
PROFESSOR

KATE SWEENEY



ASWEEN@GMU.EDU



703-993-1090

DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION OFFICE



MY OFFICE IS LOCATED IN
NORTHEAST MODULE
ROOM 117

OFFICE HOURS:

WED 3:15 – 4:00

AND

BY APPOINTMENT

Stop by before class or feel free to email me to schedule an appointment for another day. I'm pretty quick to respond to emails! I'm also happy to have students stop by my office unannounced, but I can't guarantee I'll be available. I'm on campus most days of the week, but I'm often in meetings. If you need to get in touch with me urgently, put "URGENT" in the subject line of your email, and I will respond as soon as possible.

COM 203 INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

Welcome to Introduction to Journalism! This course will be your gateway to the exciting and evolving world of journalism. We live in a complex media landscape, where technology, economics and culture continue to disrupt the ways in which people produce and consume the news. However, the fundamentals of journalism have not changed. In this course you will gain an understanding of the industry and acquire the skills journalists use to produce accurate, ethical and impactful journalism.

This course is practical. It's designed to teach you to think like a journalist, analyze the news and participate in the truth-telling process. You'll research report, interview, write and edit stories, and you'll examine the role of the professional journalist in today's society. Hopefully you'll catch the "journalism bug" and decide to enroll in a Journalism minor or concentration here at Mason.

MEETING TIME & PLACE

WEDNESDAYS 4:30 – 7:10 PM

CLASSROOM: PLANETARY HALL, ROOM 212

OUR CONTRACT

This syllabus represents an agreement (or contract) between the student and the instructor. By remaining enrolled in this course, each student accepts the policies and guidelines covered in this syllabus, schedule, and GMU course policies. Therefore, please read all these pages carefully and refer to them often.

If you miss the first class, you must email me with your intention to remain registered, or you may be dropped. If you late-add this class, it is your responsibility to email me before showing up for class.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION: Email may seem like a thing of the past, but it's still a primary tool in the workplace. *So, please get used to checking your GMU email on a regular basis!* I use your GMU address for all outside-of-class communication. If you need to shoot me an email, please do! I typically respond within 24 hours or less. Be sure to **include a subject** in the subject header and start with a simple greeting like, "Hi Prof Kate," or "Hi Professor Sweeney," before you type your message.

REQUIRED READING

We will not use a textbook in this course, but you are required to obtain the following:

- Subscription to **The New York Times**. GMU students get a FREE subscription!
 - Sign up here. <https://timesync.gmu.edu/libnews/?p=8120>
- **The Associated Press Stylebook**, 2017 or 2018 edition. Don't purchase this until after our first class.
 - The 2018 edition is \$25 <https://www.apstylebook.com/>
- Additional readings – short articles and reports will be provided to you as links or handouts.

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED:

To be a great writer, you must be a great reader and an informed member of society! So, consider consuming:

- The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Huffington Post, your hometown paper, The Atlantic, Newsweek...
- Daily news broadcasts of CNN, BBC, MSNBC, Fox News, Al Jazeera, Bloomberg, VOA.
- Listen to WTOP News radio 103.5 FM. Check out NPR at 88.5 FM or 90.0 FM especially 5-10 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- Podcasts to check out: NPR's Up First, NYT's The Daily, The Indicator from Planet Money, Today Explained, Endless Thread... for others: <https://player.fm/featured/daily-news>
- **Peruse the Internet for a daily news source of your choice. Find what you like! News can be fun, addictive even, enjoy your daily dose!**

OVERVIEW & GOALS

This **three-credit course** will enable students to:

- Understand news value in order to generate timely and innovative ideas for news stories and features.
- Practice the craft – research, report, interview and write 300-500-word stories on deadline.
- Think critically, independently and creatively about local and global issues, trends, events, and the news industry.
- Understand the history, ethics and economics of the news industry and understand the disruptions in the industry.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy and fairness.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE

Be present! Be curious! Be supportive of your colleagues! Think of this course like practice for a fulfilling career. Effective professionals deliver work on time, on budget and on target. True professionals also show up on time every day, speak up when they need help and ask questions when they need clarity. I encourage you to communicate with me like a true professional. If you foresee an issue delivering an assignment, approach me **in advance** of the due date, and I will help you navigate the requirements. When in doubt, reach out. Stop by my office. Shoot me an email. I'm here to empower you to engage in our learning process. This class is work, but it can be fun when we all work together to succeed.

