



**University of Wollongong  
Wollongong Campus  
Faculty of Creative Arts**

**SUBJECT OUTLINE**

**Subject Number:** JOUR201  
**Subject Name:** Introduction to Print News Writing  
**Credit Points:** 8 credit points  
**Pre-Requisites:** PHIL 106 and either SOC 110 or POL 121 or any 36 cp WRIT subject  
**Co-Requisites:** Nil  
**Session & Year:** Autumn 2006

**Teaching Staff:**

Position	Name	Room	Telephone No.	Email	Consultation Times
Subject Coordinator, and lecturer	A/Prof Stephen Tanner	25:119	4221 4940	stanner@uow.edu.au	Mon 9.30 - 10.30 At other times by appointment through Dale Dumpleton <a href="mailto:daled@uow.edu.au">daled@uow.edu.au</a> or 4221 3190
Tutor	Marcus O'Donnell	25:G05a	4221 3774	marcuso@uow.edu.au	Thur 10.30 - 12.30 Fri 10.30 - 12.30
Tutor	Caitlin Lewis	tba	tba	tba	Mon 12.30 - 1.30

**TIMETABLE:** 1 hr lecture and 2 hrs tutorial per week

Day	Class	Time	Room
Friday	Lecture	14.30 pm – 15.30 pm	20.2
Monday	Workshop/lab	1.30 pm – 3.30 pm	Galileo, 17.109
Monday	Workshop/lab	3.30 pm – 5.30 pm	Galileo, 17.109
Wednesday	Workshop/lab	12.30 pm – 2.30 pm	25.162
Wednesday	Workshop/lab	2.30 pm - 4.30 pm	25.162

**Subject Description:**

The purpose of this subject is to develop newswriting skills for the print media. Students will be introduced to a range of core themes, including identifying story ideas, research techniques, interviewing, and writing according to a traditional inverted pyramid approach. Students will also be introduced to a range of ethical and legal concepts that underpin newswriting. Assessment is built around the development of fundamental writing skills, including the ability to convey often complex information concisely and accurately. Other skills include spelling, grammar, punctuation, tense and editing. Students will be expected to submit a range of stories and other writing tasks for assessment.

**Learning Objectives:**

On successful completion of this subject, students will be able to:

1. Understand the basic principles of news writing.
2. Identify story angles in news events/issues.

3. Be able to research stories and conduct interviews that add significantly to a story's development
3. Write news stories that will appeal to a broad readership.

In meeting these objectives, students will develop skills relevant to the following Attributes of a Wollongong Graduate:

- \* A commitment to continued and independent learning, intellectual development, critical analysis and creativity.
- \* Coherent and extensive knowledge in a discipline, appropriate ethical standards and, where appropriate, defined professional skills.
- \* Self-confidence combined with oral and written skills of a high level.
- \* A capacity for, and understanding of, teamwork.
- \* An ability to analyse issues logically, as well as to evaluate different options and viewpoints and to implement decisions.
- \* An appreciation and valuing of cultural and intellectual diversity and the ability to function in a multicultural or global environment.
- \* An acknowledgement and acceptance of individual responsibilities and obligations, and of the assertion of the rights of the individual and the community.

#### **ASSESSMENT DETAILS:**

Students are required to attempt all assessment tasks in order to be eligible for a pass in this subject.

#### **Assessment Task No 1:**

**Marked out of 100 – Weighting 7.5%**

- 1. Description:** In class test. This test will be conducted in the lecture slot (wk 5). It will assess all material covered in weeks 1-4.
- 2. Due Date:** Friday, March 24 (in lecture).
- 3. Format:** Short answers.
- 4. Assessment Criteria:** Students must display a sound understanding of the different concepts discussed in class. This includes material covered in lectures, workshops and readings.
- 5. Must attempt:** Yes.

#### **Assessment Task No 2:**

**Marked out of 100 – Weighting 50%**

- 1. Description:** In class tasks. These can include story plans, interviews, story drafts, editing.
- 2. Due Date:** In tutorials, weekly.

**3. Format:** Will vary, depending on the task.

**4. Assessment Criteria:** You must show that you are developing news sense and news writing skills.

**5. Must attempt:** Yes.

### **Assessment Task No 3:**

**Marked out of 100 – Weighting 10%**

**1. Description:** News story (1)

**2. Due Date:** End of week 9, Friday, April 28 (in class).

**3. Format: News story,** maximum of 400 words, list of questions asked interviewees and copy of story plan, including research undertaken. This should be about a local community event. It should be written in such a way as to appeal to a broad readership.

