

WRIT 100 B: NEWS AND DEMOCRACY

Fall 2009

Instructor: Mary Ellen Alu

Wed/Fri 8:55 a.m. to 10:05 a.m. HILL 410

Office Hours: Wed/Fri 8:15 a.m.-8:45 a.m.
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“And were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter.”

So wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1787. Today, newspapers are in jeopardy, as advertising and circulations fall precipitously and company giants shed reporters and editors. In this course, students will explore the sweeping changes in how we get our news, with an emphasis on newspapers' role in democracy, the surge of Internet news and the growing influence of blogs, social networking sites and other new media.

Required Texts and Materials:

- Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's 2006
- Course readings posted on Blackboard and distributed in class
- A Journal
- Folder for Handouts

Course Requirements

You will complete several pieces of writing, both formal and informal, both graded and ungraded. Formal writing assignments will be developed through drafts and peer review. You will keep a journal on designated topics, which will figure into your final grade. Individual conferences, written comments, workshops and the College Writing Center -- all may be used to help you plan, draft and revise a piece of writing. A final research paper will require substantial use of the Reeves Library.

Course Description and Objectives

Writing 100 B introduces writing as a process that is central to college learning and to life. Writing 100 B focuses on college-level reading and writing, so you will begin to sharpen the critical reasoning skills needed for success in any academic discipline at Moravian. You will practice speaking and writing and will work collaboratively with fellow students. You learn to write by writing and reading, so I will mostly be a facilitator in class, not a lecturer or test-giver.

By the end of this course, you will: (from Course Review Sheet):

- Understand writing as a way of thinking and demonstrate that in the act of writing a writer may construct new knowledge.
- Understand that success in writing lies in attention to the process as much as in the form of the final product and experience the power of collaboration as part of that process
- Increase your ability to read critically and comprehensively and to synthesize ideas from sources with your own ideas
- See how reading and talking about writing contribute to the development of writing abilities
- Gain facility in writing in a variety of genres for a variety of audiences
- Gain experience in using technology for research/writing and demonstrate competence in finding materials through research and citing them in an academic style.
- Become aware of errors in grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling that may impede a reader's understanding and increase your facility in avoiding or correcting such errors.
- Be able to format a paper for an academic reader.
- Understand the role of news media in a democracy.

Course Expectations

- You are expected to **attend each class** and **actively participate** in discussions and assignments. More than two absences will hurt your grade.
- You are expected to arrive at class **on time**.
- You are expected to complete all readings and assignments **on time**.
- You are expected to be considerate of other students in class, including their opinions. No text-messaging, no cellphone use, no Facebook or Twitter in class, UNLESS part of the day's assignment.

Grading/Assignments

Class Participation 10% Attendance, participation in discussions/groups, assignments filed **ON TIME**

Journal 10% Students will post to their journals as assigned, in - and outside - class.

Personal Essay 15%

News Analysis 20%

Critique 20%

Prospectus for Research (Persuasive) Essay 5% Requires extensive use of the Reeves Library

Research (Persuasive) paper 20% Requires extensive use of Reeves Library. .

COURSE OUTLINE (Subject to Change)

Sept. 2 News in Democracy

Overview of class, Syllabus

Overview of the fast-changing News Business and the role of the press in society

Video: <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4901034n&tag=related:photovideo>

Sept. 4 The Daily Newspaper Vs. The Daily Show

Assignments: From Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism

<http://www.journalism.org/node/10953>

Sept. 9 Generating Ideas

Assignments:Downie, Leonard Jr. *The News About the News* (American Journalism in Peril).

Chapter One

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, "The Writing Process," Chapter One.

Sept. 11 When News Matters: The terrorist attacks of 2001/Developing Essays

Assignments: Carey, James W. "American Journalism On, Before, and After September 11." pp. 71-89

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, "The Writing Process," Chapter Two.

Sept. 16 Making Revisions

Assignments: Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapters 3,4

Draft of Personal Essay Due

Sept. 18 When News Matters: Keeping tabs on your elected officials and how they spend your (and your friends'/parents') hard-earned money

Guest Speaker: Investigative Morning Call Reporter Tim Darragh

Assignments: Archived stories from The Morning Call

<http://www.mcall.com/news/specials/all-special-kennel-031107,0,5454576.story?coll=all-news-hed>

<http://www.mcall.com/news/local/swaps/all-news-swaps-060609-pt1,0,1306292.story>

Sept. 23 When News Matters: Watergate

Assignments: View All the Presidents Men” (on reserve at Reeves Library; on Blackboard).

