



UNSW
SYDNEY

School of the Arts and Media

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences



MDIA5001

Writing for Media

Session 1, 2017

Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

Conveners

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Dr Christopher Kremmer	c.kremmer@unsw.edu.au	BY PRIOR APPOINTMENT ONLY: 11 a.m - 12 Midday Wednesdays during teaching periods	Rm 231T, Lvl 2, Webster	93856364

School Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, their request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Essential Information

All SAM students must make a valid attempt at all assessments in order to pass the course.

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

In this course you will be introduced to key media writing skills. The course will cover a range of genres and roles in the journalism and communication field. You will learn the fundamentals of journalistic prose, research, interviews and news story structure.

The emphasis will be on writing for print journalism but the skills learnt will form the basis of a portfolio of skills that will be useful across all media and communications contexts. You will learn how to structure and edit a news story, how to use quotes and how to engage readers. You will read and analyse a range of news stories and will learn to research, interview for and write both 'hard' and 'soft' news stories. You will learn about the values and production constraints that guide the selection of news items.

This course engages with the history of the news genre and with the question: what is news? You will learn about balance, bias and ethics. This course will also require you to think about the ethical and professional aspects of your work and its social, economic and political role.

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to

1. Plan and undertake the research needed to write an effective news narrative
2. Obtain sources, conduct interviews and use information in a professional and ethical manner
3. Write, structure and edit a hard news story for a specific medium, format and audience
4. Write, structure and edit a soft news feature story that narrativises events, places and characters

Teaching Strategies

This course will be taught face to face in a seminar room environment with a strong emphasis on encouraging your participation in the process of learning. During the course you will be actively engaged in solving problems posed by the lecturer. Your learning will be enhanced by the use of case studies.

Assessment

Assessment criteria in MDIA5001 focus on the quality of submissions in four main areas: RESEARCH, WRITING, INTERVIEWING and FORMATTING.

RESEARCH criteria reward a grasp of the values that guide and sources that enable research in the genre relevant to the assignment. These may include:

- News values, including facticity and accuracy
- Sufficient number and variety of appropriate sources
- Focus, depth and detail of research relevant to the topic
- Immediacy and relevance to a specific public audience or readership

- Correct attribution of facts, quotes and anecdotes
- Effective use of online, public, institutional and/or private archives and sources to illuminate the relevant topic
- “Follow-up” and preview-story research techniques

WRITING criteria reward clear and concise expression, correct spelling and syntax, correct use of direct and indirect quotations, and a writing style appropriate to a specific publication or media writing genre, such as hard/soft news, feature writing, and/or print, audio-visual, online and multimedia. These may include:

- Engaging and appropriate story openings, or leads
- A narrative structure (inverted pyramid, feature style, etc.) that suits the media form and genre
- Conformity with the course writing style guide
- Good choice of quotations
- Good grammar
- A story or script layout appropriate to a media genre

INTERVIEWING criteria reward effective engagement with relevant human sources. This will include:

- Identifying appropriate interviewees, including individuals and authorised spokespersons
- Getting in-person access to newsmakers. Experts, and where appropriate, members of the public, by securing interviews and attending events
- Pursuing a productive line of questioning. Asking the right person the right questions for a

specific story or media genre.

- Effective use of phone, social media and email to obtain interviews, quality data, quotes and stories
- Following best practice ethical guidelines in seeking and conducting interviews

FORMATTING criteria reward assignments that meet the submission guidelines in terms of:

- Word length
- Cover sheets
- Interviewee details
- Supplied stipulated components (images, transcripts, scripts)
- Due dates
- Submission to Turnitin, Moodle, hard copies as directed.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Length	Due Date	Submission
Soft news story (Multimedia)	40%	750-850 words	5 p.m Thursday 25th May 2017	Write a Soft News/Feature Article in Radio, Television or Multimedia script style. In-text attribution identifying the source all facts and quotes used (non-academic style). INCLUDE QUOTES FROM AT LEAST THREE (3) INTERVIEWS, TWO OF WHICH MUST BE CONDUCTED IN-PERSON
News research exercise	30%	500-750 words	5 p.m Thursday 23rd March 2017	Submit your research data, contacts and quotes for a News Story in Dot Points format. Full attribution of sources using Harvard Referencing Style. INCLUDE QUOTES FROM AT LEAST ONE (1)

