

SYLLABUS: Journalistic Reporting and Writing (JRN 3050), Spring 2022

Professor: Gregg Birnbaum, adjunct assistant professor

Class hours: This fully online class meets on Zoom on Tuesdays from 5:40 p.m.-7:20 p.m.

Remote office hours: After class, 7:20 p.m.-8:20 p.m., on Zoom, Facetime or the phone, and by appointment at other times during the week.

Email: gregg.birnbaum@baruch.cuny.edu backup email: ggbirnbaum@aol.com

Phone/text: 917.414.1622

MAIN LEARNING GOALS:

- Identifying and understanding news events
- Writing strong, accurate ledes
- Constructing comprehensive news stories

ADDITIONAL GOALS:

- Gain proficiency in interviewing and using quotes and paraphrase effectively, covering a beat, conducting research, and finding and developing sources.
- Sharpen writing skills by analyzing story structure and use of language, authoring clear and accurate spot stories, longer hard news and enterprise pieces and features/profiles.
- Become familiar with the latest tools and techniques of digital journalism and with social media platforms.
- Acquire knowledge about ethics, best practices, fairness, accuracy, objectivity and eliminating bias, highest industry standards and how to avoid mistakes.
- Develop the ability to meet deadlines.
- Learn about the news industry, how reporters do their jobs and what it means to think like a journalist.

INSTRUCTOR BIO:

Professor Birnbaum served most recently, from June 2021 to December 2021, as the interim Business Editor at the Miami Herald. Prior to that, from 2017 to spring 2021, Professor Birnbaum was the Assistant Managing Editor for Politics at NBCNews.com, where he supervised online coverage of the Trump administration, White House, Congress, federal agencies, as well as national politics, including the 2020 presidential election, its aftermath and the early Biden administration. Previously, Professor Birnbaum was a Senior Editor at CNN.com politics from 2015-2017, handling breaking news, the politics live blog, as well as defense/national security coverage. The other positions he's held include: Managing Editor/Head of Political Content, New York Daily News; Deputy Managing Editor, POLITICO; and Political Editor, The New York Post.

Professor Birnbaum has been in the news business for more than 30 years as a reporter and editor, beginning his career — and his love affair with journalism — as a “copy kid” at The Wall Street Journal. He received his Master of Science degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in 1985 and has been teaching journalism at Baruch since 2014. In the Spring 2022 semester, he also is teaching journalism at the University of Florida.

COVID PROTOCOLS:

The most important concern is your health and safety, particularly in light of the Omicron variant. Please do not do anything that compromises your health. I will discuss Covid during our first class and answer questions and address concerns that students may have. You also are welcome to discuss any related issues privately with me after class.

CLASS GROUND RULES:

- **Be on time. It helps to join the Zoom a few minutes early each Tuesday to make sure that your video and microphone are working.** If a student must miss a class, inform me **before** class by email or text as soon as you know you won't be able to make it. If you cannot attend class for any reason, you are expected to make up the assignments and readings.

Classes will be recorded on Zoom to give you the chance to watch any classes you might have missed. I will share the Zoom recording link for each class with all students after the class is over. Here is Baruch's policy about recording:

“Students who participate in this class with their camera on or use a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded solely for the purpose of creating a record for students enrolled in the class to refer to, including those enrolled students who are unable to attend live. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the ‘chat’ feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live.”

I very much prefer that you put your Zoom video on during class, as it will be easier to get to know one another and seeing the professor and the students together, even if only on a screen, creates a more in-person-like classroom environment and makes communication with each other smoother and more enjoyable. However, under CUNY rules, you have the right to turn off your video, and you will suffer no penalty for doing so. I also will be frequently sharing my screen with the class to provide examples of concepts we are learning and other material.

I will remove any students who misbehave from the Zoom class.