Do I really have to come to class? Um... YES you really have to come to class just like you will really have to go to work. Nearly every class will involve some kind of writing exercise, group activity or discussion designed to teach course material. You are expected to be more than a passive recipient of information. You are expected to think critically, offer insight, ask questions and take a constructive role in learning. Reporting involves proactive engagement with other people. Don't worry if you are shy, you can do well in this class. Come to class, actively listen and get involved.

CLASSROOM POLICIES & ETIQUETTE

Late assignments. Adherence to deadlines plays an important role in this course. Journalists meet deadlines; their job is on the line if they don't. Deadlines set for assignments in this course are final. **Assignments turned in late without obtaining an extension before the deadline won't be accepted.**

Attendance. Attendance is critical in order to successfully complete the course. As adults and busy people, circumstances may pop up that prevent you from attending. You are allowed one unexcused absence – no questions asked. Subsequent absences will impact your grade. If we work on an activity or assignment in class and we finish it, it's done. You've missed it. No make ups unless you: 1) **email me before class** with a short but detailed explanation, or 2) the next time I see you, you present a written excuse from a medical doctor, fire fighter or court of law.

Tardiness. Please do not walk into class late or leave early. It's rude and disruptive. That said, there are times when life interferes – we get stuck in traffic, have to fight for parking, or get a flat tire. I get it. It happens to all of us. But let's not make it a habit. Habitual lateness will impact your grade. If you know in advance that you must be late or leave early for a valid priority, **let me know before class.** I'm reasonable. Communication is key.

Religious holidays. It is the policy of GMU and this instructor to make every reasonable effort to allow members of our diverse university community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. It is your responsibility to provide me with **advance written notice** of the dates of any major religious holidays on which you will be absent.

Laptops/phone/devices in the classroom. Bring your laptops/devices to class, but please be respectful of your classmates and our time by silencing your cellphones and other portable devices. Kindly refrain from browsing, emailing, texting, messaging, Tweeting, or Facebooking on your personal devices or on the computers in the room during class time. You may use your computer to take notes, but if you sit with your computer flipped open each class for the entire class, your participation points will likely take a hit. Most working journalists will tell you, a pad and pen are the most convenient way to take notes on assignment. They're portable, reliable in all conditions and don't need recharging. Also, multiple research studies conclude that students who take notes by hand actually learn more!

Academic Integrity. The GMU Honor Code applies to all students. The entire text of the code is available in the University Catalog or online at: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/acadpol.html#Honor>. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. If you have questions or concerns of any kind, please ask for guidance.

Ethics & diversity. As part of this course, we will discuss issues of professional ethics and their contribution to the pursuit of truth, accuracy and fairness in journalism. This discussion will include issues of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, and the responsibility of journalists to accurately reflect the diversity of global society.

Plagiarism. Let's keep this simple: Don't plagiarize. For clarity on the various forms of plagiarism, check out this site: <https://www.plagiarism.org/>. Also, don't make up quotes or sources. Don't fabricate any information in a story. You will get caught – maybe not by me, but it will catch up with you. Reputation is everything in this business – don't spoil yours.

Syllabus Changes. Exceptional circumstances may necessitate changes in the syllabus. Modifications will be discussed in class and e-mailed to the students.



Hope for the best. Prepare for the worst. Computers crash. Printers run out of ink. Wireless connections fail. So, don't wait until the last minute to do your work and **SAVE OFTEN**. Consider saving duplicates to an external hard drive. If you lose your work at the last second, don't hide and skip class. Talk to me! We'll determine a plan.



EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement Weather. In case of inclement weather check <https://ready.gmu.edu/category/advisories/> or call 703-993-1000 to find out if the university is closed. (Note: GMU rarely closes for inclement weather.) **If we must miss a class meeting due to inclement weather, please look for an email from me!** I will let you know what our plan is to keep pace with our schedule. Note: Some of us face longer or more treacherous commutes than others. If the roads near you are unsafe, please don't drive. Get in touch with me via email.

Emergency Procedures. George Mason University is dedicated to preparing staff and students in the event of an emergency. All students in this class are encouraged to register for Mason Alert. Sign up for the "Mason Alert Emergency Notification System" here: <https://ready.gmu.edu/masonalert/>

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Advising. I strongly recommend that you see the undergraduate academic advisor for your major every semester as well as advisors for minors. You should also include instructors as part of your advising team.

Special needs & equitable learning. This university and this instructor are committed to providing an equitable learning environment for every student. If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, please notify me immediately. I will readily adjust for students with special needs, but you must work through the Office of Disability Resources (703-993-2474) to arrange accommodations. The Office of Disability Resources will provide you with a letter to give to me and/or you may request to have them contact me directly.

Writing Center. The Writing Center offers **FREE** writing support in the form of face-to-face tutoring and online tutoring to Mason students. They will help with any and all stages of the writing process, from brainstorming and structuring to revising and polishing. A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University Libraries. Need help researching a topic? "Ask a Librarian" <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

University Policies: The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies. This class will adhere to published university policies regarding sexual harassment and equal opportunity, and this class will follow all appropriate university regulations.

DEPARTMENT GRADING POLICY

George Mason University uses a 10-point +/- grading scale. The Communication Department has adopted the following scale which I will use to assign final grades.

A+	97% to 100% (exceptional work)
A	93% to 96% (outstanding work)
A-	90% to 92%
B+	87% to 89%
B	83% to 86% (above standard)
B-	80% to 82%
C+	77% to 79%
C	73% to 76% (meets standard)
D	60% to 69% (fundamental problems)
F	59% or less (poor results or work not submitted)

GRADING RUBRIC FOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

I post all grades on BLACKBOARD. If you wonder where you stand, check Blackboard or ask me!

Assignment grades will be assessed as follows:

A (90 to 100 percent): The story has virtually no style, spelling, grammar or punctuation errors and is ready to be published by a professional news outlet with very little editing. The lead is strong, the point of the story is clear and it is well organized. It contains all the important elements, leaving out information that is off point or redundant.

B (80 to 89 percent): The story has a few style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with minor editing is ready to be published by a professional news outlet. The lead is acceptable, main points are explained and the story is well organized. The writing may need to be tighter and some word choices may need to be clearer.

C (70 to 79 percent): Meets the standard, but the story has some style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with some editing can be published by a professional news outlet. The lead may be buried, main points may not be clearly articulated, and the story may have left out one or two important facts or included information not germane.

D (60 to 69 percent): The story has fundamental problems such as multiple style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors. It does not have a clear lead, main points may be missing and the story is poorly organized and written. Key points may be missing, requiring more interviews/calls. The story would have to be substantially reworked to be published.

F (<60 percent): Not submitted or the story is inaccurate, late or libelous, or it is of poor quality.

Please note: Any story that includes libelous material will result in an F (0 points). Examples would be if you describe someone as a murderer in your story before he or she has been convicted, or if you mistype the name of a convicted rapist or robber, implicating someone not guilty of the crime.

Work that is submitted on time will be evaluated based on the following criteria: rules of spelling, grammar, AP style, story structure, conciseness, clarity, readability, accuracy, flow, completeness and fairness. Any story or assignment that is submitted after the deadline will result in an F (0 points). **The deadline for in-class assignments is the end of class, unless otherwise instructed, and for outside assignments, the start of class.**

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS – **READ THIS!**

Turning in assignments. You must submit paper copies of all assignments. Always bring a **print out** of every assignment to class on the day it is due. If you must miss class on the day an assignment is due, upload your assignment to Blackboard prior to the start of class and you will receive credit for it.