				INTERVIEW YOU CONDUCTED
Hard news story (Print)	30%	450-550 words	5 p.m. Thursday 13th April 2017	Hard News story written in print/online style. In-text attribution of all facts and quotes to their sources (non-academic style) INCLUDE QUOTES FROM AT LEAST TWO (2) INTERVIEWS YOU CONDUCTED (AT LEAST ONE IN-PERSON)

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Soft news story (Multimedia)

Details: 800 words. This is the final assessment in this course. Marking criteria, grades and qualitative feedback for all assignments.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- Plan and undertake the research needed to write an effective news narrative
- Obtain sources, conduct interviews and use information in a professional and ethical manner
- Write, structure and edit a soft news feature story that narrativises events, places and characters

Assessment 2: News research exercise

Details: 500 - 750 words in dot points. Marking criteria, grades and qualitative feedback for all assignments.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- Plan and undertake the research needed to write an effective news narrative
- Obtain sources, conduct interviews and use information in a professional and ethical manner

Assessment 3: Hard news story (Print)

Details: 500 words. Marking criteria, grades and qualitative feedback for all assignments.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin, students do not see Turnitin similarity reports

Learning outcomes:

- Plan and undertake the research needed to write an effective news narrative
- Obtain sources, conduct interviews and use information in a professional and ethical manner
- Write, structure and edit a hard news story for a specific medium, format and audience

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au. Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible it will be stated on your course's moodle site with alternative submission details.

Late Assessment Penalties

An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- * Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- * Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- * Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,

* Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation' please refer to the Special Consideration website:
<https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices;

Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management

Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

Course Schedule

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 27 February - 5 March	Seminar	<p>NEWS DISCOURSE: REAL, FAKE & IN BETWEEN</p> <p>What is news and how does it contribute to media discourse? What are the origins of journalism, and how does it function as a form of critical thinking and activism that both reinforces and resists power? What's news to you, and why does it matter?</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Ch. 1 pp. 3-15 'The History of Journalism' and Ch. 2 pp.16-29 'The Methodology of Journalism'</p> <p>Other Readings: Levine, P. (2004). Journalism and democracy: does it matter how well the press covers Iraq? <i>National Civic Review</i>, 93(3), pp.16-24.</p>
Week 2: 6 - 12 March	Seminar	<p>NEWS VALUES AND RESEARCH METHODS</p> <p>What values and objectives guide news research? How is news gathered and what gets ignored? How are sources evaluated for their reliability, and what practices are used by journalists to make the job of daily news production more manageable? What are the main public, institutional, corporate and private archives accessed to construct news narratives? How do forms of journalistic writing such as the</p>

Date	Type	Content
		<p>'follow-up' and preview 'create' news? How much data is enough? What role does the audience play in deciding what becomes news?</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Ch. 3 pp. 33-47 'News Values' and Ch. 7 pp. 79-102 'Journalism Research'</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Stovall, J. 2005, pp. 167-178 <i>Journalism: who, what, when, where, why and how</i>. Boston: Pearson.</p> <p>Other Readings: Harcup, T., & O'Neill, D. (2001). What is news? Galtung and Ruge revisited. <i>Journalism studies</i>, 2(2), 261-280.</p>
Week 3: 13 - 19 March	Seminar	<p>NEWSMAKERS</p> <p>Who are newsmakers, and how do they achieve such a status? Can anyone make news, or are some people more 'authorised' than others? How do we identify, locate and access newsmakers? What influence does our perceived audience wield in determining who makes news? And what role do journalists play when it comes to making - and breaking - a newsmaker's reputation?</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Ch. 5 pp. 63-71 'The Newsroom and Tips for</p>

