

Course description and objectives:

English 312 will provide guided practice in writing informative, interesting, or entertaining “stories” for newspaper audiences. Such audiences are rapidly shrinking, and many of the standards you will be taught have been increasingly disregarded in recent years, but newspaper writing – or what used to be newspaper writing – is what your instructor knows and has practiced in his own career. As apprentice news writers, you will be expected to develop writerly or journalistic habits and attitudes toward your writing; to practice giving and receiving constructive criticism on writing; and to be active and critical readers of newspapers. You will also have an opportunity to “cover” news for course assignments. Specific learning goals for the course are as follows:

- **regular, scheduled writing** (exercises, major assignments, reflective analyses of your own writing and writing process, responses to classmates’ writing and to published pieces, notes on reading, notes toward writing)
- **improved critical and editing skills**
- **awareness of news values, audiences, publications’ *personae* and the preparation of at least one piece of news/feature writing for submission to an editor**

Assignments and evaluation:

Grades are important, but more so from student and institutional perspectives. While you will receive grades in this course, I encourage you to consider your work more as “writers” than as “students.” To that end, much of this course will be about practice, habits and discipline. Action produces motivation or “inspiration” more often than the other way around.

As suggested above, you will do frequent writing of various kinds: note-taking and –making, planning stories, drafting them, exercises of several kinds, critiques of your own and others’ writing. **Major assignments** will consist of **three** news/feature stories to be developed from planning through editor-ready copy. Of these, you will revise **one** to submit for publication. There will also be **one** major fact-finding exercise that is to become the basis for a story. All this work may also contribute toward the program portfolio that English majors must compile, so it’s incumbent on you to save all your major assignments—preliminary as well as final drafts.

Specifically, these assignments and their percentages of your course grade will be:

- **a fact-finding exercise**, leading to a story idea or plan = 15%
- **an on-campus news story** = 15%
- **an on-campus feature story** = 15%
- **a off-campus news or feature story** = 20%

Other graded work in EN312 will consist of:

- **“weekly” quizzes on grammar, punctuation, usage, spelling, style** = 10% (altogether)
- **a final stylebook test** = 10%

- **class participation**, including attendance, active contributions to discussion, active participation in workshops, contributions to the class wiki = 15% (altogether)

Most written work is to be done using a word processing application on the campus network or on your own laptop. Work will be submitted electronically via my website or the course wiki site. **Late work will not be accepted without prior approval; any work handed in late without prior approval will be assigned a grade of zero.**

Attendance:

This is a workshop-based course, which means that your attendance and active participation are crucial. Please arrive on time and prepared for every class meeting. You may be excused from up to three class meetings for legitimate academic, medical, or emergency reasons only; more than three unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade by 1/3. Missing more than two workshops, excused or unexcused, will result in a lowering of your grade by 1/3. Repeated lateness to class or failure to be prepared when class starts may also negatively affect your grade.¹

Books and materials:

Christian, Darrell *et al.*, eds. *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. New York: The Associated Press, 2013.
 The New York Times (Monday-Friday)²
 the Express-Times (Monday-Friday)³
 the Comenian (whenever)⁴

a reporter's notebook
 pens, pencils, eraser
 a digital audio recorder
 flash drive (recommended, but not required)

Academic honesty:

Moravian College expects its students to perform their academic work honestly and fairly. A Moravian student, moreover, should neither hinder nor unfairly assist the efforts of other students to complete their work successfully. This policy of academic integrity is the foundation on which learning at Moravian is built.

¹ "Prepared" in this context means you are in class and your work is readily accessible on a desktop or laptop computer.

² Required reading -- to be purchased through the college bookstore.

³ Required reading -- available free on campus

⁴ Required reading -- available free on campus.

The College's expectations and the consequences of failure to meet these expectations are outlined below. If at any point in your academic work at Moravian you are uncertain about your responsibility as a scholar or about the propriety of a particular action, consult your instructor.