**4. Assessment Criteria:** Students must show that they:

- \* have a good understanding of the 5Ws and H and the other elements that make up a news story;

- \* are able to ask appropriate questions of interviewees to ensure that their story is balanced, fair and interesting;

- \* possess sound writing skills, including grammar, spelling and punctuation.

**5. Must attempt:** Yes.

### **Assessment Task No 4:**

**Marked out of 100 – Weighting 20%**

**1. Description:** News story (2). Topic will be handed out in class in week 12.

**2. Due Date:** End of week 13, Friday, May 26 (in class).

**3. Format:** Feature story, maximum of 500 words.

**4. Assessment Criteria:** Students will be assessed on a range of elements, including, but not restricted to:

- \* originality of subject and readership potential (news sense);

- \* depth of research (initiative);

- \* writing style;

- \* grammar, spelling and punctuation.

**5. Must attempt:** Yes.

### Assessment Task No 5:

#### Marked out of 100 – Weighting 7.5%

**1. Description: Essay.** Topic: 'Hard copy newspapers are like dinosaurs – they are doomed to extinction.' Discuss this proposition, drawing on academic research and comments from industry practitioners.

**2. Due Date: Week 13, 5 pm, Friday, May 26.**

**3. Format:** Feature story, 500 - 750 words.

**4. Assessment Criteria:** Students will be assessed on a range of elements, including, but not restricted to:

- \* originality of argument
- \* depth of research (initiative);
- \* writing style;
- \* grammar, spelling and punctuation.

**5. Must attempt:** Yes.

### Assessment Task No 6:

#### Marked out of 100 – Weighting 5%

**1. Description:** In class test. This test will be conducted in the lecture slot (wk 13). It will assess all material covered.

**2. Due Date: Friday, May 26 (in lecture).**

**3. Format:** Short answers.

**4. Assessment Criteria:** Students must display a sound understanding of the different concepts discussed in class. This includes material covered in lectures, workshops and readings.

**5. Must attempt:** Yes.

**Performance Grades & Descriptors:**

<b>HD</b>	<b>High Distinction</b>	<b>85 – 100%</b>	Work that achieves this grade will be of publishable or near publishable standard. It will show a strong understanding of the subject matter being written about and be presented in a lively and/or informative style. To achieve a High Distinction, students will display strong research and analytic skills (where required), and the ability to extract interesting or difficult to obtain information from interviewees. It will also display a sound understanding of the 5Ws and H, Masterton's elements of newsworthiness and the inverted pyramid approach to news writing. Such copy will be clean, showing that the writer takes editorial pride in their work.
<b>D</b>	<b>Distinction</b>	<b>75 – 84%</b>	To obtain a distinction, you will display above-average abilities. This will include strong writing and presentation skills. Your copy will be clean and virtually complete. In the case of a journalistic task, your work will reveal a good understanding of the topic. This will be reflected in your research and use of talent.
<b>C</b>	<b>Credit</b>	<b>65 – 74%</b>	Work that is awarded this grade will be fundamentally sound, but not particularly exciting. It will contain the core elements, although not of a standard that would warrant publication without considerable revision. This work will be deficient in at least one of a number of areas, including writing, structure or understanding of the topic.
<b>P</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>50 – 64%</b>	Such work will generally reveal significant flaws. This might include, but would not be confined to, a lack of understanding, superficiality, or poor writing. One major potential flaw is a failure to follow recognised journalistic formats.
<b>PC</b>	<b>Pass Conceded</b>	<b>45 – 49%</b>	This work will be of an inadequate standard, due potentially to a number of flaws, including an obvious lack of preparation or research on the part of the student, poor writing, editing and presentational skills. A student who has received this mark may have shown a lack of commitment to the subject.
<b>PR</b>	<b>Pass Restricted (not available at 300 level)</b>	<b>45 – 49%</b>	The work will have failed to meet the required standards in a number of key areas. The student may have ignored assessment criteria, produced work that is not of a publishable standard, failed to follow journalistic formats, or shown little pride or interest in their work.
<b>F</b>	<b>Fail (unsatisfactory completion)</b>	<b>0 - 49%</b>	Work that is accorded a fail mark will not have met the required criteria. The writing will be of a poor standard, showing inadequate information and may reveal considerable punctuation, grammar or spelling errors. Research will be superficial or non-existent. In the case of journalistic pieces, the use of talent will also be inadequate.

