Comm. 2687, Writing for the Media
Prof. Marion Fernandez-Cueto
Phone: 832.641.5372
Email: maendem@stthom.edu
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday a.m. by appointment only, at 1311 Branard, Guadalupe House

Course description: Welcome to Writing for the Media! This course will introduce you to the basic skills needed for a career in mass communication. No matter which field of communication you enter, good writing must lie at the heart of your craft. During this semester, we will review standard conventions of the English language, including grammar, punctuation, spelling, diction and paragraph construction, to help you construct simple and understandable messages. We will discuss the nature of news, both print and broadcast, and the difference between news writing and public relations. Finally, the course will cover research and interview principles and techniques, and outline the basic resume and networking skills needed to land an internship or job in the media.

Texts:

Grading structure:
- News and Grammar Quizzes: 15%
- Writing/research assignments: 25%
- Mid-term: 25%
- Final: 25%
- Class participation/attendance: 10%

Your attendance is vital. **More than three absences**, as well as **chronic lateness**, will affect your grade negatively and may cause you to fail the class. Please don’t hesitate to seek my assistance outside class if needed. If you have a documented disability that may affect your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center (713-525-2169).

Various writing and research exercises will be assigned almost weekly. Work must be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and double-spaced. **Late work** will not be accepted unless I have given you prior permission.

A note on plagiarism: I expect the highest level of academic honesty. Please remember that not citing your sources when required, or improperly paraphrasing someone else’s work (both orally and in writing), constitutes plagiarism and may cause you to fail the class. Fabricating news stories, news tips, or print “bloopers” for class assignments will also be punished. Additionally, I will file a report with the committee for academic dishonesty, which may cause you to be dismissed from the University.
Course breakdown:

1/19  Introduction, Syllabus
1/24  Introduction and baseline grammar “test”
1/26  News v. PR v. propaganda
1/31  Composition basics
2/2   Composition basics, con’t.
2/7   Grammar basics & exercises
2/9   Grammar, con’t.
2/14  Grammar, con’t.
2/16  Common spelling mistakes, AP style intro.
2/21  Common vocabulary and pronunciation mistakes
2/23  Word usage/diction
2/28  TBA
3/2   TBA & review for mid-term
3/7   Mid-term
3/9   Research and Interview Skills
3/14  SPRING BREAK!
3/16  SPRING BREAK!
3/21  Newswriting
3/23  Newswriting
3/28  Public Relations
3/30  Public Relations
4/4   Guest speaker
4/6   Broadcast
4/11  Social Media
4/13  Guest speaker
4/18  TBA
4/20  Resume and cover letter skills
4/25  Landing a media job/internship
4/27  TBA
5/2   TBA
5/4   Review for final

Lecture topics may change as needed. Final exam: TBA