Reporting 270
Syllabus
Instructor: Dr. Sarah Keller
LA 609
Office Hours 11-2 T-Th
406-896-5824
skeller@msubillings.edu

The Book: Writing and Reporting News 6th 7th or 8th Edition
By Carole Rich (Required)

Style Guide: You should have access to a media writers style guide.
When Words Collide, 7th Edition (If you have the 5th Edition Writing and Reporting News only)
By Lauren Kessler and Duncan McDonald (Recommended)

All stories must be turned in to the drop box as a word document or rich text with your name in the title of the document.

Course Policies
- Academic Dishonesty of any sort will result in a significant grade reduction for the course. If a student commits academic dishonesty twice, this will result in a grade of F for the course. Please consult the Student Handbook pp. 136-7 for the University’s policies on academic misconduct.

- I expect everyone to remain respectful of your fellow classmates, regardless of differences of opinion that may arise. I’d like the discussion area to remain a place where people are comfortable asking for feedback and sharing their respective points of view—so please communicate mindfully.

Academic Support:
- If you have a disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please make an appointment with me during my office hours. Validation from Disability Support Services (DSS) authorizing your accommodations will be needed. The DSS office is located in the Academic Support Center. Their phone number is (406) 657-2283.

Catalog Description: JRNL 270 Reporting (formerly COMT 222 Media Writing)
3 cr. (F, Sp) Introduces students to fundamentals of newsgathering in print and broadcast journalism. The course covers basic skills necessary for newsgathering such as reporting techniques, story composition, and interviewing methods.

Course Outcomes
- Demonstrate sound news judgment;
- Explain story and the best way to deliver it;
- Write basic news stories with accuracy, clarity, and conciseness;
- Conduct interviews;
- Explain and use common story formats for print, broadcast and online news;
- Gather and edit audio for basic radio and Internet stories;
- Explain the rich diversity of your audience and the need to consider a variety of views and backgrounds;
- Explain basic legal and ethical principles of journalism.

GRADING POLICIES
Please do not ask me or have anyone else ask me to change a semester grade in order to protect your GPA, major-requirement status, scholarship, job, or athletic-team status. I cannot and will not change a semester grade. It is your job to earn your grade throughout the term. If you are having difficulty in the class, please talk to me as soon as possible so that we can work together on overcoming obstacles to your success.

Grades cannot be assigned to recognize how hard or long a student has worked on a project. I cannot measure time, effort, or energy expended, but only the visible outcome of your endeavors: the finished product. Grades are based on announced standards, not comparisons to other students’ work or other professors’ grading systems.

Students have the right and responsibility to ask for clarification of grading standards at any reasonable time, although waiting to do so until the last week of class is generally not a good idea.

If you want to know your grade, it’s simple: Look at D2L. Grades will not be e-mailed to you.

**GRADING SCALE**

Here is the scale:
- 95 to 100 percent = A
- 90-94 percent = A-
- 85 to 89 percent = B
- 80 to 84 percent = B-
- 75 to 79 percent = C
- 70 to 74 percent = C-
- 65 to 69 percent = D
- 60 to 64 percent = D-
- Below 60 percent = F

**Schedule and assignment due dates**

1. Unit one-Understanding News

2. Unit two-The Basic Story

   Writing Assignment: Grace Ford Story- Due: February 3
   (10 points)

3. Unit three-Ideas

   Writing Assignment: Ideas Story- Due: February 17
   (20 points)

4. Unit four- Criticism and Opinion

   Writing Assignment: Opinion Story-Due: March 3
   (20 points)
5. Unit five-Controversy

6. Unit six-Controversy Story (Labeled Issues in the Assignments and Grade Book.)
Writing assignment: Controversy Story-Due: March 24
(20 points)

7. Unit seven-Public Relations
Writing Assignment: News Release-Due: April 7
(20 points)

8. Unit eight-Travel

9. Unit nine- More Travel
Writing Assignment: Travel Story-Due: April 21
(20 points)

10. Unit ten-The Beat

11. Unit eleven-Memorable Journalism

12. Unit twelve-The final is near
Writing Assignment: The Final- Due: May 2
40 points)

13. Unit thirteen-The Final

14. Unit fourteen-The End