

**CST 180: Introduction to Journalism, Spring 2009, 3 credits**  
***Cedar Crest College, Miller 20, Tues./Thurs. 9:30-10:45am***

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**Required Texts:** *Always bring your textbook to class.*

- ◆ Inside Reporting: A practical guide to the craft of journalism” by Tim Harrower

**Additional Texts and Supplies that may be helpful for class:**

- ◆ *Associated Press Stylebook*, latest edition
- ◆ *The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White

**Important Websites and Additional suggested materials for class:**

- ◆ *Morning Call* web site [www.mcall.com](http://www.mcall.com)
- ◆ *New York Times* web site [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- ◆ A Portfolio Binder (see syllabus for description)
- ◆ A reporter’s notebook and tape recorder
- ◆ A thumb drive for saving in-class assignments

Journalists must keep up with the news. Reading local and national newspapers is a crucial component of every reporter’s job. As students strive to develop their media writing skills, they must be informed about local, state, national and international events. Students should keep up with major local, national and international news (via newspaper, television, radio or web sites).

**Course Description:**

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of journalism. Students analyze, critique and write stories for print journalism. Contemporary issues in journalism are discussed and debated. Students also learn techniques of newsgathering within a socially responsible and ethical framework.

**Course Objectives and Outcomes:**

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Organize and structure news stories and other journalistic pieces coherently and effectively
2. Acquire information competently and responsibly
3. Present information with clarity, objectivity, accuracy, and thoroughness
4. Present opinions with clarity and substantiation
5. Quote, paraphrase, and summarize accurately and appropriately
6. Present copy in accordance with current style criteria
7. Demonstrate understanding of the principles relating to libel and journalistic ethics

In this course, students will develop the basic skills needed to become effective writers in communications-oriented professions.

**Course Format:**

This course will employ a combination of lectures, discussions and newsroom simulation.

**Student Assessment/Evaluation:**

Students will write 4 news articles, complete in-class newsroom simulation assignments, and present oral reports on news coverage. Grades will be based on the timely and thorough completion of assignments — the quality of writing, the depth of research and interviewing, and adherence to deadlines. The following list of assignments will be discussed in more detail in class:

### **Story #1 Speech coverage (300-350 words)**

Plan to attend a speech either on campus or off where you can take notes and write a “summary” of the event. Your story should be interesting and draw from the highlights of the event. It is also important that you get quotes from the speaker and from those in attendance. The story is short, so it is important that you follow guidelines we discuss in class in order to make the story clear, concise and interesting. It is important to use quotes in this story as well as all necessary attributions.

### **Story #2 - Feature story on a campus event or local event (450-500 words)**

This story will feature a local event that would be of interest to the community. It will be important to describe the event to the readers as vividly as possible and to get quotes from those in attendance or others that may be relevant to the story. Again, this is a short story so it is important to be concise and interesting. As with all stories, be sure that your lead grabs the reader and makes them want to continue reading.

### **Story #3 Review of local arts event (i.e. local artist’s show, opening, play etc.) (600-650 words)**

This story should summarize a local arts event. The topic for your story can be a local theater’s presentation of Hamlet, or it can be about a local festival or any other topic that would be appropriate and interesting. This story should incorporate quotes and attributions. Make the story interesting and really grasp the feeling of the event and portray that to the reader.

### **Final Story- To be determined by student (750-800 words)**

This story has no specific topic, but the topic must be discussed and approved with the instructor. Please begin to think about this story and all stories as soon as possible. Make sure you have the resources to write a story BEFORE you begin the story. Feel free to ask questions at any time about any story topics or ideas. We will discuss all story ideas in class, but it is also important that you talk with me to discuss story topics. Do not procrastinate in picking topics for your story.

### **Why are the writing assignments rather vague when discussing the topic of the story?**

Because of the varying schedules of the class members, it is important that there be some flexibility in the topics for each story. It would be easy to assign students to on-campus events, but it would not be easy for all students to attend those events. The last page of this syllabus gives the student a number of ideas for story topics and students are also encouraged to talk to the instructor to help with story ideas.

News articles will be graded as follows:

A—an exceptional article that is accurate, demonstrates creativity, and superior research and writing skills and could be published without editing.

B—an engaging article that is accurate, demonstrates good research and writing skills and could be published with little or no editing.

C—an average article that is accurate, researched and could be published with some editing

D—an article that is inaccurate and/or requires more research and significant editing.

F—an article that is inaccurate, insufficiently researched and in need of major revision.

### **Journalism Movie Critique**

Students should pick a feature length film about journalism and/or journalists and look at the way that the craft or the people practicing it are presented. Papers should be thoughtful and include a very brief synopsis but should focus primarily on the critique. To be discussed further in class.

### **News Presentation**

Students will be asked to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation of current events. The events should be local, national and international in scope. Presentations should take the format of a broadcast in that they are somewhat informal and can cover a lot of material in a short amount of time. **Students should strive to cover diverse topics in an objective manner.** The presentations will constitute 10% of your final grade. We will assign presentation dates during the first week of class.

