. 18 and Thursday, Feb. 20) –**

Reporting tools, statistics and the Internet as a resource. Private investigator, former journalist, speaker is planned or we might plan a news media tour.

**Week Seven (Tuesday, Feb. 25 and Thursday, Feb. 27) Midterm assignment will before heading out on spring break)**

Proofreading, editing and self-editing your work will be reviewed in anticipation of the mid-term story being due.

**Week Eight NO CLASS, Tuesday, March 4 or Thursday, March 6)**

Spring break. Enjoy your rest.

**Week Nine (Tuesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 13)**

We will discuss and provide feedback for your story that was due Thursday, Feb. 27 Please read about covering a news story, writing about a topic. Chapters 7-10.

Let’s talk about what you want to do for a final project. Writing a story about a Loyola University alum or interesting, potentially newsworthy Loyolan. Profile and interview techniques to be discussed.

Chapters 10. Public Relations. Read this chapter.

**Week Ten (Tuesday, March 18 and Thursday, March 20) (there could be changes to this schedule)**

Media tour, discussing effort to reach younger readers and specific demographic audiences. You will gather information to do a story on the media outlet we will visit. Your story, which should include interviews with subjects at the outlet and even the entity’s audience, is due by 1 pm on Friday depending on which day we do the tour.

**Week 11 (Tuesday, March 25 and Thursday, March 27)** Writing for broadcast, radio and TV and a web cast. Chapter 9 (pp. 181-191) Please review this chapter if you have not already read it.

**Week 12 (Tuesday, April 1 and Thursday, April 3)**

An in-class deadline writing exercise is likely. Press conference style of a speaker or perhaps a classmate. Please review Chapter 4 before this class on “Reporting the Basics.”

**Week 13 (Tuesday, April 8 and Thursday, April 10)**

Open discussion. Ethics and law. Chapter 7 will be reviewed. Please read if you have not done so.

**Week 14 (Tuesday, April 15 and Thursday, April 17)**

Obituaries, sports stories and things a young reporter might do in their first job

**Week 15 (Tuesday, April 22 and Thursday, April 24) (FINAL STORY DUE)**

**Easter Week and individual conferences during class Tuesday and Thursday.  
(Professor available during final class before break to discuss final story)**

Final project can be handed in by the beginning of class on Thursday. This is your story of 500 to 700 words.

**About the professor**

Bruce Japsen has more than 25 years of professional journalism experience, including newspaper, magazine, television, radio and web-based media. In addition to teaching at Loyola since 2006, Japsen writes a column for Forbes about health care business, issues and policy, specifically the Affordable Care Act. He is also a frequent contributor to the New York Times, Chicago Medicine magazine, among others. He is a regular analyst on WTTW’s Chicago Tonight , WBBM Newsradio-780 AM, 105.9 FM and Fox News Forbes on Fox program and the Fox Business Channel. Bu, NPR affiliate WBEZ a

Previously, he was the health-care business reporter at the Chicago Tribune from 1998-2011. He has also been a reporter at Crain’s Modern Healthcare magazine, the Dubuque Telegraph Herald and the Des Moines Register, covering everything from Big Ten football and basketball to an Academy Award nominated movie and presidential politics. He also has taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Iowa’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

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