Loyola University Chicago

Fall 2023

Reporting Basics I

COMM 205

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

10:25 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Class location: SOC Room 003

Professor Patricia Lamberti

Office Hours:

By appointment – in person or virtual

Office Phone: (312) 915-6860

Email: plamberti@luc.edu

Course description

This course will introduce you to the skills required to work as a journalist, professional writer or content producer.

Perhaps you are not interested in the careers mentioned above. This class is still for you.

Remember that all jobs involve writing, research and interviewing. Regardless of where you work, you will likely:

- Write emails, memos or reports
- Post to social media about your industry or job
- Interview current and potential clients and potential new hires
- Ask questions to your coworkers about their lives and jobs
- Have questions asked of you during your initial job interviews and be prepared to ask questions about the job you are being considered for

In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of interviewing, researching, concise writing, grammar and brainstorming ideas.

We will also examine why journalists and writing matters in a world with ChatGPT and other AI tools.

We will discuss and think about the role news consumption plays in becoming a better citizen of the world.

This course is writing intensive.

Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Develop skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals working in journalism and professional writing.
- Develop skills in expressing ideas through writing and storytelling.
- Practice interviewing skills.
- Learn how to write concisely and with proper grammar.
- Learn more how to research, from using library databases to advanced Google options.
- Structure writing in an organized and engaging manner.
- Craft engaging opening paragraphs, a skill that transfers to all types of writing.

Course Materials

- All materials are online.
- Many of the readings can be found on the New York Times web site. You have free access to the New York Times web site through Loyola's Library Systems. Register [here](.).

Course Policies – IMPORTANT! READ THIS!

Deadlines

You will have deadlines in this class. You will have assignments that will need to be completed outside of class time. They are due on the dates listed below. .

If you turn in an assignment late, you will be penalized one full letter grade each day past the deadline. So on the first date past the due date, the best score you can earn (assuming the work is perfect) would be a B+. On next day, the best score possible is a C+. By the 5th day, your grade will be a 0.

Exceptions to deadlines

Things happen in life that make us miss deadlines. If you are truly sick or your Kia is stolen, I will understand.

If I notice a pattern of missed deadlines, and a pattern of excuses, I may ask for documentation or further clarification about the issue. It is up to my discretion to accept this documentation or not.

Plagiarism and AI Policy

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense that undermines the principles of intellectual honesty, originality, and fairness. With the increasing integration of AI technologies into various academic disciplines, it is essential to understand how plagiarism applies to AI-generated content. This policy outlines the guidelines and consequences related to plagiarism in the context of using AI tools and resources.

Guidelines:

1. Understanding Plagiarism: Students must understand that plagiarism involves using someone else's work, ideas, or content without proper attribution or permission, and presenting it as their own. This applies to both human-authored and AI-generated content.
2. AI-generated Content: a. When using AI tools to generate content, students should consider the output as authored content and give credit to the AI tool if required. b. Copying and pasting AI-generated content without proper citation is considered plagiarism, just as with human-authored content.
3. Attribution: a. Properly attribute the use of AI-generated content by indicating the AI tool or platform used, along with any relevant details such as version, settings, and parameters. b. If the AI-generated content is used as a direct quote, paraphrase, or summarized, proper citation following the established academic style (e.g., APA, MLA, AP) is required.
4. Originality and Creativity: While AI tools can assist in content creation, students are still expected to contribute original ideas and critical thinking to their work. Over-reliance on AI-generated content without personal input is discouraged.
5. Collaboration: Collaborative use of AI tools should adhere to the same standards of honesty and attribution. All contributors to a collaborative project must be acknowledged appropriately.
6. Educational Use: Students are encouraged to explore and experiment with AI technologies as part of their learning process. However, any content created using AI tools and submitted for assessment should still adhere to the principles of originality and proper attribution.

Consequences:

Cases of plagiarism, whether involving human-authored or AI-generated content, will be addressed according to the institution's established academic integrity policies. Consequences may include:

- Receiving a failing grade for the assignment or course.
- Academic probation or suspension.
- Disciplinary action as outlined by the institution.

<mark>**The AI policy above was generated using ChatGPT.**</mark>

This part is from me, a real human being who will be leading you in this course:

AI can make certain tasks faster. But it does not necessarily produce great results. Nor does it substitute for critical thinking, creativity, originality and human intelligence. That's why it's called artificial intelligence.

