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

Instructor
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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