Date	Type	Content
		Finding Stories' AND Ch. 19 pp.279-297 'Courts, Crime, Councils and Sports'
Week 4: 20 - 26 March	Seminar	<p>**ASSIGNMENT 1 SUBMISSIONS DUE BY 5PM THURSDAY 23 MARCH**</p> <p>WRITING GENRE 1: HARD NEWS (PRINT & ONLINE)</p> <p>What makes a story 'hard' news? Does the term mean news that is hard to find, difficult to get? Or does it suggest stories that are more reliable and important than 'soft' news? And once we have understood the concept of hard news, and gathered the required kinds of data needed to produce it, how do we write for maximum impact in this genre of journalism in both print and online media?</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Ch. 9 pp. 119-134 'Writing News for Print'</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Gissler, S 2000, Tips: Leads. http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/gissler/tips/Tip-ledes.html</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Duncan, J. (1993). "The Structure of a News Story" in <i>The Front Page and Beyond</i>. Australian Centre for Independent Journalism, University of Technology, Sydney.</p> <p>Other</p>

Date	Type	Content
		<p>Readings: Lehman-Wilzig, S. N., & Seletzky, M. (2010). Hard news, soft news, 'general' news: The necessity and utility of an intermediate classification. <i>Journalism</i>, 11(1), 37-56.</p>
Week 5: 27 March - 2 April	Seminar	<p>THE ART OF INTERVIEWING</p> <p>You've done your background research and identified suitable people to interview. How do we persuade people to talk to us? And once they've agreed, what techniques can we use to get enough quality of information out of the interview to justify writing a news story?</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Ch. 7 pp. 105-118 'Interviewing'</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Wheeler, S 'The dos and don'ts of interviewing' in Keeble, R, <i>Print Journalism: A critical introduction</i>. Routledge, 2005. Pp. 64-71</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Clayton, J. <i>Interviewing for Journalists</i>, Piatkus 1994. Chs. 10,11, 14</p>
Week 6: 3 - 9 April	Seminar	<p>WRITING STYLE 1: TEXT BASED (NEWSPAPER & ONLINE)</p> <p>What is meant by news style? Who or what determines the</p>

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		<p>language and conventions that apply to writing for text-based media like newspapers, magazines, social media and online? What literary devices are used in news narratives and why are they favoured? What does history teach us about the evolution of writing styles, and how they are shaped by emerging technologies, including those of the Digital Age?</p> <p>Prescribed readings TBA</p>
Week 7: 10 - 16 April	Seminar	<p>**ASSIGNMENT 2 (30%) SUBMISSIONS CLOSE 5 P.M THURSDAY 13th APRIL 2017**</p> <p>ACCURACY, DECENCY & FAIRNESS: ETHICS IN NEWS MEDIA PRACTICE</p> <p>News media writing is about more than just getting the story first and getting it right. The methods used to obtain information are the subject of laws and community ethical standards. Journalists are expected to avoid using their positions of power for personal gain. Some people even expect them to concentrate on important stories rather than trivia! New media technologies such as social media, drones and smart phones have brought a new dimension to our thinking about ethical issues and standards in news. Codes of ethics, laws against defamation and contempt are all under review. And the idea of "objectivity", once a cornerstone of news media practice, is under siege in an area in which opinion speaks louder than facts, and everyone has a viewpoint.</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lamble, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An</i></p>

Date	Type	Content
		<p><i>Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press. Ch. 4 pp. 48-62 'Journalism Ethics'</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Ch.6 pp. 72-78 'Dealing with Spin and Difficult Situations'.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>The Australian Journalists' Code of Conduct https://www.meaa.org/meaa-media/code-of-ethics/</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Alysen, B 2006, 'News and PR' in <i>The Electronic Reporter</i>, Sydney: UNSW Press, pp. 37-41.</p> <p>Other readings:</p> <p>Lamble, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press Ch. 16 pp. 225-243 'Defamation'; Ch. 17 pp. 244-257 'Contempt'; and Ch. 18 pp. 258-276 'Other Legal Perils'</p>
Week 8: 24 - 30 April	Seminar	POSTGRADUATE READING WEEK - NO CLASSES
Week 9: 1 - 7 May	Seminar	<p>WRITING GENRE 2: SOFT NEWS (MULTIMEDIA)</p> <p>While hard news dominates the headlines, the majority of news media content has been described as "soft news". This broad category ranges from stories that take readers behind</p>