I **highly recommend** that you **also** upload digital copies of your assignments to Blackboard. I've never lost a student's paper, but there's a first time for everything. Uploading to Blackboard will provide you with time-stamped delivery.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is your responsibility to store a digital copy of all assignments you turn in for grading. When preparing your final portfolio, you will need to access the assignments you turned in earlier in the course and revise those assignments according to editorial notes provided to you. Thus, storing your work digitally makes your life easier.

Formatting assignments. All written assignments must be in Word format, double-spaced. Use 12-point Times New Roman font. Do not create a cover page. On the top of page-one include all of the following information:

Your name
 Your email address
 Com-203, name of the assignment
 Date
 Word count

- Paragraphs must be consistently indented by five spaces throughout and you must use **AP Style**. Please consult your AP Stylebook and the “cheat sheets” I provide to you. You will lose points on assignments that don't meet these requirements. (If your assignment is longer than one page, please be sure your name is on all pages.)

ASSIGNMENTS

Three hundred points are available this semester. This course rewards a consistent effort. Blowing off the small assignments and hoping for a good grade on the two biggest assignments is not a plan for success. You will find descriptions for each assignment in the schedule on the next pages.

Weekly News Briefs (8 x 5 points each).....**40 points (13% of your grade)**

Short Writing Exercises / Homework.....**65 points (22% of your grade)**

- 6 Word Biography (10 points)
- Most Important News Event of Your Life (10 points)
- Editing Exercise (10 points)
- Write a Lead (5 points)
- Beat Memo (15 points)
- Feature Pitch (5 points)
- Statement & Prediction (10 points)

Story Assignments.....**80 points (27% of your grade)**

- Breaking News Story, In-class 350-word Assignment (20 points)
- Press Conference Story, In-Class 400-word Assignment (20 points)
- Feature Story Draft, 600 words (40 points)

Portfolio (compilation of your revised work in this class).....**100 points (33% of your grade)**

Professionalism/In-Class Engagement.....**15 points (5% of your grade)**

SCHEDULE

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ALL CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS AND/OR VIA EMAIL)

Aug 29, 2018

WEEK ONE – Course Introduction

We will discuss the course goals and requirements. We will define “news media” in the new media era, and I will present a short lecture on journalists as watchdogs. I will also explain your first assignments, which are as follows:

Homework Due September 5:

- **Six-Word Memoir (10 points).** Write your life story in exactly six words.
 - **Weekly News Brief (5 points each week x 8 weeks of briefs = 40 total points).** During the semester you will stay up to date with the news and you will scan The New York Times and other credible publications for stories you believe should be on everyone’s radar. Every week you will select TWO stories to potentially verbally “brief” the class about. (Not everyone will share every week, but please be prepared.) **You will also submit these briefs to me on paper each week.** If you must miss class the day a brief is due, you may upload it to Blackboard for 2 of the 5 points available. Your written briefs must include the following information for BOTH of stories you select each week. Keep your briefs BRIEF.
 - Publication (Newspaper or magazine) and date published:
 - Headline:
 - What’s the first sentence of the story?
 - What’s it about?
 - Who’s it about / who’s impacted by it?
 - When and where is it happening?
 - Why does this story matter? Why should we care about it?
 - **Read before our next class on Sept 5:**
 - [Behind the Race to Publish the Top Secret Pentagon Papers](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/20/us/pentagon-papers-post.html) (This is a 10-20 minute read. You do NOT need to watch the video that accompanies the text. We will watch that in class next week.)
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/20/us/pentagon-papers-post.html
 - [Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics](https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp) (This should take just 3-5 minutes to read. Give it a quick glance and save the link so that you can refer to it throughout your career.) https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp
-

Sept 5, 2018

WEEK TWO – Ethical Reporting. We will discuss how ethics and critical thinking apply to reporting and we will look at a case study in which we must apply journalistic principles to determine the best approach for reporting the story.

