



REPORTING & WRITING Syllabus | Fall 2017

LAU 113/111
MW 9-9:50am
Lab F 8-9:50am

Dr. Brian Carroll

I. Introduction

COM 250 Course Description: Basic reporting and writing for multiple media platforms. Includes an introduction to journalism ethics. Laboratory included.

Course Purpose & Objectives: To introduce students to the fundamentals of news reporting, journalistic writing, basic news judgment and digital publishing. To increase students' knowledge of local, national and international news and events. To learn basic journalistic skills, such as information gathering, interviewing, source development, ethics and law.

II. Stuff you need to know

Instructor: Dr. Brian Carroll

Physical address: Laughlin 100

Office phone: 706.368.6944 (anytime)

Email: bc@berry.edu | Twitter: @tarheelblue

Homepage: <http://www.cubanxgiants.com>

Blog: <http://wanderingrocks.wordpress.com>

Office hours: MWF 2-4pm; Tue 1-5pm are official, but stop by anytime

Course information, including calendar: cubanxgiants.com/berry/250

III. What you will need (required)

- *Writing & Editing for Digital Media*, 3rd edition, by Brian Carroll
- *Associated Press Stylebook*, most recent edition
- Subscription to a credible source of news (we'll discuss in class)

IV. What you may want (not required)

- Tim Harrower, *Inside Reporting*
- George T. Arnold, *Media Writer's Handbook: A Guide to Common Writing and Editing Problems*
- Lauren Kessler and Duncan McDonald, *When Words Collide: A Journalist's Guide to Grammar and Style*
- Andrea Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*
- William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*

V. Class format

This course is hands-on. In the classroom and in the lab we will attempt to simulate a newsroom environment. Students will gather information, check facts, develop sources, use news judgment and write on deadline. We will have lots of small assignments, such as quizzes, in-class exercises and activities, and practice with elements of story development and publishing. In terms of content, we will generally follow the organization of the textbook, *Writing & Editing for Digital Media*, 3rd edition.

VI. Policies

Attendance: Be here every day on time, just as you would for a job, surgery or even a haircut. Everyone gets one unexcused absence or late arrival, maybe two, with no questions asked. Stuff happens. After that, unexcused and/or unexplained absences (and/or lateness) will result in point deductions from the "professionalism and participation" portion of your grade. What is excused is at the instructor's discretion, so you are best served by discussing situations and extraordinary circumstances prior to class whenever possible. Chronic tardiness and/or absenteeism will result in whole letter grade deductions for the course, with "chronic" defined as five or more (latenesses and/or absences). If a student misses six or more class and/or lab sessions, that student might be administratively dropped from the course. An absence for medical reasons with documentation does not count toward this threshold.

Professionalism in the classroom: The instructor needs your attention and your respect, as do your peers. And this instructor is easily distracted. So, no unauthorized device use, therefore, including Apple watches for texts. Put your phones away, and make sure they are silent. Do homework for other classes somewhere else. If your phone goes off on class, or if you are seen texting or reading texts, etc., you will be treated as absent. It's a respect thing.

Preparation: Complete the assignments, do the readings and be ready to tackle the activities of the day. Be ready to discuss, even to debate, our course topics for the day. This means coming to class having already mentally prepared to participate. It's a state of mind and an attitude toward learning.

Academic integrity: Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life at Berry, academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure on the assignment in question. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses, and aiding and abetting. Students who are sanctioned for violating the academic integrity policy forfeit the right to withdraw from the class with a grade of "W."

VII. How you will be graded

Dailies (writing assignments, quizzes)	40%
Midterm	20%
Collaborative project I	15%
Collaborative project II	15%
Professionalism	10%
TOTAL	100%

To compute your final grade, add up your point totals, apply the appropriate percentages, then refer to the Berry College Communication Department suggested grading system, summarized here:

A = 93-100	A- = 90-92	B+ = 88-89	B = 83-87
B- = 80-82	C+ = 78-79	C = 73-77	C- = 70-72
D = 60-69	F = 59 and below		

Definitions of the grades can be found in the Berry College Catalog. “A” students will demonstrate an outstanding mastery of course material and will perform **far above** that required for credit in the course and **far above** that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student performance that is relatively unusual in the course and that **demonstrates mastery**.

VIII. Viking Honor Code

It is not just policy, it is foundational to the academic environment we enjoy and in which scholarship thrives. It is in force in this classroom and during all lab sessions. For the complete Viking Code, please consult the student handbook. In short, each student is “expected to recognize constituted authority, to abide by the ordinary rules of good conduct, to be truthful, to respect the rights of others.” The College’s mission, in part, commits to a community of integrity and justice. During an era when ethics are sometimes suspect, there seems no higher goal toward which students ought to strive than that of personal honor.

IX. Deadlines

When an in-class/in-lab assignment is due, it is due. This reflects the reality of many communication professions and work environments. Late in-class assignments will not be accepted. Turn in whatever has been done by deadline. For out-of-class assignments, late work can be submitted but it will be penalized. The grace period extends to two class meeting dates past the due date.

Format for all assignments: Double line space, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins for all work. The instructor has a lot of grading; uniformity helps ease the pain.

Writing Center: For any assignment at any time in the semester, feel free to drop by Berry’s Writing Center for help. Their mentors might not know journalistic writing, but they can help you with grammar, syntax, orthography and the like. And it’s not a “you have a problem” thing; it’s just smart to get good, free help with our teaching and learning.

X. Students with special needs

If you have special needs of any kind, including learning disabilities and/or medications, please let me know. Let us discuss it and work together to overcome. In addition, *“students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodation in this course are encouraged to contact the Academic Support Center in Memorial Library as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.”* – Academic Support Center.

Finally, I believe we are here for a good time, not a long time, so let’s have some fun.