- Because this online class meets once a week, the mid-week assignments take the place of the second class. The mid-week assignments are generally due the Friday after the assignment is made on Tuesday.
- Once class has started, give it your undivided attention. Focus on the class and not on what may be going on around you from wherever you are Zooming. You may not WhatsApp, text, email, tweet, IM or surf the web during class (unless it's for a class assignment). If there's an emergency, you may leave the Zoom to deal with it.
- Class sessions are "off-the-record." They may not be recorded by students in any manner and no tweeting, Facebooking, Instagramming, blogging or other public sharing of class activities or discussions on social media or any other platforms is permitted.
- Some of my communications with you will take place through Blackboard and it is essential that you check your Baruch email on a daily basis. I use Blackboard regularly to send important group emails to the class and you miss those at your own peril. Blackboard group emails work only with CUNY email addresses and it should be a Baruch email address; you will not receive the group emails unless you are checking your CUNY email address.
- **All assignments must be completed by deadline.** That's good training for the news business (and other professions) and we've got a lot of material to cover over the semester so it's vital to keep up with the work. (If there are special circumstances that you think may warrant a deadline extension, discuss them with me – **before** the deadline has passed.)

Penalties for late assignments: An assignment submitted from one day late up to a week late will be penalized by a reduction of one full grade, i.e., what would have been a B if it were on time becomes a C; if it is eight days up to two weeks late, it will be lowered by two full grades, i.e., a B becomes a D. **After two weeks, I will not accept the assignment (unless there are special circumstances that we have previously discussed) and you will receive an F GRADE on it. In this course, an F grade on an assignment equals zero for the purpose of calculating your final course grade.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must promptly read, understand and absorb the feedback, editing, comments and critiques that I provide to you on submitted assignments. I will not tolerate the same mistakes being made over and over as we progress through the semester, and your grades will suffer. If you have questions about any of my feedback, if there's anything you aren't clear on, or you have questions about grading on a particular assignment, please discuss them with me.

In addition, I do not use Blackboard to record student grades; I use my own grading book. If you have a question about what your grade was on a particular assignment, whether you have missed any assignments, or where you stand overall with your course grade at any time during the semester, please ask me.

- **CAREFULLY PROOFREAD** all your assignments before submission for accuracy, grammar, style, punctuation and spelling. Work that is riddled with careless errors – for instance, names and places

misspelled or incorrect info or improper grammar and style (**particularly with quotes**) — will be returned ungraded and must be redone correctly to receive credit. (After an assignment has been graded and returned to you, there is no opportunity in this course to redo and resubmit the assignment to improve your grade.)

- The vast majority of assignments must be sent to me by email as attachments. **Use WORD docs; I don't accept PDFs.** Send only one assignment with each email. If, for whatever reason, you have two assignments to send at the same time, put them in separate emails. The email subject line should contain the assignment title and date due. For instance, "Home assignment/liquor store robbery/Sept. 8." There will be a few instances in which an assignment can be completed in an email without the need to attach a doc, and I will indicate those.

When you have submitted a doc, the first page should contain, at the top, the story "slug" (the one- or two-word identifying "name" of the story in capital letters, i.e., BIRNBAUMINTERVIEW), your name, date and the word count. **Please use double spacing between indented paragraphs.** You should not write headlines or titles for your stories. At the bottom of the assignment, type "30" – the traditional journalism marking that signals the end of the story has been reached.

****PLAGIARISM AND FABRICATION**:**

These are the felony crimes of academia and journalism. Plagiarism and fabrication will not be tolerated in this course. I will fail you on the assignment and report you to college administrators if I have evidence that you have copied or used someone else's work without providing appropriate credit, including taking from a previously published story or article, in whole or part, any quotes or other material for use in your assignment without indicating the source of the information, have made up (fabricated) anything, or have submitted an assignment as your own that was done, in whole or part, by someone else. I will use my own 35 years of experience to detect cheating, as well as turnitin.com. Also, you are not permitted to submit work for this class that has been or is being submitted for another course without permission from both instructors. Having others do assignments for you or substantially assist you with assignments also is prohibited.

In addition – to be crystal clear about this – homework assignments in this class are to be done individually. They are not group projects to be workshopped communally in a WhatsApp group. Do your own work.

