Instructors:
Chris Lavergne
112 Scoates Hall, 458-3391
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MWF 9-10 a.m.

Dr. Deborah Dunsford, Senior Lecturer
145 Scoates Hall, 458-3389;
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Office Hours: By appointment – call 862-3001

Course Meeting Schedule:
Self-paced, independent study

Prerequisites: Grade of C or better in AGJR 105. Credit will not be given for both AGJR 203 and JOUR 203.

Course Description: Agricultural Media Writing I introduces students to news gathering, writing, editing and style. It also includes media ethics and law – all as they relate to communicating agricultural information to the industry and to the general public. The course content includes news identification, audience analysis, basic news writing forms (including the inverted pyramid) and style based on the Associated Press Stylebook. Throughout the course, students will write for mediums including newspapers, radio, television, the Internet and other current and emerging mediums used to communicate with the agricultural industry and its stakeholders.

Course Background: Every form of mass communication presently in use, whether delivered to the public aurally, visually or in combination, must be written during an early step of the communication process. Putting a story into written form is the job of professional agricultural communicators, whether they work in news, public relations or advertising.

Course Outcomes:
• Understand the basics of news identification and newsgathering for various agricultural stakeholder audiences.
• Organize the gathered information into an appropriate form for various agricultural communication media.
• Use style consistent with the medium and that assists the agricultural audience in better understanding the information provided.
• Write clear, accurate and engaging copy that would be usable for the targeted agricultural medium.

Required Texts:
Projected Course Outline/Topics

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Tentative Topics</th>
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| 1    | **6/2-6**  
Introduction to AP style, news analysis, news story basics, including leads. AP Style quiz 1 and 2. Begin writing Leads |
| 2    | **6/9-13**  
Leads writing practice, introduction to story structure, the inverted pyramid. Attribution. **Major Assignment 1 due 6/13 by 5 p.m.** |
| 3    | **6/16-20**  
Information gathering, interviewing agricultural sources including preparing for the interview, asking the right questions. Agricultural Meetings. |
| 4    | **6/23-27**  
Agriculture news story structure, agricultural news conferences. |
| 5    | **6/30-7/4**  
Work Week  
**Major Assignment 2 due 7/4 by 5 p.m.** |
| 6    | **7/7-11**  
Writing for agricultural public relations and advertising. Basic structure, considerations. Lab: Ag news release, Advertising for agriculture. Topic due for major assignment 3. |
| 7    | **7/14-18**  
Multiple sources – keeping the information straight. Lab: Writing multiple-source agricultural stories, leads for poll and survey stories. **Major Assignment 3 due 7/18 by 5 p.m.** |
| 8    | **7/21/25**  
| 9    | **7/28-8/1**  
Story ideas for Assign. 4 due. Agricultural media dynamics. Publishers, publications and broadcast entities and how they interact with producers and each other. |
| 10   | **8/4-8**  
Photographs, graphics and related visual elements. Supplemental captions exercise. |
| 8/11 | **Major Assignment 4 due by 5 p.m.** |

Graded Evaluation Activities:
**Major Writing Assignments** (60 percent of course grade)
Four major writing assignments will be evaluated on content, story components (lead, sources), form, style and mechanics. The assignments will be progressively longer and more complex as the course progresses.

- Assignment #1, Lead (5 percent of grade) **Due by 5 p.m., Fri., June 13**
- Assignment #2, Covering a news conference/speaker (10 percent) **Due by 5 p.m., Fri., July 4**
- Assignment #3, Single-source story on topic generated by student (20 percent) **Due by 5 p.m., Fri., July 18**
- Assignment #4, Multi-source story on topic generated by student (25 percent) **Due by 5 p.m., Mon., Aug. 11**

Students must turn in all four major writing assignments to be eligible to pass the course.

**Supplemental exercises, story topic proposals** (30 percent of course grade)
Supplemental exercises will include writing assignments, group work, e-mail discussions and other materials that reinforce topics discussed in the lecture. The supplemental exercises also provide practice for the four major assignments throughout the term.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will lose 10 points for every weekday they are late and will not be accepted if they are more than one work week late. (Please see Late Ticket section that follows.)
Quizzes (10 percent of course grade)
Quizzes include scheduled Associated Press and short pop quizzes that will cover current events in agriculture, general current events and lecture information. The quizzes will be e-mailed to you on a regular basis during the course with specific due dates and times. You complete the quiz and turn them in via e-mail or in Scoates 112.

Grading Scale
- 90 + percent A
- 70-79 percent C
- 59 percent or less F
- 80-89 percent B
- 60-69 percent D

Americans with Disabilities Policy Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. To be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 979-845-1637.

Academic Dishonesty:
We expect all class members to comply with TAMU policies regarding scholastic dishonesty and other issues outlined in the official student rules. As a professional in any communication field, plagiarism harms the credibility of the profession as a whole. **Plagiarism of any sort will result in an F in this course and possible dismissal from Agricultural Journalism program.**

Late Tickets: Students will be given one late ticket that will give them the option to turn in one assignment up to two weekdays late. With the exception of the first and final major assignments, the ticket may be used at the student’s discretion – no questions asked. The ticket must be filled out and attached to the assignment when the assignment is turned in to the instructor.

| Name __________________________ |
| Assignment _____________________ |
| Original Due Date _______________ |