

# HU3629 Topics in Journalism: Community and Public/Civic Journalism

**Room:** 108 Walker  
**Time:** 4:05-4:55 MWF  
**Term:** Spring 2002

**Instructor:** Associate Prof. Craig Waddell  
**Office:** Room 342 Walker  
**Office Hours:** Noon-1:00 MW;  
other times by appointment  
**Phone:** 487-3261 (office); 482-1636 (home)  
**E-mail:** cwaddell@mtu.edu  
**Class List:** journalism2-1@mtu.edu (*Responses to messages to this list are posted to the whole list.*)

## Required Texts

Jock Lauterer. *Community Journalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ames: Iowa UP, 2000.

Arthur Charity. *Doing Public Journalism*. New York: Guilford Press, 1995.

Associated Press. *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2000. [For reference.]

*The Michigan Tech Lode Policy and Style Manual*.

For additional, on-line resources, please go to the *Michigan Tech Online Lode* at <http://www.mtulode.com/> and click on Links.

## Course Description

*Community journalism* is usually defined as journalism by papers--usually weeklies--with circulations of under 50,000 that focus on service to their particular communities. *Public* or *civic journalism* is usually defined as journalism that strives to provide readers with what they need to be responsible citizens. As Jock Lauterer makes clear in chapter 19 of *Community Journalism*, there is a strong overlap between these two types of journalism. In this course, we will explore and examine the relationships between these two types of journalism through reading, discussion, and practice.

To facilitate learning through practice, you will all be employees of the *Michigan Tech Lode* and will earn approximately \$20-\$50 for each story you publish (payment depends on quality, length, and depth of research). You will need to complete a *Lode* employment application form, and if have not previously been employed by Michigan Tech, you will need to complete some additional paperwork with Beth Krenek, the Student Organizations' secretary (among other things, she will need to see your Social Security card and driver's license).

The *Lode* is published every Wednesday, and the deadline for articles is usually noon the previous Monday. **The preferred means of submission to the *Lode* is a double-spaced hard copy accompanied by a disk copy. Be sure to include your name and the appropriate section name (news, sports, or features) on your disk, file, and hard copy.** Either hand your work directly to your editor or leave it in the in-box in the *Lode* office in the MUB. (With his or her approval, you may also be able to submit electronic copies of your articles directly to your editor via his/her e-mail address. If you use this option, be sure to find out what kind of file your editor wants--Word, RTF, text file, etc.)

The three section editors are as follows:

News: Brita VandeHei bavandeh@mtu.edu

Sports: Eric Habermas ejhaberm@mtu.edu

Features/Vitality: Amanda McMahon ammcmaho@mtu.edu

The *Lode's* editor in chief is Lori Sprangers (lmsprang@mtu.edu); and the *Lode's* business manager--who makes sure that you get paid--is Josh Tolk (jitolk@mtu.edu).

Over the course of the semester, you will produce three in-depth stories. Each of these stories will pass through the following four stages: (1) story proposal (one page); (2) first draft; (3) second draft; (4) final story as submitted to the *Lode*. You will submit all of this work to me for evaluation, and you will also submit a copy of each final piece to the *Lode* for publication. (Final publication decisions are made by the section editors.)

I will run the class as much as possible as a combination staff meeting and journalism workshop, including discussion of readings, films, in-class conferences, exercises, and informal oral presentations on your work in progress.

Throughout the semester, please make frequent use of the *Lode* office, which offers many resources for *Lode* staff, including Portage Professional Reporter's Notebooks and micro-cassette recorders for conducting interviews.

## **Story Proposals**

Each story proposal should be about one page long and should identify the subject of your story, potential informants, and other actual or potential sources of information. The proposal might

also indicate what you've already learned about this story, why it's newsworthy, why you're interested in writing about it, and what particularly qualifies you to undertake this assignment.

### **First Drafts**

Each first draft should lay out the general outline of your story. Incorporate in these drafts comments and questions indicating where you need help and direction from me or from a section editor. What resources have you identified? What difficulties have you encountered? What questions remain unanswered?

### **Second Drafts**

Second drafts should be ready for final tweaking and copy editing. There may also still be a few more substantive loose ends to be addressed.

### **Final Copies of Stories**

Final copies of stories should be ready to submit to the *Lode* for publication. Final publication decisions for and editing of these stories is the responsibility of the *Lode* section editors.

### **Course Portfolios**

Please keep a portfolio of all of the work you have completed for the course: the hard copies of your articles as I've marked and returned them to you, and copies of everything you have had published in the *Lode*. You may need these portfolios later in the semester.