We will talk about plagiarism and fabrication in our first class, and I will answer any questions you have so that all students are clear on this important issue. You should take academic integrity very seriously; I do. If you have related questions about assignments as you are doing them, ask me.

In addition, visit www.baruch.edu/academic/academic_honesty.html to read the college's policies about academic honesty and send me an email confirming that you understand the principles and will follow them.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Active participation on Zoom is strongly encouraged (!), more so than ever because we are distance learning. Participation **COUNTS FOR 15 PERCENT OF YOUR FINAL COURSE GRADE. Of course, voluntary participation is encouraged, but I also will call on students as I see fit, regardless of whether you have a hand up or your video on. Silence will count against you.** Robust participation by all or many students will help create a sense of class community and reduce the “space” between us since we aren't physically together. We can make this work – Zoom meetings allow for easy communication. You do not need to raise your “Zoom hand” for me to acknowledge you. Simply speak up during a pause to let me know you have a question or would like to make a comment. I prefer oral communication during class, as opposed to using Zoom's chat function. Questions, comments and discussion are encouraged; respectful disagreement with your fellow students and/or your professor is invited. Get engaged in each class.

CONTACTING ME:

My preferred means of communication outside of class time is by email. You can reach me at gregg.birnbaum@baruch.cuny.edu, which I check daily and should be our main point of contact, or at my backup personal email (ggbirnbaum@aol.com) if the Baruch email system is down. You also can text me at 917.414.1622 in a pinch. If you need to speak with me for any reason, please let me know and I will make time. As was indicated previously in the syllabus, each Tuesday after class during the semester, I am also available for one hour. Please make use of this opportunity – I am approachable and welcome the chance to interact with students.

GRADING:

Three substantial assignments account for 50 percent of the final grade. They are:

- **“The Meeting,”** Week 4, March 1: Attend a meeting, speech, press conference, panel discussion or similar event and write an approximately 400-word story. Discuss with me in advance the event you intend to cover. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, March 8, 5:00 p.m. (This assignment counts for 10 percent of the final grade.)
- **“The Business,”** Week 8, March 29: Write an approximately 600-word feature story about a small, locally owned store/retail establishment/business and how it has been impacted by COVID-19.

Tell the reader something new and/or interesting about the business. In particular, readers want to know if the business is growing, stable or going downhill and why. And what are the challenges it faces? What changes, improvements, innovations are planned or have been forced by the pandemic? The story must include quotes from the owner/manager, employees, several customers and possibly a competitor. Students will discuss with me in advance the business they have selected. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, April 5, 5:00 p.m. (This assignment counts for 20 percent of your grade.)

- **“The Profile,”** Week 10, April 12: Write an approximately 700-word profile of someone other than a family member or friend. Focus on one or two of the most significant events in your subject’s life to find an angle for your story. You should arrange to interview your profile subject for at least 30-45 minutes. Also, you must interview at least two people who know your subject and quote them in your story. Students will discuss their subject with me in advance. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Friday, April 22, 5 p.m. (This assignment counts for 20 percent of your grade.)

For each of these three major assignments, you must “pitch” (present/describe/sell) your story idea to me in advance as though I were your editor at a newspaper/website. That means convincing me before you start work why the story is interesting and explaining how you intend to accomplish it.

The remaining 50 percent of the final course grade is composed of:

- Weekly home assignments that are due on Tuesdays throughout the semester (not including the three major stories discussed above) are worth 20 percent;
- Mid-week assignments count for 15 percent; and
- Class participation, as previously mentioned, is 15 percent

Most assignments will receive a letter grade, but not all. Some non-graded assignments during the semester will instead be marked as “completed” or “failed to complete,” which counts as a zero. As mentioned previously in the syllabus but I will repeat it again here: **I do not use the Blackboard grading function, but instead record your grades in my own gradebook. If you have a question about where you stand with your course grade at any time during the semester, please reach out for me.**

Again, failure to complete an assignment, even a non-graded assignment, will result in a 0 on that assignment. Nothing will pull your course grade down more steeply than 0’s. Do yourself a favor and complete all assignments, even the smaller ones.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I will generally adhere to the syllabus, but I may not follow it precisely each week. I will announce assignments for the coming week in class on Tuesday; they will often be what the syllabus indicates, but not always. **If you miss a class or are not sure about the assignments for the coming week, ask me or a fellow student (find a class friend on Day One). DO NOT DO AN**

ASSIGNMENT SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS LISTED ON THE SYLLABUS FOR THE COMING WEEK.