All work that you submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be your original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructor. This includes any work presented, be it in written, oral, or electronic form or in any other technical or artistic medium. When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source. Direct quotes from any source (including the Internet) must be placed in quotation marks (or otherwise marked appropriately) and accompanied by proper citation, following the preferred bibliographic conventions of your department or instructor. It is the instructor's responsibility to make clear to all students in his or her class the preferred or required citation style for student work. Student ignorance of bibliographic convention and citation procedures is not a valid excuse for having committed plagiarism. When you use the specific thoughts, ideas, writing, or expressions of another person, you must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source.

You may not collaborate during an in-class examination, test, or quiz. You may not work with others on out-of-class assignments, exams, or projects unless expressly allowed or instructed to do so by the course instructor. If you have any reservations about your role in working on any out-of-class assignments, you must consult with your course instructor. In each FYS class and in the Writing Center, we try to establish a community of writers who can review and provide helpful criticism of each other's work. Although no students in your class or in the Writing Center should ever be allowed to write your paper for you, they are encouraged to read your work and to offer suggestions for improving it. Such collaboration is a natural part of a community of writers.

You may not use writing or research that is obtained from a "paper service" or that is purchased from any person or entity, unless you fully disclose such activity to the instructor and are given express permission. You may not use writing or research obtained from any other student previously or currently enrolled at Moravian or elsewhere or from the files of any student organization, such as fraternity or sorority files, unless you are expressly permitted to do so by the instructor.

You must keep all notes, drafts, and materials used in preparing assignments until a final course grade is given. In the case of work in electronic form, you may be asked to maintain all intermediate drafts and notes electronically or in hard copy until final grades are given. All these materials must be available for inspection by the instructor at any time. *In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your senior capstone seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.*

Statement on disabilities:

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Ms. Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street, at 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Office of Learning Services. Students are also encouraged, yet not required, to inform course faculty of those situations that can affect academic performance. Resources may be available to aid students who are experiencing academic difficulty. It is important to contact the office as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 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).

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center, on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall, is there to support the efforts of all writers at Moravian College. The tutors there are students who are good, experienced writers and who are professionally trained to help you improve your writing. They will go over an essay draft with you and guide your understanding of how you might improve that draft. You could also drop by to pick up some of the free handouts on virtually every part of writing: getting started, writing a thesis, developing paragraphs, eliminating wordiness, using commas, and the like. The Writing Center is generally open Monday-Thursday afternoons and Sunday evenings during the semester. The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Topical outline of assignments:

Week I M 8/26 – F 8/30	Course introduction. What is news? What are some of the important factors of audience, newspapers, writers' stances? Introduction to <i>The Associated Press Stylebook</i> Leads and story structures - I
Week II T 9/3 – F 9/6	<i>All the President's Men</i> (film on video – 139 minutes)
Week III M 9/9 – F 9/13	Writing the news story; interviewing Class visit: a news interview subject Fact-finding exercise due
Week IV M 9/16 – F 9/20	Leads and story structures - II Handling quotes and attribution; working with sources; on- and off-the-record etc.
Week V M 9/23 – F 9/27	Draft of on-campus news story due Workshops
Week VI M 9/30 – F 10/4 (midterm)	On-campus news story due Class trip: a news event (TBA)
Week VII M 10/7 – F 10/11	Feature leads and story structure
Break Sa 10/12 – Tu 10/15	
Week VIII W 10/16 – F 10/18	Draft of on-campus feature story due Workshops

Week IX M 10/21 – F 10/25	Developing the feature story Class visit: a feature writer
Week X M 10/28 – F 11/1	Refining news writing: some writing tricks and pitfalls On-campus feature story due
Week XI M 11/4 – F 11/8	Conferences; ideas for off-campus stories
Week XII M 11/11 – F 11/15	Draft of off-campus story due Workshops
Week XIII M 11/18 – F 11/22	Off-campus story due
Break Sa 11/23 – Su 11/30	
Week XIV M 12/2 – F 12/6	Style test Story revised for submission due
Final exams M 12/9 – Sa 12/14	There will be no final exam in ENGL312