

NEWS AND DEMOCRACY
WRIT 100 F
Fall 2010

Instructor: Mary Ellen Alu

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 8:30-8:50 a.m. and by appointment

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Course Information:

Credit Hours: 3 credits

Class Meeting: Tuesday and Thursdays, HILL 209, 8:55 a.m. to 10:05 a.m.

“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 hyper-local Internet news sites and the growing influence of blogs and social networking sites.

Required Texts and Materials:

- Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook*, 8th 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 research paper will require substantial use of the Reeves Library.

Course Description and Objectives

Writing 100 introduces writing as a process that is central to college learning and to life. Writing 100 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, assignments, and very importantly, the workshops. More than two absences will hurt your overall grade.
- You are expected to arrive at class **on time**. **Note that class starts at 8:55 a.m. NOT 9 a.m.**
- 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/group workshops,
Assignments filed **ON TIME**

Essay 1 15%

Essay 2 15%

Essay 3 20%

Essay 4 (requires extensive use of Reeves Library) 20%

Portfolio: Includes Reflective Document and Third Revision of One Essay submitted earlier in the semester, Drafts and Revised papers, Prospectus for Essay 4, Journal entries 20%

Guidelines (Rubric) for Written Assignments

(Written by Ben Slote and modified slightly by Ann Bomberger)

1) Written work in the A range is based on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clear and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument); it brings in specific, relevant examples to back up its assertions; its points, at each turn, are clearly articulated: the words carry precise meaning, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's cohesion as a whole, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing

ideas, not one idea half-asserted); if appropriate it accurately and thoughtfully uses other sources; and its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling, or typographical mistakes that exacting proof-reading would catch. (All of this takes a lot of work. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.)

2) Written work in the B range: a very good paper, the writing of which is clearly, thoughtfully, and effectively executed. What sometimes prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, thorough thinking or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent and the other areas of the paper are strong, the essay will usually earn a B-.

3) Written work in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it contains only minimal textual support, it has problems with organization and/or sentence clarity, it is in dire need of proofreading.

4) Written D work either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay.

5) Written work that earns an F misses on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of mechanical mistakes).

Note: It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignment and for the course final grade.

Grade Scale

A	(93-100)
A-	(90-92.9)
B+	(87-89.9)
B	(83-86.9)
B-	(80-82.9)
C+	(77-79.9)
C	(73-76.9)
C-	(70-72.9)
D+	(67-69.9)
D	(63-66.9)
D-	(60-62.9)
F	(Less than 60)

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to Change)

**NOTE: Reading assignments and Videos are on Blackboard
Bring Assigned Readings to Class**

ASSIGNMENTS

DUE DATES

Week 1 -- Aug. 31 and Sept. 2

Introduction: Good-bye Newspapers
Syllabus/Overview of writing process

Aug. 31, 2010

Reporters as Watchdogs
View: CBS report on Newspaper Industry
Read: "Future of Media"
Journal Entry

Sept. 2, 2010

Week Two -- Sept. 7 and Sept 9

The Writing Process
Read Bedford, Chs. 1 and 3
Read: Shirky: "Thinking the Unthinkable"
Journal Entry

Sept. 7, 2010

Watergate
View *All the Presidents Men*
(On Blackboard; also on reserve at Reeves Library)
Journal Entry

Sept. 9, 2010

Week Three -- Sept. 14 and 16

Conducting Peer Reviews
View: Daily Show segment on New York Times
Read Bedford Ch. 2
Journal Entry

Sept. 14, 2010

Draft Essay 1 due
Workshop/Peer Review

Sept. 16, 2010

Week Four -- Sept. 21 and 23

Revisions/Reporter as Storyteller
Guest: MC reporter Steve Esack
Read: Assorted MC clips
Journal Entry

Sept. 21, 2010

Revised Essay 1 due
Analyzing text

Sept. 23, 2010

Note: Fall convocation at 10:30 a.m.

Week Five -- Sept. 28 and Sept. 30

Ideas to Save Newspapers

Sept. 28, 2010

Read: Bedford Ch. 4

Read: Isaacson: "How to Save your Newspaper."

Journal Entry

Ideas to Save Newspapers

Sept. 30, 2010

Read: Swensen, Schmidt: "News you can Endow"

Journal Entry

Week Six -- Oct. 5 and 7

Draft Essay 2 due

Oct. 5, 2010

Workshop/Peer Review

Constructing a Written Argument

Oct. 7, 2010

Read Bedford, Ch. 5

Note: Collecting Journals for mid-semester review

Week Seven -- Oct. 12 (no classes) and 14

Revised Essay 2 due

Oct. 14, 2010

The Great Media shift

Journal entry in class

Week Eight -- Oct. 19 and 21

Daily Show vs. Daily Newspaper

Oct. 19, 2010

View: Daily show segment

Read: Pew report on Daily Show

Journal entry

Twitter & Free Speech

Oct. 19, 2010

Read: Selected articles on Twitter revolution

Read: Media shift, "Your guide to citizen journalism"

Journal entry

Blogs Oct. 21, 2010
Read: Pradnya. "Approval by a Blogger...;"
Articles on Sherrod
Journal Entry

Week Nine -- Oct. 26 and 28

Draft Essay 3 due Oct. 26, 2010
Workshop/Peer Reviews

Evaluating Arguments Oct. 28, 2010
Read: Bedford, Ch. 6
Journal entry

Week 10 -- Nov. 2 and Nov. 4

Revised Essay 3 due Nov. 2, 2010
The Research paper/
Prospectus

Meet at Reeves Library Nov. 4, 2010
Read Bedford: Chs. 46- 49

Week 11 -- Nov. 9 and 11

Hyper-local New sites Nov. 11, 2010
View: Selected Websites
Journal entry

Conferences Nov. 13, 2010

Week 12 -- Nov. 16 and 18

Prospectus due for Essay 4 Nov. 18, 2010
Read: Bedford, Ch. 50 - 51
Workshop/Peer Review

The Reflective Document Nov. 20, 2010
Read: Bedford, Ch. 52-53
Workshop/Journal Entry

Week 13 -- Nov. 23 (Note: No classes on Nov. 25)

Draft Essay 4 due Nov. 23, 2010
Workshop/Peer Reviews

Week 14 -- Nov. 30 and Dec. 2

Polishing the Research Paper

Nov. 30, 2010

Read: Excerpts, Jones: *The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*

Journal Entry

Revised Essay 4 due

Dec. 2, 2010

Preparing the Portfolio

Week 15 -- Dec. 7

Preparing The Portfolio

Dec. 7, 2010

Review of Essay 4