Would you want to eat artificial pizza? No. You'd want to eat real pizza.

Feed your brain real food.

Other Academic Dishonesty Policy Issues:

All projects you turn in for this class or present to the class must be original. You cannot submit materials used in another class. If you are caught doing so, you will fail the class.

Email policy

I will respond to all emails within 24 hours between 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Keep in mind that I may not check my email right before an assignment is due. Ask questions early and re-read the assignment sheet. Often, the answer is there.

Attendance policy

Regular attendance is expected. But if you are sick, or have another pressing issue, just email me beforehand and let me know.

Regular attendance, and consistent communication about your reasons for not attending class in person, play a role in the participation and professionalism portion of your grade.

That said, life throws roadblocks in our paths at times. If you are truly sick or suspect you are ill (with COVID-19 or any other illness), just email me. Please do not come to class if you suspect you are sick.

If you are not attending class just because you aren't in the mood, ask yourself who is really losing. On our first day, we will [examine how much each class costs you.](#)

Participation policy:

You can't participate in-class activities, or discussions, if you are not in class.

You are also not participating if you are multi-tasking while you are in the classroom.

The golden rules?

Don't come to class if you are sick or under duress.

Let me know beforehand if you have a reason to use your laptop or phone, but remember that I am a professional too. I don't need to know every detail about your illness or problems.

If you don't attend class regularly, or explain why you are missing class so often, I cannot give you full credit for participation.

Participating doesn't mean talking all the time. While talking matters, so does active listening.

Doing the in-class activities (which often includes writing and small group discussion) is part of your participation grade.

The grading scale for participation is as follows:

A range: Frequent and meaningful contributions to class discussions that show insight and understanding of material.

B range: Frequent and meaningful contribution to class discussion. Reasonable effort during all in-class activities. Demonstrates respects for others by listening, and avoiding multitasking.

C range: Occasional participation to class discussion. Average effort put into class discussions and activities.

D range: Only participates nudged to do so. Poor demonstration of respect for others.

F range: No class participation. Little respect for others demonstrated.

Professionalism policy:

If you don't attend class regularly, email me before missing class, or explain why you are missing class so often (and offer some proof if requested), you are not behaving professionally. I cannot give you full credit for the professionalism portion of your grade if you don't attend class regularly, explain your absences, etc.

Behaving professionally also means that you should arrive on time.

You should be prepared for class and ready to participate in discussions and in-class exercises.

You should listen to others in the room, respect opinions that may differ from your own and focus on the conversation/project at hand.

Although you are used to multitasking in your private lives (I admit that I often check my phone while watching TV), many people (myself included) consider it inappropriate to multitask in a professional setting, like the classroom or a workplace.

I pay close attention to who is checking their phones, who is wearing earbuds, who is checking email or social media, and who is browsing the internet for purposes other than what we're working on in class.

I personally find multitasking rude. But even more importantly, research shows that multitasking has a serious, negative effect on cognitive functioning. I will ask you to analyze this article about multitasking as one of our first in-class exercises. But feel free to read it now.

The grading scale for professionalism is as follows:

A range: Minimal absences and/or understanding of attendance policy. On time. Focused on discussion and activities. No multitasking.

B range: Demonstrates respects for others by listening, and avoiding multitasking. Some absences and/or understanding of attendance policy. Mostly focused on discussion and activities. Minimal multitasking.

C range: Average focus and noticeable multitasking.

D range: Only professional when nudged to do so. Poor demonstration of respect for others. Apparent multitasking.

F range: Little to no demonstration of professionalism.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral (LUC.edu/csaa) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: LUC.edu/dos or LUC.edu/csaa.

Their phone number is 773-508-8840. The email is deanofstudents@luc.edu.

Diversity and Inclusion Policy

In this class, we will celebrate and promote a safe and healthy community life for people of all races, religions, national origins, socio-economic classes, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, physical and learning abilities, and ages by modeling behavior and articulating expectations that we live and work together in one community, bound together by our commitment to learning and respect for one another.

If you feel that you or another student are not in a safe environment, please contact me. If you feel that I have contributed to the unsafe environment, please know that I am always open to

learning more. But if you don't feel comfortable speaking with me, please contact Associate Dean John Slania at jslania@luc.edu.