### **In-class newsroom assignments/workbook assignments**

These assignments will be given in-class and you will have a certain amount of time to complete the assignment and turn it in to the instructor. Other tasks may be assigned for homework.

**PLEASE NOTE:** There are no make-ups for news presentations or in class assignments. There are no exceptions to this rule. Rationale: These assignments are designed to give students the experience of deadline pressure.

### **Health and Wellness Conference**

Our class will have the opportunity to work together to complete a project/presentation/creative venture that we will present on Tuesday, April 28 to the attendees of the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Health and Wellness Conference. The format, requirements and so on will be determined after we decide on a topic. The conference is from 10am-2pm on the above date so please make yourself as available as possible on that day.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Due</b>
Speech Story (300 words)	5 percent	50	Tues. Feb. 10
Campus or Local Event (450 words)	10 percent	100	Thurs. Feb 26
Local Arts Story (600 words)	15 percent	150	Thurs. Apr 2
Final Story (750 words)	20 percent	200	Tues. May 5
Journalism Movie Critique	5 percent	50	Thurs. March 5
Student news presentation	10 percent	100	TBD
In-class assignments and take homes	15 percent	150	Throughout semester
Health and Wellness Conference	10 percent	100	Tues. April 28
Participation	10 percent	100	Throughout semester

The following is the **grading scale** for this course:

A	= 100-93	C	= 76.9-74
A-	= 92.9-90	C-	= 73.9-70
B+	= 89.9-87	D+	= 69.9-67
B	= 86.9-84	D	= 66.9-64
B-	= 83.9-80	D-	= 63.9-60
C+	= 79.9-77	F	= 59.9 and below

### **Participation/Attendance:**

Participation is mandatory. Participation means taking an active role in class discussions and projects and possibly providing constructive criticism of your classmates' work. In-class assignments and discussions are **central** to this course. Students will earn up to 100 points for participation. Obviously you can't participate if you do not attend class. *There will be no make-ups for missed assignments. Extended absences due to illness or a family emergency will be excused only with notification from the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.* I realize that we all have busy lives outside of school but it is important to be present at almost every class session. Ten points will be deducted from students participation grade if she is absent and 5 points if she is late. A student may also add up to 10 points if she has actively participated in class throughout the semester

### **Deadlines:**

Deadlines are part of journalism! Part of learning about the media is learning how to cope with deadline pressure. Work handed in after the deadline without prior approval will be marked down 10 percent for each day that it is late. The best way to make a deadline is to finish work before it is due. Reporting takes time—don't procrastinate.

**Faculty statement on disruptive behavior (C. Cameron, author – edited from original version):**

Generally, disruptive behavior in the classroom is any behavior that interferes with the process of learning. At Cedar Crest College, it is the right of every student and faculty member to engage in a classroom experience free from disruptive behavior.

What is disruptive to one person might not be disruptive to another, so the final authority on disruptive behavior is the faculty member. Faculty members have the authority to address disruptive behavior in the manner they see fit under the guidelines set forth in the College Catalog.

Disruptive behavior may be viewed on a continuum ranging from the isolated incidents of mildly annoying or irritating behavior to more clearly disruptive, dangerous, and/or violent behavior.

Examples of disruptive behavior may include the following:

- Persistent speaking without permission
- Use of electronic devices, cell phones, or pagers during class
- Threats or harassment of any kind
- Working on homework for other classes
- Inappropriate personal disclosures during class (sharing too much information)
- Sleeping in class
- Entering class late or leaving early (without permission)
- Eating/drinking in class without permission
- Arguing with faculty and other students

Additionally, classroom participants should note that basic human courtesy is an expectation when interacting with faculty members, staff, and other students.

**Plagiarism:**

Deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is a serious academic and professional offense and a violation of the spirit of the Cedar Crest Honor Code philosophy. Depending on the severity of the offense, penalties for plagiarism will range from the assignment of an “F” for the article or work, to the assignment of an “F” for the course. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty. Under certain circumstances, acts of plagiarism may result in suspension or expulsion from the College.

**Learning Disabilities:**

Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Advising Center.

**In-class critiques:**

On a day that a story is due (lead and/or draft), students are asked to bring several copies of a complete draft of their story to class. When students arrive in class, they will read other student’s papers as well as get and incorporate feedback into their own story. At the end of class, the stories will be due. The final story should then be printed and handed in. This means that you must bring your drive to class so that you can make necessary changes. Your grade WILL benefit from class critique. If you miss class the day a story is due, you must still get the story to me by 10:45am on that day. Again, deadlines are very important.

**EXTRA CREDIT** – Working on a story in class and then having a well-written timely article accepted for publication in *The Crestiad* or another other college or professional paper may count for extra credit in this course. If you are a *Crestiad* staffer there is no double dipping, in other words you may not submit a story for this course and *The Crestiad*.