There are no quizzes, mid-terms or final exams for this course, and there is no extra-credit opportunity.

Work materials required for in-class, mid-week and home assignments, such as fact sets, videos and press releases, will be provided.

READINGS:

- There is no textbook. The readings are drawn from a variety of sources and will be distributed to you through Blackboard or by email.
- Required daily news dosage: You must read one or more articles each day from major media outlets, such as The New York Times, New York Daily News, The Wall Street Journal, FoxNews.com, CNN.com, NBCNews.com and others.

As Professor Joshua Mills has said, "To produce good reporting and writing, you must *read* good reporting and writing."

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS: We will have several standout journalists speaking to the class on a variety of topics during the semester from various news outlets. Those appearances will be announced the week before.

MINIMUM TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS:

To progress in this fully online course, you will need regular access to a laptop and/or desktop computer, reliable Wi-Fi, a working knowledge of how to use basic word-processing software and a web browser, an active Baruch email account and access to Blackboard. A smartphone or access to one to record audio for assignments also would be helpful. If you don't have a smartphone, please discuss alternatives with me.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:

Baruch has a continuing commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Like so many things, the need for accommodations and the process for arranging them have been altered by COVID-19. Students with disabilities who may need some accommodation to fully participate in this class should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible at disability.services@baruch.cuny.edu or call 646-312-4590.

CONNECTIVITY NOTE:

If I suddenly disappear from the Zoom, it most likely means my Wi-Fi has gone down, an occasional hazard of remote learning. Please wait in the Zoom class until I have re-established my connection; that may take a few minutes.

REMINDER, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: During the semester, if you start to experience personal difficulties or stressors that are interfering with your academic performance or day-to-day functioning, please consider seeking free and confidential support at the Baruch College Counseling Center. For more information or to make an appointment, visit their website at <https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/counseling/> or call 646-312-2155. If it's outside of business hours (Monday-Friday 9-5pm) and you need immediate assistance, please call 1-888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355). If you are concerned about one of your classmates, please share that concern by filling out a Campus Intervention Team form at <https://studentaffairs.baruch.cuny.edu/campus-intervention-team>. And if I can be of any help in connecting you with the extensive Baruch resources, please let me know. I am always available to talk.

CLASS OUTLINE: 14 WEEKS OF NEWS

WEEK 1: TUESDAY, FEB. 1

Topic: Welcome/Introductions/Remote learning/What is news?

Key points covered in class:

- Introductions/Course learning goals/Syllabus review
- How we'll make Zoom work for us this semester
- Class rules of the road, including plagiarism-fabrication, grading, instructor expectations
- What is news? (and what isn't)/Definitions, types/Thinking about the reader, always
- Dog bites man (not news) and man bites dog (news – it's happened)

Mid-week assignment: Write a 350-word mini-essay about your interest in journalism, what topics you're passionate about, the skills you want to develop and improve and what you hope to get out of this course. Deadline: Friday, Feb. 4, 5 p.m.

(Also, don't forget to read the college's academic honesty policy, indicated previously in the syllabus, and send me an email indicating that you have done so and will follow it.)

Home assignment: Choose the best lede in each of five multiple-choice examples and briefly explain in one or two sentences your reason for each selection. Deadline: Tuesday, Feb. 8, 5 p.m. (class does not meet that day but the assignment is still due).