Personal essay due

Sept. 25 Newspapers: the Daily Miracle?

Assignments: **Downie, Leonard Jr.** *The News About the News* (American Journalism in Peril). Chapter Four

Sept. 30 Good-bye Newspapers/Hello Web

Assignments: **Starr, Paul.** “Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption)

Pew Research Center: Newspapers Face a Challenging Calculus. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1133/decline-print-newspapers-increased-online-news>

Pew Research Center. “Internet Takes Over Newspapers as News Outlet” <http://people-press.org/report/479/internet-overtakes-newspapers-as-news-source>

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapter 47.

Oct. 2 Good-bye Newspapers/Hello Web II

Assignments: **Stewart, Sinclair and Grant Robertson.** “Future of Media: Is democracy written in disappearing Ink

Knight Digital Media Center. “Ideas that Get in the Way of Saving Journalism.

http://www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org/leadership_blog/comments/three_statements_that_get_in_the_way_of_saving_journalism/

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapter 55

Oct. 7 The Writing Process/Revising and Peer Review

Draft of News Analysis due

Oct. 9. Blogs!

Assignments: Joshi, Pradnya. “Approval by a Blogger May Please a Sponsor”

The New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/13/technology/internet/13blog.html>

Collect journals

Oct. 14 Twitter! and Citizen Journalism

Assignments: **Hart, Melissa.** The Chronicle Review: “The Trouble with Twitter.”

<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Trouble-With-Twitter/47443/>

Friedman, Jon. “Marketwatch: Maybe Trudeau doesn’t understand technology.”

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/doonesburys-garry-trudeau-must-a>

News Analysis Due

Oct. 16 An RX for Newspapers?

Assignments: **Isaacson, Walter.** “How to Save your Newspaper.” Time. <http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1877191,00.html>

“Charlie Rose” Panel Discusses the Future of Newspapers. <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/10075>

Oct. 21 An RX for Newspapers?

Assignments: **Swensen, David. Schmidt, Michael.** “News you can Endow.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/28/opinion/28swensen.html>

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapter 50-53

Oct. 23 An RX for Newspapers?/Researched Writing

Assignments: **Shirky, Clay.** “Why iTunes is not a workable model for the newspaper business.” <http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/why-itunes-is-not-a-workable-model-for-the-news-business/>

Rex Blog: “What would Jefferson do?”

<http://www.rexblog.com/2009/02/01/18968>

New West.Net “The Trouble with Non-Profit Journalism.”

http://www.newwest.net/topic/article/the_problem_with_non_profit_journalism/C559/L559/

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapter 54, 56, 57

Oct. 28 Understanding the Research Project

Meet at Reeves Library

Draft of Critique Due

Oct. 30 Are Web sites profitable?

Vance, Keith. “Thanks everyone.” <http://www.seattleonthehill.com/section/opinion/224>

Nov. 4 A Middle Ground?

Assignments: Kinsley, Michael: Do Newspapers have a Future? <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1538652,00.html>

Critique Due

Nov. 6 CONFERENCES

Nov. 11 The Future of Journalism

Assignments: Xark: “20/20 Vision: What’s next for news?” http://xark.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/03/news-futures-a-whats-next-overview.html

Guest Speaker: Deputy Online Editor Elizabeth Bartolai

Nov. 13 Prospectus due/The Writing Process

Nov. 18 The Writing Process/Writing clear sentences

Assignments: Jones, Alex S., *The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*. Excerpts
Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, Chapters 11, 12. **Do exercises**

Nov. 20 Research (Persuasive) Draft due/The Writing Process

Nov. 25, 27 No Class THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec. 2 Thomas Jefferson vs. Clay Shirky

An evolution of thought.

Assignments: Shirky, Clay. Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable

<http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/>

Revising research (persuasive) drafts

Dec. 4 Saving the News

Assignments: Eheridge, Eric. “Why Newspapers Can’t be Saved, but the News Can.” <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/16/why-newspapers-cant-be-saved-but-the-news-can/>

Dec. 9 Course Wrap-up

Final Persuasive Essay Due

Final journal entry/Journals due