## Schedule Of Readings and Assignments

*(Professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus.)*

Tues. Jan 20 – Course Intro

- ✓ Overview of Course & Grading Policy
- ✓ In-class Review of Pertinent Web Sites
- ✓ What is Journalism? What makes news?

Thursday Jan 22 –

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 1: The story of Journalism & Discuss Chapter 2: How newsrooms work
- ✓ Sign up for news presentations
- ✓ Discuss Story 1
- ✓ Discuss next week's Guest Speaker – research speaker before class

Tuesday Jan 27 – No class – Professor at Moravian College Conference

Thursday Jan 29 - Guest Speaker - Judi Hampton, Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow

- ✓ “How to write and talk about diversity with ease”

Tuesday Feb 3

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 3: Newswriting Basics
- ✓ Lead for Story 1 due
- ✓ News Presentation - example

Thursday Feb 5

- ✓ Continue discussion of Chapter 3
- ✓ Newspaper News Content Critique
- ✓ News Presentation 1

Tues Feb 10

- ✓ Story 1 draft and final due
- ✓ News Presentation 2

Thurs Feb 12

- ✓ Discuss Story 2
- ✓ Discuss Chapter 4: Reporting Basics
- ✓ In class interviews
- ✓ News Presentation 3

Tues Feb 17

- ✓ Continue Chapter 4 discussion
- ✓ News Presentation 4

Thurs Feb 19

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 5: Covering the News
- ✓ Lead for Story 2 due
- ✓ News Presentation 5

Tues Feb 24

- ✓ Continue Chapter 5
- ✓ News Presentation 6

Thurs Feb 26

- ✓ Story 2 draft and final due
- ✓ News Presentation 7

Tues Mar 3

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 6: Beyond Breaking News
- ✓ News Presentation 8

Thurs Mar 5

- ✓ Journalism movie critique due

Tues Mar 10 & Thurs Mar 12 – No classes Spring Break

Tues Mar 17 – No class – Professor at College Media Convention in NYC

Thurs Mar 19

- ✓ Discuss Story 3
- ✓ Discuss Chapter 7: Law and Ethics
- ✓ News Presentation 9

Tues Mar 24

- ✓ Continue Chapter 7
- ✓ News Presentation 10

Thurs Mar 26

- ✓ Lead for Story 3 due
- ✓ Discuss Chapter 8: Online Reporting
- ✓ News Presentation 11

Tues Mar 31

- ✓ Continue Chapter 8
- ✓ Facebook and Journalism
- ✓ News Presentation 12

Thurs Apr 2

- ✓ Story 3 draft and final due
- ✓ News Presentation 13

Tues Apr 7

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 9: Broadcast Journalism
- ✓ News Presentation 14

Thurs Apr 9

- ✓ Lead for Story 4 due
- ✓ Continue Chapter 9
- ✓ News Presentation 15

Tues Apr 14

- ✓ Discuss Chapter 10: Public Relations
- ✓ News Presentation 16

Thurs Apr 16

- ✓ Continue Chapter 10
- ✓ News Presentation 17

Tues Apr 21

- ✓ Catch-up day and prep for conference
- ✓ News Presentation 18

Thurs Apr 23

- ✓ Prep for Conference

Tues Apr 28 – Health and Wellness Conference – arrive by 9:30am (TCC)

Thurs Apr 30 – Last day of Class

- ✓ Evaluations
- ✓ Work on final story in-class and in-class critiques.
- ✓ **Please bring all necessary materials to class to work on story.**

Tues May 5 – Friday Schedule – no class – Final story due 9:30am via email:erortiz@cedarcrest.edu

**Videos we will watch during the semester include:**

Modern Marvels: Newspapers

Clips of interviews with Woodward and Bernstein

“Local News”

Clips from “Race and News”

**Story Ideas**

For Cedar Crest events visit

[http://www.cedarcrest.edu/Redesign/Home%20Page/events\\_frameset.asp](http://www.cedarcrest.edu/Redesign/Home%20Page/events_frameset.asp)

**Beyond Cedar Crest**

Find additional info at: <http://www.lehighvalleypa.org/default.aspx?pageid=2>

<http://allentownpa.org/thingstodo.htm> ; <http://bethlehempa.org/events/>; <http://www.easton-pa.org/>

**Places in the Lehigh Valley where you can find interesting events, people and products:**

Allentown Art Museum, Baum School of Art, Burnside Plantation, Colonial Industrial Quarter, Goundie House, Kemerer Museum of Decorative Arts, MCS Gallery, Moravian Museum, Open Space Gallery, The Banana Factory, Williams Center Gallery, Zoellner Arts Center AND The Allentown Symphony Orchestra, The Bach Choir, Celtic Classic Highland Games & Festival, Civic Theatre of Allentown, Concours d'Elegance, Pennsylvania Playhouse Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, State Theatre in Easton, & the Touchstone Theater