Reading assignment:

- *"Inside Reporting,"* Tim Harrower on "The five W's"
- The Society of Professional Journalists one-page code of ethics: <http://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf>

SCHEDULING NOTE: We do not meet on Tuesday, Feb. 8, because Baruch classes that day are following a Friday schedule. Our second class will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 15

WEEK 2: TUESDAY, FEB. 15

Topic: Leads (“ledes”)/Journalism ethics

Grammar/style corner: Its/It’s

Key points covered in class:

- What is a lede?/The five “W’s”/Inverted pyramid/Elements of strong ledes/What can go wrong: The buried lede and other fails
- Case study: Early, later ledes on the Denver Post’s Aurora mass shooting coverage
- Lecture on journalism ethics and standards: Fairness/Objectivity/Accuracy/Unacceptable conduct

Mid-week assignment: What’s wrong with eight ledes. Deadline: Friday, Feb. 18, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Write a lede and four-five additional paragraphs for an approximately 300-word spot news story based on a fact set about a liquor store robbery. Deadline: Tuesday, Feb. 22, 5 p.m.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Leads that succeed”

To prepare for “The Meeting**” assignment in Week 4, students need to find an upcoming meeting, speech, press conference, panel discussion or similar event to cover. Students will discuss with me in advance the event they have selected and how they plan to report on it. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me.

WEEK 3: TUESDAY, FEB. 22

Topic: Covering a meeting, speech/News writing/Story structure

Grammar/style corner: **Punctuating quotes**

Key points covered in class:

- What comes after the lede/Ways stories can be organized/How ledes are supported/”Nut grafs”
- Lecture: Covering a meeting, speech, press conference, panel discussion

- Discussion of the choose the best ledes assignment from Week 1 and the what's wrong with the eight ledes assignment from Week 2

Mid-week assignment: Find three recent online stories from major media outlets – one covering a speech, one a press conference and one a meeting. Send me the links and tell me in a couple lines what you liked about each, what struck you about the way the story was done, what you learned journalistically from each. Deadline: Friday, Feb. 25, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Interview five-six people about a current event and write an approximately 400-word “reaction story” based on those interviews. Students will discuss their topic with me in advance. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, March 1, 5 p.m.

Students need to finalize plans for “The Meeting**” assignment in Week 4 by finding an upcoming meeting, speech, panel discussion or similar event to cover remotely. Students will discuss with me in advance the meeting they have selected and how they intend to cover it. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss virtual options with me.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Interviewing”
- **Punctuating quotes pdf**
- Highlights of Associated Press style
- Pro Tip Sheet #1

WEEK 4: TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Topic: Interviewing

Special guest speaker: Brandon Harden, leadership editor, Insider

Key points covered in class:

- Interviewing: What makes for a good interview/How-to, effective methods, technical aspects/What not to do
- Discussion of the liquor store robbery home assignment from Week 2

Home assignment: “The Meeting.” Attend a meeting, speech, press conference, panel discussion or similar event and write an approximately 400-word story. Students will discuss with me in advance the event they plan to cover. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss virtual options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, March 8, 5 p.m. (Reminder: This assignment counts for 10 percent of your course grade.)

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Covering meetings” and “Covering speeches” and “Covering Politics” [all in one pdf]

WEEK 5: TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Topic: Quotes, paraphrase/Story structure, con’t/

Grammar/style corner: Numbers

Key points covered in class:

- Quotes: Why quotes are important/Recognizing good ones and moving the story forward/How to use quotes effectively, when to paraphrase/”Kickers”/Red flags – accusations, inappropriate language, context, precision
- Analysis of the Associated Press story, “Thousands gather on Capitol steps for animal rights”

In-class writing drill with fact set #1: A murder

Mid-week assignment: Find three great quotes from recent news stories and write a sentence or two about why you chose each, why the quote stood out. Deadline: Friday, March 11, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Redo the in-class writing drill. Deadline: Tuesday, March 15, 5 p.m.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Finding and using sources” and “Quotations”

WEEK 6: TUESDAY, MARCH 15

Topic: Beat reporting

Special guest speaker: Rebecca San Juan, real estate beat reporter, The Miami Herald