Date	Type	Content
		<p>the scenes to explain important news in greater detail and from different perspectives, to stories that are merely useful, interesting or plain trivial. But our main goal as students of media writing is to understand the profound stylistic differences between hard and soft news narratives, which affect not only what we write about, but how we write and even our approach to research.</p> <p>Prescribed readings: Lambie, S 2016, <i>News as it Happens: An Introduction to Journalism 3rd edition</i>, Melbourne: Oxford University Press Ch. 12. Pp. 165-175 'Feature Writing</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Land, F. M. (1995). 'Awakening the Right Brain in Feature Writing', <i>Journalism & Mass Communication Educator</i>, 50(3), 52-60.</p> <p>Other Readings: Baum, M. A. (2002). Sex, lies, and war: How soft news brings foreign policy to the inattentive public. <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 96(1), 91-110.</p>
Week 10: 8 - 14 May	Seminar	<p>THE NEWS OR ISSUE-BASED FEATURE</p> <p>Among the dizzying variety of "soft news" stories, the news or issue-based feature is the feature sub-genre with the closest connection to news writing. But while news features share the obsession of news discourse with important and immediate events that affect and interest large audiences, they are written in a more traditional style as flowing narratives that emplot events and</p>

Date	Type	Content
		<p>characterise their subjects.</p> <p>Prescribed readings</p> <p>White, Sally. 'Writing Soft News' pp. 247-272 in <i>Reporting in Australia</i> (1996) Sydney, Macmillan Education Australia</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Lyons, J 'Raging Turnbull', <i>The Good Weekend (Sydney Morning Herald)</i> 4 September 2014</p>
Week 11: 15 - 21 May	Seminar	<p>WRITING STYLE 2: AUDIO, VISUAL & MULTIMEDIA</p> <p>In text-based media writing, words are the kings. But the Digital Revolution has dethroned the once supreme word which must now compete with the mobility and immediacy of audio and visual storytelling enabled by mobile devices. The key to successful multimedia writing is to allows words to do what words do best -- provide background, context and meaning - and allow sound and images to convey the drama and texture of events. In this seminar we examine the 'language' and layout of multimedia writing.</p> <p>Prescribed readings: TBA</p>
Week 12: 22 - 28 May	Lecture	GUEST LECTURE: TBA
Week 13: 29 May - 4 June	Seminar	<p>PITCHING & PUBLISHING</p> <p>How to turn your assignments into publications and career opportunities.</p> <p>Prescribed readings: TBA</p>

Resources

Prescribed Resources

- TEXTBOOK – Lamble, S. *News as it Happens: an Introduction to Journalism* (2016)

Recommended Resources

- Book – Stephens, M. *A History of News* (1988)
- Book – Sedorkin, G. *Interviewing: A Guide For Journalists and Writers* (2002)
- Book – Sheriden-Burns, L. *Understanding Journalism* (2002)
- Book – Alysen, B. *The Electronic Reporter* (2006)
- Book – Phillips, G. & Lundgren, M. *Australian Broadcast Journalism* (2013)
- Book – Bainbridge, J. *Media and Journalism: New Approaches to Theory and Practice* (2011)

Course Evaluation and Development

The student learning experience is important to the Faculty and the staff in this course. Throughout the duration of the course, students are encouraged to provide either formal and/or informal feedback. At the conclusion of the semester a formal student evaluation is provided to enable feedback on the course content and teaching staff.

Image Credit

See bibliography