

J335: Principles and Practices of Reporting, 4 credits

Fall 2022, Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00am-1:00pm
Vilas Hall 2111

Course Schedule

Michael W. Wagner, Ph.D.

Professor
5164 Vilas Hall

Office Hours for Prof. Wagner

Wednesday 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Rathskeller Hours for Prof. Wagner

Monday 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.
Also by appointment

mwagner8@wisc.edu; @prowag  @prowag.uw 
608-263-3392 (office)

TA: Tahereh Rahimi

5156 Vilas Hall

trahimi@wisc.edu

Office Hours for Tahereh

Tuesday 3:30-4:30 p.m. in person or Zoom:

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/7171156866?pwd=UmtLVWlrN3NNODIYSVBkVmNnMnd5dz09#success>

Congratulations on making it through J202 and welcome to J335! This is an intensive reporting class that provides strong foundations for reporting and writing across topics within multiple platforms.

In my section of J335, you will learn:

- How to identify what is newsworthy
- How to thoroughly and accurately report a story
- How to clearly and accurately write a story
- How to present different kinds of stories across multiple platforms
- How to pitch stories and respond to editorial feedback for the purposes of publishing
- How to write multiple stories at once.

J335 is demanding. In addition to our regular class meetings, in-class exercises, and readings, you will do plenty of outside reporting and a voracious amount of reading of contemporary news coverage at the local and national levels.

It is important to note that separate sections of J335 do different things. That's ok. "Principles and Practices of Reporting" is a broad topic and there are lots of ways to attack it. Focus on what you are asked to do in this section. In my section, we will focus our attention on a variety of topics, including: neighborhood reporting, budget reporting, statehouse/political reporting, local news, data visualization, audio feature storytelling, broadcast storytelling, feature writing, writing on deadlines, and enterprising stories.

J335 students in this section are required to pitch at least two of their assigned stories to *Madison Commons* for publication. *Madison Commons'* editor will visit on the first day of the semester to describe how the process will work. This is a great chance to get some clips and additional editorial feedback.

Grades

AP Quizzes: 5%

In-Class Writing/Ledes & Nut Grafts: 10%

Professionalism: (Participation, Preparedness) 5%

Neighborhood Observation: 5%

Neighborhood Story: 5%

Budget Story: 5%

Budget Visualization: 5%

Neighborhood Feature: 5%

Local Gov't Story: 5%

Election Team Story: 5%

Press Conference: 10% November 1st, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Audio Story: 5%

Open Feature: 10%

Final Project: 20% (10% group grade and 10% individual grade)

Bonus: Each class story published in *Madison Commons* raises your final grade 0.5%

Grades are calculated as follows:

| | | |
|----|--------|--|
| A | 93-100 | publishable in current form with few revisions |
| AB | 88-92 | close to publishable with minimal work |
| B | 80-87 | strong story, needs considerable rewriting to be publishable |
| BC | 75-79 | mix of strengths and flaws, needs work |
| C | 67-74 | major flaws, needs major work |
| D | 59-66 | critically damaging flaws, needs overhaul |
| F | 0-58 | work not done |

Late Work is accepted at a penalty of 15 points per 24 hours the assignment is late.

A note on grading: Your TA, Tahereh, and I will share the grading. So, for most assignments, I will grade half of the class' stories and Tahereh will grade the other half. For some smaller assignments, such as regular lede writing when guests visit class, one of us is more likely to grade everything. The idea is that you will get used to editorial feedback from multiple sources, sources that might not always agree about what is important. This is good practice for the professional world.

Attendance

Treat J335 as you would treat a job in a professional newsroom. Deadlines are real. You must show up on time to every class period. You must be prepared. You must have your work done. You are under no obligation to wait until the last minute to complete an assignment. If something goes wrong, technology-wise, 15 minutes before a story is due, that is a shame. If your source wouldn't get back to you, find another one.

That said, we are not in an actual newsroom and you are not being paid to be here. That is to say, of course, life happens to all of us and there may be a good reason that you have to miss class on occasion (personal travel is not a good reason). If you have to miss class, get ahold of me before class. You have at least six ways to get ahold of me (email, Twitter, IG, Facebook, phone,

office). Do so before class and we can always work something out. Doing so after class is a roll of the dice.

Diversity & Inclusion

We are our own little community in J335; you belong here. It is good that you are here and that we can all learn from each other. In the parlance of our university, “Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

Plagiarism and Fabrication

Integrity is very important. Please take note of the university’s policy on academic misconduct: <http://students.wisc.edu/doso/acadintegrity.html>. If you have questions about how to properly cite a source, the quality of a particular source, and the like, I will help you with gusto and vigor.

You should all know what plagiarism is — using someone else’s work in your own stories. This includes cutting and pasting material that was written by others, as well as patch writing, when you change a word or two but keep an original source’s general work.

Fabrication is making up a source, pretending a source is something that he or she isn’t, or creating information that you report as true. Your work should only include your own accurate writing, paraphrased material or direct quotes from sources. Again, if you have questions about plagiarism and fabrication, or wonder whether what you’re doing is wrong, please ask. You will not be punished for asking, but you will be disciplined for plagiarism.

Like many instructors in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, I reserve the right to use Turnitin to maintain academic integrity. This means your work may be uploaded to turnitin.com to be compared with material submitted by other students, as well as information from websites, publications and other sources. If we review your assignment this way, we will receive a report with a “similarity score” and details about possible matches between the assignment and other sources. After reviewing that report, I — not the software — will evaluate and decide whether or not there has been plagiarism or other academic misconduct. Your assignments will be kept in the global Turnitin database, but I am the only one who is permitted to view your assignment there.

If I determine there has been academic misconduct, punishment will include an “F” for the assignment. Depending upon my opinion of the severity of the infraction, punishment may also include an “F” for the course. There will be a lengthy essay, for no credit, that you will write on the dangers and evils of plagiarism. I will report all instances of academic misconduct to the Dean of Students. Do not try me.

Sourcing

There are no anonymous or confidential sources allowed in J335.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

I am delighted to accommodate your needs to complete your work. In the parlance of our university, “The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.”

<http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php>