Key points covered in class:

- What is a “beat”?/Examples of core beats, governmental, non-governmental/How a beat reporter does it/Types of stories/Words of caution
- Analysis of a Supreme Court story by Linda Greenhouse, past Pulitzer Prize winner for beat coverage

Mid-week assignment: Find three examples of well-reported and well-written business profiles and write a sentence or two about why you chose each, what you learned journalistically from each. Deadline: Friday, March 18, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Imagine you are an education beat reporter: Write an approximately 400-word story based on a transcript of a school board meeting that you covered. Deadline: Tuesday, March 22, 5 p.m.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Covering a beat”

**Students need to begin the process of finding an appropriate store/retailer/business for “The Business” assignment in Week 8 on how the establishment has been impacted by COVID-19. The business should be locally owned and relatively small; no large chains like Starbucks. The story must include interviews with a manager or employee, several customers and possibly a competitor. Students will discuss in advance with me the business they want to write about. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss virtual options with me.

WEEK 7: TUESDAY, MARCH 22

Topic: Open Meetings Law/Sourcing/Semester halfway point review

Grammar/style corner: Commas

Key points covered in class:

- Key aspects of New York’s Open Meetings Law
- Sources and sourcing: Where do journalists get information and how
- Review “best of” examples from “**The Meeting**” assignment from Week 4

In-class writing drill with fact set #2: Corporate news (imagine you’re a business beat reporter)

Mid-week assignment: redo the in-class writing drill. Deadline: Friday, March 25, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Rewrite the Associated Press “late package” story to use quotes and paraphrase properly. Deadline: Tuesday, March 29, 5 p.m.

Reading assignment:

- Pro Tip Sheet #2

Students should have found or be well on their way to finding an appropriate store/retailer/business for “The Business**” assignment in Week 8 on how the establishment has been impacted by COVID-19. The business should be locally owned and relatively small; no large chains like Starbucks. The story must include interviews with a manager or employee, several customers and possibly a competitor. Students will discuss in advance with me the business they want to write about. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me.

WEEK 8: TUESDAY, MARCH 29

Topic: Features/Business stories/Catch up, extra review time

Key points covered in class:

- Discuss examples of well-reported business profiles, including the Miami Herald's Carlos Frias piece: <https://www.miamiherald.com/miami-com/restaurants/article257144242.html>
- Lecture: What are features, how they differ from hard news stories/Various types, such as profiles, human interest, trends, explainers, utility/What is a "feature lede"/Use of description, quotes, anecdotes, detail and feature story structure

Home assignment: "The Business": Write an approximately 600-word feature story about a small, locally owned store/retail/business and how it has been impacted by COVID-19. Tell the reader something new and/or interesting about the business. In particular, readers want to know if the business is growing, stable or going downhill and why. And what are the challenges it faces? What changes, improvements, innovations are planned or have been forced by the pandemic? The story must include quotes from the owner/manager, employees, several customers and possibly a competitor. Students will discuss with me in advance the business they have selected. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, April 5, 5 p.m. (Reminder: This assignment counts for 20 percent of your grade.)

Reading:

- Harrower on "News writing tips"

WEEK 9: TUESDAY, APRIL 5

Topic: SEO, web analytics, metrics/Bot journalism

Key points covered in class:

- Review the Week 7 home assignment on the school board meeting
- Understanding reader behavior: Web analytics-metrics/Chartbeat demonstration/mobile
- Speaking internet journalism: UVs; PVs; CMS; SEO; UGC, UX, AMP, engagement time; loyalty; linking; producing a web story
- How bots write news stories, AI

Mid-week assignment: Find three recent profile stories and explain in a sentence or two what you found compelling/interesting about each. Pay particular attention to journalistic techniques used in your examples and note them in your comments to me. Deadline: Friday, April 8, 5 p.m.

Home assignment: Make choices in three journalistic ethics cases and explain your reasoning in two-three sentences for each. Deadline: Tuesday, April 12, 5 p.m.