### **The Michigan Tech Writing Center**

Michigan Tech has an excellent Writing Center, which is located in Walker 107. I encourage you to schedule, regular weekly appointments with a writing coach. Establish a schedule early in the semester, because appointed times (as opposed to drop-in times) tend to get booked quickly. For more information, call 487-2007 or check the Center's Web page at [www.hu.mtu.edu/wc/](http://www.hu.mtu.edu/wc/).

### **Attendance Policy**

"Ninety percent of success is just showing up." Woody Allen

**If you miss more than four class meetings, you will automatically fail the course. There will be no exceptions to this policy unless you have either a medical excuse signed by your physician or a personal emergency authorized in writing by the Dean of Students.** For a

description of what constitutes an excused absence, see the below excerpt from the *Michigan Tech Student Handbook*:

"Students are expected to attend all classes, including recitation and laboratory sessions, beginning on the first day of regular instruction as stated in the University academic calendar. This date can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog and in the Time Schedule Booklets.

Students having excused absences are permitted to make up graded work. Whenever possible, students should contact the instructor prior to the absence and arrange a mutually acceptable make-up procedure. Otherwise, the students should account for the absence at the first opportunity.

Students who are unable to notify instructors concerning their absence from class or who must notify several instructors on short notice should contact the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

An absence is excused under the following conditions:

1. A student is participating in off-campus, University-sponsored activities, such as field trips, fine arts performances, intercollegiate athletics, judging teams, etc. The faculty or staff members supervising the off-campus activity will send a notice via e-mail to all academic departments and the Office of Student Affairs before the activity takes place. The notice will include the name and date of the activity, the name of the supervising person, and a list of all participating students.
2. The instructor is assured that a student's absence from class was due to circumstances beyond the student's control. The student must provide verification of the special circumstance if the instructor requests it.
3. Excuses are usually given in the following circumstances: illness, funeral of any relative or close friend, military duty, court appearance, and personal emergencies.
4. The instructor deems it excusable. Some examples might include professional and graduate school interviews, plant trips, job interviews requiring travel, and professional society meetings."

### **Late Assignments**

**I won't accept any assignment that's more than two days late. There's no penalty for one late paper (as long as it's not more than two days late); subsequent late papers, however, will be lowered by one part of a letter grade (e.g., from a BC to a C).**

## **Evaluation**

Your final grade will be determined *approximately* as follows:

15% Story Proposals (5% for each of 3)

30% Story Drafts (5% for each of 6)

35% Final Stories (10% each for stories 1 and 2; 15% for story 3)

20% Quizzes (5% for each of 4)

## **Format of Your Work**

Your work should be word processed and printed on 8.5" x 11" white paper in a 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides. Put your name in the upper right corner of the first page, skip one line (i.e., single space) and put the course title (Topics in Journalism); skip another line, and put the date; skip one more line and put your title (centered), then skip two lines and begin your double-spaced text. Number your pages, and staple your papers in the upper left corner. Include at the top of each assignment the assignment number (1-3) and the section for which its intended (news, sport, features, or editorial).

## **Academic Dishonesty** (from the *Michigan Tech Student Handbook*)

"Academic integrity and honesty are central to a student's education. Ethical conduct in an academic context will be carried forward into a student's professional career. Academic honesty is essential to a community of scholars searching for and learning to seek the truth. Anything less than total commitment to honesty undermines the efforts of the entire academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University.

In their academic work, students are expected to maintain personal academic integrity; treat all academic exercises as work to be conducted privately, unless otherwise instructed; ask faculty to clarify any aspects of permissible or expected cooperation on any assignment; and report any cheating activity.

Definitions of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty, can be found in the Academic Integrity Policy [see below]. Copies of the policy can be obtained from the Office of Student Affairs and chairs of academic departments.

Students found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive a sanction ranging from academic integrity warning to expulsion. Please refer to Student Rights and Responsibilities in the University Community or the Academic Integrity Policy for more information."

## **Definitions of Academic Dishonesty** (from the Michigan Tech Academic Integrity Policy)

**"A. Plagiarism:** Knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation. This includes reading or hearing another's work or ideas and using them as one's own; quoting, paraphrasing, or condensing another's work without giving proper credit; purchasing or receiving another's work and using, handling, or submitting it as one's own work.

**B. Cheating:** Intentional, unauthorized use of any study aids, equipment, or another's work during an academic exercise. This includes unauthorized use of notes, study aids, electronic or other equipment during an examination; copying or looking at another individual's examination; taking or passing information to another individual during an examination; taking an examination for another individual; allowing another individual to take one's examination; stealing examinations. All graded academic exercises are expected to be performed on an individual basis unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

**C. Fabrication:** Intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation during an academic exercise. This includes changing or adding an answer on an examination and resubmitting it to change the grade; inventing data for a laboratory exercise or report.