Pronoun Policy

Addressing one another at all times by using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.

If you wish, please share your gender pronouns with me and the class. If you do not wish to be called by the name that appears on the class roster or attendance sheet, please let me know. My goal is to create an affirming environment for all students with regard to their names and gender pronouns.

Notice of Reporting Obligations for Responsible Campus Partners

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Campus Partner ("RCP") under Loyola's [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation](#) (located at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as an RCP I am required to report certain disclosures of sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and/or domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the University's [Title IX](#) Coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation under Illinois law to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect (https://www.luc.edu/hr/legal-notices/mandatedreportingofchildabuseandneglect/).

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform students who have experienced sexual/gender-based violence of available resources and support. Such a report will not generate a report to law enforcement (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Furthermore, the University's resources and support are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take additional action to ensure the safety of the University community. If you have any questions about this policy, you may contact the [Office for Equity & Compliance](#) at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call [The Line](#) at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with additional resources as needed. More information can be found at luc.edu/coalition or luc.edu/wellness.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equitable access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu.

Grading policy

In five years, you won't remember what grade you earned in this class. At best, grades motivate you to learn as much as you can.

In the worst-case scenario, grades make you feel bad about yourself, question your life goals and hate school.

When thinking about grades, keep a few things in mind.

Grades don't always indicate how much you're getting out of a class, or school overall.

When you were in elementary school and high school, teachers and parents used grades to help keep you on task and unearth your talents.

But you are now an adult. It is your responsibility to learn as much as you can, keep yourself on task and uncover your passions. Grades may help you do this, but grades aren't your only guide on this road.

As an adult, you need to push yourself to learn – without the reward or punishment of a grade.

Getting As on assignments shouldn't be a reason to tell yourself, "I am a master at this. I don't need to try anymore. I'm checking out." You're not a master yet. An A means you're exceptional for a student in college. You can always improve.

Likewise, getting Cs shouldn't be a reason to give up. In fact, a C makes sense. That's an average grade, and you just started doing this.

I take a lot of time to make my grading policy transparent. The rubric for major assignments is listed below.

Your first assignment is worth less than latter ones. After all, as you learn, you should get better.

You will receive credit or not credit for your in-class exercises and Friday assignments. If you do them, you'll get full credit for them. If you don't do them, you won't get credit.

Final grade breakdown:

All assignments will be posted under "assignments" on Sakai.

Participation and professionalism: 100 points

In class exercises:210 points

Assignment one: 100 points

Assignment two: 150 points

Assignment three: 200

Final: 250 points

Individual Assignment Grade Scale:

A: 100-94

A-: 93-90

B+: 89-88

B: 87-83

B-: 82-80

C+ 79-78

C: 77-73

C-: 72-70

D+: 69-68

D: 67-63

D-: 62-60

F: 59-0

Total Semester Grade Point Scale:

A: 1000-940

A-: 939-900

B+: 899-880

B: 879-830

B-: 829-800

C+ 799-780

C: 779-730

C-: 729-700

D+: 699-680

D: 679-630

D-: 629-600

F: 599-0

Grading Rubric for major assignments and final:

A: Publishable work with a maximum of one spelling, grammatical, or punctuation error and the proper information and sources written in a lively, well-organized manner.

B: Minimal spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Minimal missing information and sources; minimal problems with the lead and organization.

C: Notable number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Noticeable missing information and sources; problems with the lead and organization.

D: Significant number of spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Significant missing information and sources; Significant problems with the lead and organization.

F: Misspelling of proper names. Other major spelling, grammatical, punctuation and/or AP Style errors. Almost total lack of information and sources; Severe problems with the lead and organization.

Fieldwork considerations should COVID cases rise:

Due to COVID-19, you still need to be cautious when it comes to field work (i.e., interviewing people in person). As the COVID-19 pandemic becomes endemic, a persistent part of daily life that society has learned to live with, we will continue to be attentive to the public health environment with a heightened sense of awareness.

To make people comfortable, you should always carry a mask with you to use for close contact when interviewing people. Wearing a mask during interviews, even outdoors, may be encouraged or prudent, depending on each situation.

At the minimum, you must conduct all interviews in a thoughtful and reasonable fashion with the intent of meeting deadlines while respecting the people you are working with.

Schedule