

PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

432.11 Writing for the Media

3 credit hours

Fall 2011

Dr. Nicholas P. Greco

nicholas.greco@prov.ca

Wednesday, 8:30-11:05.

Office Hours: Friday, 8:30-11:30, or by appointment.

SYLLABUS

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main objective of this course is to learn how to begin a project, organize thoughts and polish writing for various media. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to both improve the technique of writing as well as the creativity involved in such writing. The course focuses on exploring techniques of organization, transition, clarity and drama.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through participation in lectures, classroom discussion and completion of the course requirements:

1. The student will begin to understand all that is involved in contemporary journalistic writing;
2. The student will learn to couple solid technique with creativity in writing for various media;
3. The student will gain a greater understand of what constitutes excellent writing in the context of journalistic reporting and other types of writing for media.

C. COURSE TEXTS

Required: Carl Sessions Stepp, *Writing as Craft and Magic*, 2nd Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)

D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance and participation: It is only in the best interest of the student if he or she attends each class and, in fact, consistent attendance is required. Each student will be expected to read the assigned course texts and be prepared to contribute to a meaningful discussion based on those readings. It is on this participation that a portion of the final grade is based. Each student is expected to arrive to class promptly for its beginning.

Each session is constructed so that there is discussion following the readings and elements of technique in the first portion of class time, while in the second portion, students will be given the opportunity to write and share their writing. Some of this time will be spent in group work. Some of the resultant writing will be handed in for formal grading. More information on these assignments will be forthcoming.

2. Readings Quizzes: There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of short answer and multiple choice questions. These quizzes will be based on the readings. A student will receive no marks for quizzes missed, nor will they be able to write them at a later date.

3. Daily writing: Each student is required to keep a daily Internet weblog (“blog”) in which they will write about an event (or events), either local or global, that happened that day (minimum 100 words). The student need not make entries on the weekend or on holidays. This blog journal can be informal, but the student should consider good writing practices when making entries. As part of this assignment, the student will be required to consider a longer term issue to explore throughout the term (in other words, not all blog posts must explore this issue, but a regular number of them must do so). Further details regarding the longer term issue explored in the blog posts will be discussed in class.

4. Take-home Final Exam: The final exam will consist of short essay questions covering all of the material presented in the course from its beginning.

E. GRADING SUMMARY

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Reading Quizzes:	15%
Daily Writing:	45%
Final Exam:	30%

Excellent	A+	4.0	91-100	Satisfactory	C+	2.5	67-69	
	A		85-90		Adequate		C	63-66
	A-		80-84				C-	60-62
Very Good	B+	3.5	77-79	Marginal	D+	1.0	57-59	
Good	B		73-76		D		53-56	
	B-		70-72		D-		50-52	
				Failure	F	0.0	<50	

F. COURSE POLICIES

1. **Class Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than 5 classes **for any reason** will result in a failing grade in the course.

2. **Late Assignment Policy:** Assignments are due immediately at the beginning of class on the date on which they are due. Assignments not remitted at that time will be accepted by hand or in my mailbox with a 10% penalty only until 4:30pm on the day that the assignment is due. Any assignments turned in after 4:30pm of the due day will be accepted but will receive a grade of 0. As there will be no extensions granted for any assignments, please note their due dates.

3. **Written Assignment Format Policy:** All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font (12-point only), with 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page, and include proper pagination. In addition, the text must be left-justified. The paper must follow Turabian style. Written assignments may be double-sided. The text should also be free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The paper should be stapled together at the top left corner, without any type of plastic or paper binding. **Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a loss of marks. Papers without a proper bibliography or any proper citations will receive a mark of 0, unless otherwise exempted by the professor.**

4. **Plagiarism:** Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Bookstore.

5. Information and Communication Technologies in the Classroom: **Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities.** Use of cell-phones or iPods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

This is a Communications and Media class. As such, the exploration of new communication technologies is encouraged. However, unauthorized use of laptops and other information and communication technologies in this class will not be tolerated.

G. COURSE OUTLINE

- September 7: Introduction
- September 14: Journalism in a Time of Change
Stepp, Ch. 1
- September 21: **DAY OF PRAYER**
- September 28: Writing as Craft and Magic
Stepp, Ch. 2 and 3
- October 5: Journalism
Stepp, Ch. 4
9:50 – 12:15 “How to Do Academic Research and Write Excellent Papers”
All students, and *especially* new students, should attend this helpful workshop. At various points during your time as a Providence College student you will be expected to submit research and writing assignments. This workshop will help you to excel in these tasks.
- October 12: Beginning to Write
Stepp, Ch. 5
- October 19: Focusing your Writing
Stepp, Ch. 6
- October 26: Managing your Writing
Stepp, Ch. 7

November 2: Models
Stepp, Ch. 8

November 9: Feature Story Writing
Stepp, Ch. 9

November 16: Clarity
Stepp, Ch. 10

November 23: Drama
Stepp, Ch. 11

November 30: Polishing your Work
Stepp, Ch. 12

December 7: Conclusions