

Course Expectations
Journalism and Expository Writing
Fall, 2007

Teachers: Melissa Waterman and Nancy Griffin

Course Overview

This class will introduce students to the fundamentals of print journalism and expository writing. Students will learn about the evolving nature of journalism in today's environment of multiple media sources: the Internet, cable television, radio, and newspapers. Through contemporary readings, speakers, movies, and weekly perusal of local and national newspapers, students will develop their ability to discern among opinion, propaganda, "hard" news, editorials, and feature articles and to uncover bias in such pieces. Through regular writing assignments, students will hone their own reporting and writing skills with the goal of composing clear, concise and balanced articles.

Expectations of Students

1. Attend class or inform teacher well before class why you will be absent
2. Turn in all assignments on time. Each student may have up to three papers or assignments turned in late, provided that the student notifies the teacher in advance and the assignment is turned in at the next class. More than three lates will result in no credit.
3. Be mentally present in class, able to discuss materials fully and to engage with others in a non-rancorous manner. Discussion leads to learning; if you aren't contributing to the discussion, you will not pass.

Course Assignments

1. Students will completely read one local newspaper each week and be prepared to discuss the content of a single article at each Thursday class.
2. Students will read selections on media and ethics, practical journalism, and other topics and discuss conclusions in class each week. Reading assignments will generally be given on Thursday for discussion on Tuesday.
3. Students will conduct three interviews with selected speakers or local officials and write three features stories on the individuals.
4. Students will form three to four teams to tackle one major topic of local significance, decided by the class, for a series of articles illustrating different aspects – economic, political, social, environmental – of that topic.

Readings will include selections from Ben Bagdikian's *The Media Monopoly*, Howard Kurtz' *The Media Circus*, articles by A.J. Liebling, Hunter Thompson, Timothy Crouse, Bill Moyers, Joan Didion, and others.

Movies will include *Outfoxed*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, *All the President's Men*, and *Shattered Glass*.

Speakers may include George Chappell and Tom Groening, *Bangor Daily News*, Gretchen Ogden, *Maine Boats, Homes, and Harbors*, Leanne Robicheau, *Village Soup*, David Platt, Island Institute, and (with luck) Don Corrigan, WCSH Channel 6.