



**English 312 Z – News and Feature Writing  
Spring 2007  
Moravian College**

**Instructor**

Mariella Savidge

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Office hours will be by appointment

**Course goals**

News and feature writing offers guided practice in writing news and feature articles for newspaper readers, with attention to news criteria and the state of Newspapers in the United States.

Students should expect to develop an ear for collecting details and the skills to deliver them clearly to readers. Students will read and analyze good writing, cover events and develop techniques to write stories quickly and accurately. Students also will read and critique each other's work in draft and writers will revise based on these responses.

Journalists from the field will speak on day-to-day and special challenges in the profession such as being embedded in Afghanistan, reporting and writing a months-long feature and developing story ideas.

**Reading**

- “The Associated Press Style Book and Libel Manual”
- “In Cold Blood,” by Truman Capote

**Grades**

Students' grades will be based on writing assignments, a quiz and class participation. The breakdown is as follows:

- Class participation           25 percent
- Speaker story                 20 percent
- Second day follow story   10 percent
- Saturation feature           10 percent
- Description exercises       15 percent
- Book quiz                     10 percent
- Obituaries                    10 percent

**Academic honesty**

The student handbook policy will be followed.

## **Attendance**

Class time – 6:30-9:30 p.m. Mondays – will be a mix of reporting, writing, critique and discussion, much of which will be led by students. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Participation in this class is defined as speaking and interacting with the instructor and other students, not just attending. Three or more unexcused absences will lower a student's final grade.

## **In addition:**

- Instructor may apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignment.
- This syllabus is subject to change
- Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act for this course first **MUST** meet with either Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) or Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities.)

## **Tentative Schedule**

Jan. 15	Introduction News and features Using words Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, news article analysis
Jan. 22	Mechanics The news story everybody gets: obituaries Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story Choose a partner, write their obit, due Jan. 29
Jan. 29	Leads Presentations Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story Leads exercise, due Feb. 5
Feb. 5	Structure and organization If you see an adjective, kill it Analysis of leads exercise Presentations Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story Attend William Rhoden lecture 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 7, Prosser Auditorium, write up as  
Speaker story, due Feb. 12

- Feb. 12                      Speaker  
Editing Rhoden stories  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   Chapters 1-3 of “In Cold Blood”  
   Place description, due Feb. 19
- Feb. 19                      Transitions  
Interviewing  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   Saturation exercise, follow someone for a day,  
   write their story, due Feb. 26
- Feb. 26                      Tone and rhythm  
Editing saturation stories  
Presentations  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   Dialog description exercise, Due March 12  
   “In Cold Blood”
- March 5                      Spring break
- March 12                     Quotes, dialog  
Editing dialog description exercise  
Presentations  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   “In Cold Blood”
- March 19                     Ethics  
Presentations and “In Cold Blood” discussion  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   “In Cold Blood”
- March 26                     Speaker  
Features, the “softer” side of news that everybody reads  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story  
   Human interest topic  
   Event feature, due April 2
- April 2                        Human interest  
Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, analysis story, “ICB”

April 9

Details

If you see a cliché, kill it

“ICB” discussion

Assignment: 2-3 journal entries, finish “ICB”

April 16

Quiz on “In Cold Blood”

Assignment: 2-3 journal entries

April 23

Feature lead exercise