DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION                     COURSE NO.  MC 320

COURSE TITLE: Basic Journalism                     Revision 2007

I. Catalog Description:

A study of daily and weekly newspaper reporting and newsroom operating methods (3 hours).

II. Prerequisites:

Completion of MC 201 with a grade of “C” or better; 45 hours.

III. Objectives:

As an ACEJMC-accredited program, we embrace the key values of research, theory, law, ethics, history and diversity in our curriculum. Research, theory, law, ethics and diversity will be addressed as specific course units. History, as it relates to coverage of the specific topics, will be included in the discussion of those topics.

A. To teach the reporting principles required by mainstream daily and weekly newspapers.
B. To provide practice in reporting and writing through writing articles specifically for the campus newspaper.
C. To teach students the decision-making process of news choices, news gathering and news dissemination to include law, ethics, diversity, community standards and public-service journalism.

IV. Expectations of Students:

A. Interview assigned news sources and write stories based on those interviews. Students are expected to write approximately 500 words of acceptable copy per week between in-class and out-of-class assignments.
B. Study the text and write practice stories from notes provided by the instructor so as to be experienced with a variety of subjects (disasters, police news, court news, obituaries, etc.) that do not occur in normal campus news.
C. Learn press law, stylebook usage, newsroom organization, news routine and apply those to news gathering and news writing assignments.
D. Demonstrate accuracy, responsibility and ethical reporting.

V. Course Content:

A. Organizing for campus news coverage plus laboratory assignments (1 week).
B. Basic news writing theory/techniques (2 weeks).
C. Press Law (1 week).
D. Press ethics (1 week).
E. Diversity (1 week).
F. Aspects of special kinds of news stories.
   a. Meetings, speeches, conventions (3 weeks).
b. Disasters, crime, sports (3 weeks).

c. Education (1 week).

d. Government, politics, courts (2 weeks).

VI. Textbook and other materials:

VII. Basis for Student Evaluation

A. Appropriate and viable news story ideas (5 percent).
B. Accurate and complete articles (5-7) for the student newspaper (50 percent).
C. In-class writing drills (10 percent).
D. Mid-term and final exams on textbook and lecture materials (20 percent).
E. Application of principles studied in class: law, ethics, diversity, community standards, news values and news-writing techniques (15 percent).