**D. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Knowingly allowing or helping another individual to plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate information."

## **The Americans with Disabilities Act**

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, your department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

## Schedule of Assignments and Class Activities

Dates indicate when reading and writing assignments are due, not when they are given. I've used the following abbreviations for our texts: LPSM = Lode Policy and Style Manual; CJ = Community Journalism; DPJ = Doing Public Journalism. **Please bring to class each day the book we are currently reading.**

### Week 1

Monday: Overview of course and syllabus; self-introductions; brainstorm for story ideas

Wednesday: **Meet in *Lode* office (106 Memorial Union Building) to meet *Lode* editorial staff and register for employment with the *Lode*--bring your Social Security card and driver's license.**

Friday: LPSM Section I "A Short Course on Journalistic Writing" (pp. 5-29)

### Week 2

Monday: LPSM Section II "Invasion of Privacy Law" (pp. 20-22); Section III "Interviewing" (pp. 23-26); Section IV "SPJ Code of Ethics" (pp. 27-29); and Section VIII.C "Mutual Responsibilities of Writers, Photographers, and Editors" (p. 35) **Note: This last section emphasizes the importance of keeping the appropriate *Lode* editor informed about what you are working on.**

Wednesday: Review of LPSM

Friday: **Quiz 1 (on LPSM)**

### Week 3

Monday: **Story proposal 1**

Wednesday: CJ Introduction "The State of Community Journalism"

Friday: CJ chapter 1 "With Apologies to Nike, But Why Just Do It?"

### Week 4

Monday: CJ chapter 2 "Who Am I? And What Am I Doing Here?"

Wednesday: **Draft 1 of Story 1**

Friday: Winter Carnival—no class

### **Week 5**

Monday: CJ chapter 3 "News is Like a Hurricane: The Closer it Gets, the More Important it becomes to You"

Wednesday: CJ chapter 4 "Features: Pay Attention to the Signs"

Friday: **Draft 2 of Story 1**

### **Week 6**

Monday: CJ chapter 5 "Editorials: The Rapier, Not the Sledgehammer"

Wednesday: CJ chapter 6 "The Art of the Interview"

Friday: **Final copy of Story 1 (submit one copy to me for course evaluation and one copy to the appropriate *Lode* editor for publication)**

### **Week 7**

Monday: **Proposal for Story 2; review for Quiz 2**

Wednesday: CJ chapter 7 "On Writing: The Lessons of Boone's Corner and Hue"; **Quiz 2**

Friday: CJ chapter 8 "Graphics, Design and the Community Paper"

### **Spring Break March 2-10**

### **Week 8**

Monday: CJ chapter 9 "Photojournalism: Put the Camera Down and Dance, Boy!"

Wednesday: CJ chapter 10 "Emerging Technology: That's the Way We've Always Done it Here"

Friday: **Draft 1 of Story 2**

## **Week 9**

Monday: CJ chapter 11 "Community Sports: It's Only a Game, Right?"

Wednesday: CJ chapter 12 "It Used to be Called the Women's Page"

Friday: CJ chapter 13 "Whose Paper is it Anyway?"

## **Week 10**

Monday: **Draft 2 of Story 2**

Wednesday: CJ chapter 14 "Ethics and Community Newspapers: A Different Way of Looking at Things"; **review for Quiz 3**

Friday: CJ chapter 19 "Who's on First? A Community Journalism Perspective on Civic Journalism"; **Quiz 3**

## **Week 11**

Monday: **Final copy of Story 2 (submit one copy to me for course evaluation and one copy to the appropriate *Lode* editor for publication)**

Wednesday: DPJ chapter 1 "Overview"

Friday: **Proposal for Story 3**

## **Week 12**

Monday: DPJ chapter 2 "Public Listening"

Wednesday: DPJ chapter 3 "News Coverage"

Friday: **Draft 1 of Story 3**

## **Week 13**

Monday: DPJ chapter 4 "Public Judgment"

Wednesday: DPJ chapter 5 "Helping Citizens Act"

Friday: DPJ chapter 6 "The Newspaper's Place"

**Week 14**

Monday: **Draft 2 of Story 3**

Wednesday: **Review for Quiz 4**

Friday: **Quiz 4**

**Week 15**

Monday: **Final copy of Story 3 (submit one copy to me for course evaluation and one copy to the appropriate *Lode* editor for publication)**

Wednesday: Review

Friday: Final review and course evaluations