**Weekly Outline:**

<b>Week No.</b>	<b>Lecture Topic/ Readings</b>
1 February 24	<p>Introduction. What is journalism? The newsroom hierarchy</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, <i>The Daily Miracle</i>, chapters 1-3; chapter 10.</p> <p><b>Tasks for tutes in week 2:</b> Locate examples of news stories you like and/or dislike and be prepared to discuss their strengths and weaknesses in class.</p>
2 March 03	<p>News values. How do we know what makes news?</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 4.</p> <p>Bring along to class a selection of stories that build on (or highlight) some of the elements discussed by Masterton, Conley and Lamble, and others.</p>
3 March 10	<p>Finding news: news that comes to you, press releases and conferences, traditional news events. Sourcing news: who to talk to and when.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 8.</p>
4 March 17	<p>The fundamentals of news writing: the 5 ws and the H. The inverted pyramid. Writing leads, attribution and style.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 6.</p>
5 March 24	<p><b><i>In lecture test (drawing from material covered in weeks 1-4).</i></b></p>
6 March 31	<p>The fundamentals continued: grammar, punctuation, tense, style.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 7. News Ltd Style Guide.</p> <p>Bring along to class a selection of stories that you consider contain major structural faults</p>
7 April 07	<p>Interviewing. How to conduct an interview, asking the right questions and obtaining the answers you need.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 9.</p> <p>Prepare a list of questions you would ask a prominent local sportsperson on the eve of their retirement. Name the person and their sport.</p>

8 April 13	<p>Essential ethics</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 16.</p> <p>Using the Press Council adjudication site. Find some examples of complaints against journalists/media organizations. To what extent do you think these complaints are justified. Using the original story, how could the journalist or outlet made the story fairer?</p>
	Recess
9 April 28	<p>Oops, the law. Understanding defamation and other tricky issues.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 17. Mark Pearson, <i>The Journalist's Guide to Media Law</i>.</p> <p>Find two cases that have had a significant impact on the ability of Australian journalists to cover major events. Be prepared to discuss those cases.</p>
10 May 05	<p>Other forms of writing: editorials, reviews, news features and colour pieces.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapter 14.</p>
11 May 12	<p>Taking pride in your work – the editing process.</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Lynette Sheridan Burns, <i>Understanding Journalism</i>, chapter 9.</p>
12 May 19	<p>Issues in journalism</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <p>Conley and Lamble, chapters 12 and 13.</p>
13 May 26	Test (in class)

**Textbooks:**

These readings are recommended and not intended to be exhaustive. Students are encouraged to use the Library catalogue and databases to locate additional resources.

**The set text for this subject is:**

D. Conley and S. Lamble, *The Daily Miracle*, 3d ed., Oxford, 2006.

**Other recommended readings:**

L. Sheridan Burns, *Understanding Journalism*, Sage, 2002.

M. Pearson, *The Journalist's Guide to Media Law*, 2d ed., Allen and Unwin, 2004.

S.J. Tanner, *Journalism: Investigation and Research*, Longman Pearson, 2002.

S.J. Tanner, G. Phillips, S. Smyth and S. Tapsall, *Journalism Ethics at Work*, Pearson Longman, 2005.

Students should also consult the following: *Style: A Guide for Journalists*, Sydney: News Ltd, 2003

Please note: this list is not comprehensive. You should supplement these recommendations with readings you discover through your own research, both online and in hard copy.

## JOUR201 Print Media Reporting

### STORY MARKING SHEET

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment # \_\_\_\_\_

	Out of:	Actual
<b>LAYOUT</b> (Story is double-spaced on one side only, 12 point type, pages stapled together, cover page supplied with student's and tutor's names and other submission information.)	Pass/Fail	
<b>DEADLINE</b> (Story submitted by deadline.)	Pass/Fail	
<b>STORY DIARY</b> (Story diary is complete, and includes source names, phone numbers and/or email addresses.)	Pass/Fail	
<i>Provided story has passed above three categories, it will then be assessed. If a 'fail' is recorded in any of the above, the work will not be assessed.</i>		
<b>INTRO</b> (Newsworthiness, choice of language, effectiveness)	4	
<b>STRUCTURE</b> (Support for intro, relevance of info, story flow)	3	
<b>LANGUAGE</b> (Choice of language, clarity of expression)	2	
<b>STORY AS A WHOLE</b> (Does story work? Overall reading of story)	1	
INITIAL MARK	<b><u>10</u></b>	
<b>AUTOMATIC FAILURE:</b> Misspelling of key names, places. Defamation, contempt of court, plagiarism.		
<b>LESS</b> two marks for major inaccuracies		
<b>LESS</b> one half mark for each error in style, spelling and grammar (punctuation, verb tenses, attribution etc).	2	
FINAL MARK		

**General Comments:**

**Finalised 15 February 2006**