**Students also need to start thinking about a subject for “The Profile” story in Week 10.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Journalism and social media”
- Pro Tip Sheet #3

WEEK 10: TUESDAY, APRIL 12

Topic: Tales from the newsroom/Profiles

Special guest speaker: Tom Topousis, former reporter and editor at The New York Post

Key points covered in class:

- Writing profiles: Examples, tips/Analysis of “New Orleans Finest”/Discuss student examples from Week 9 home assignment
- Discuss three ethics cases from Week 9

Home assignment: “The Profile.” Write an approximately 700-word profile of someone other than a family member or friend. Focus on one or two of the most significant events in your subject’s life to find an angle for your story. You should arrange to speak with your subject for at least 30-45 minutes. Also, you must interview at least two people who know your subject and quote them in your story. Students will discuss their profile subject with me in advance. If you are not comfortable doing this assignment in person, discuss options with me. Deadline: Tuesday, April 26, 5 p.m. (Reminder: This assignment counts for 20 percent of your grade.)

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Features”
- “10 ways journalists can use Twitter before, during and after a story”:
<http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/digital-strategies/146345/10-ways-journalists-can-use-twitter-before-during-and-after-reporting-a-story/>

SCHEDULING NOTE: The college is closed for spring recess from April 15-22. We skip a week and do not meet April 19. Our next class is Tuesday, April 26

WEEK 11: TUESDAY, APRIL 26

Topic: Business stories/Social media

Grammar/style corner: There/They're/Their

Key points covered in class:

- Present “best of” examples from “**The Business**” assignment from Week 8

In-class writing drill with fact set #3: A plane crash

Home assignment: Write an approximately 250-word story based on a fact set about a good Samaritan who returns a large amount of lost money. Deadline: Tuesday, May 3, 5 p.m.

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Understanding libel”

WEEK 12: TUESDAY, MAY 3

Topic: Data journalism/Features, con't/Social media

Special guest speaker: Anna Brand, senior editor, news projects/data journalism, NBCNews.com

Key points covered in class:

- Features: Analyze several stories with a focus on anecdotal ledes and nut grafs/Examples from The New York Times, the Washington Post and Newsweek
- How reporters can use Twitter and other social media platforms to promote their work, find stories and sources, and engage readers/Don't get fooled: The pitfalls of social media and why journalists should be cautious

Home assignment: Read the “Find the holes.” Essential information is missing from each of the stories provided to you (creating a large “hole” in the story). In one or two sentences for each, describe the single piece of vital information that has been left out and why it's needed. **Special early deadline: Monday, May 9, 5 p.m.**

Reading assignment:

- Harrower on “Taste and decency” and “The seven deadly sins”

WEEK 13: TUESDAY, MAY 10

Topic: Thinking like a journalist/Tabloids

Grammar/style corner: Whose, who's and who and whom

Key points covered in class:

- Lecture: Thinking like a journalist
- Discussion of “Find the holes”
- What is “tabloid journalism”?/New York Post “Doomed” cover
- “The Falling Man,” the “Struggling girl” and Ernie Kovacs crash photos

“The Newsroom”: Our Zoom class meeting will be transformed into a virtual newsroom to report on **fact set #4:** A company leaves town. We will “cover” this breaking news story under a tight deadline and critique student ledes in class.

Mid-week assignment: Redo the in-class writing assignment. Deadline: Tuesday, May 17, 5 p.m.

Weekly assignment: Read “Words of the Dying CHCH TV and Constable Garrett Styles” and explain in approximately 250 words whether you would have chosen to broadcast the constable’s last words and the reasons behind your decision. **Special early deadline: Monday, May 16, 5 p.m.**

WEEK 14: TUESDAY, MAY 17

Topic: Ethics, cont’d/Movie time/The End

Key points covered in class:

- Ethics, cont’d: CHCH TV’s decision revealed, discussion
- Movie hour, The Fourth Estate, Part II, “The Trump Bump”
- Zoom endgame: Course closing remarks/Open discussion for students/final housekeeping notes/Goodbyes, good lucks...