Due TODAY: Six-Word Memoir and your first Weekly News Brief. Be prepared to verbally share one of your news briefs with the class today. Don’t stress out about this. These are not formal presentations. I will simply ask, “What’s happening in the world this week?” I’ll look for volunteers and I will randomly call on people. So, come prepared. Please keep in mind everyone is expected to verbally share a brief at some point in the semester.

Homework Due Sept 12:

- **Weekly News Brief (#2)** for next week! And...
- **The Most Important News Event in Your Life Essay** (10 points) - Write 300-400 words discussing the most important news event in your life. In other words, what news event really impacted you? Maybe it was something close to home, maybe it was a national or international story. What happened? When? Where were you? Why did it affect you? How did you hear about it?

Sept 12, 2018

WEEK THREE – News Value & How News Language is Different

We will discuss the concept of “framing” a story and the news values that determine the newsworthiness of a story. We will also examine how journalists leverage language to be as accurate, fair and humane as possible while meeting audience expectations that they deliver information efficiently.

Due TODAY: The Most Important News Event in Your Life Essay plus your Weekly News Brief (#2)

Homework due Sept 19:

- Editing Exercise. (10 points) I will explain this in class.
- Weekly News Brief (#3)!
- Read three brief articles before class on Sept 19:

[Poynter's Writing from the Top Down: Pros and Cons of the Inverted Pyramid.](#)

[Poynter's Birth of the Inverted Pyramid: A Child of Technology, Commerce and History.](#) (Skim this one.)

[National Geographic's Breaking the Inverted Pyramid – placing the news in context](#)

Sept 19, 2018

WEEK FOUR – The Structure of a News Story

It's time to learn “the inverted pyramid” news story structure and discuss the elements of a “lede.” We will practice writing “ledes” and structuring a story in class.

Due TODAY: Editing Exercise plus your Weekly News Brief (#3)

Homework Due Sept 26:

- Weekly News Brief (#4), plus...
- Write a Lede (5 points) – Write a one or two sentence lede for a story that I give you in class. (due next week)
- Read the following before next week: (This seems like a lot of reading, but most of these are short articles.)

“[NPR's Giffords Mistake: Re-Learning the Lesson of Checking Sources.](#)” By Alicia Shepard, Jan. 11, 2011, NPR; “[Newsrooms Grapple with How to Avoid Twitter Bloopers.](#)” by Katie Takacs, American Journalism Review, Jan. 8, 2015; “[Slate's Good Strategy for Correcting Errors on Twitter, Elsewhere.](#)” by Craig Silverman, March 4, 2014, on poynter.org; [Facebook Fake News Writer: 'I think Donald Trump is in the White House because of me'](#); [Here's How Fake News Works and How the Internet Can Stop It VIDEO.](#)

Sept 26, 2018

WEEK FIVE – Getting it Right and Getting it Wrong

This week focuses on gathering facts and interviewing techniques: Handling direct quotes and attribution, and paraphrasing and attribution — for paper and people sources. What's the difference between interviews that are on the record, off the record and on background? When should interviews be recorded? Conducted by email? We'll also talk about avoiding plagiarism. And, how can we resist talking about fake news today?

Due TODAY: Weekly News Brief (#4) and your lede for the story we discussed in class last week.

Homework: NOTHING- but be prepared to write a breaking news story in class next week.

Oct 3, 2018

WEEK SIX – Breaking News Story

Roll up your sleeves and get ready to write in class today. During class time you will report and write a 350-word breaking news story. (20 points) This is a simulated exercise that will take place in the classroom.

Due TODAY: Breaking news story due at the end of class.

Homework Due October 10:

Read the Press Conference PowerPoint – I will post on Blackboard. Look at it before class 10/10

Read:

[Covering disasters with two phones, in case one falls in the mud.](#)

[Lester Holt explains how his team covers hurricanes on the ground.](#)

[Framing in news coverage of disasters.](#)

[To journalists covering war and disasters: Thank you for your service.](#)

Do NOT prepare a news brief for next week, but keep up with the news.

Oct 10, 2018

WEEK SEVEN– Press Conference Story

During class time you will participate as a journalist in a simulated press conference. You will prepare and ask questions, then you will write a short news story (up to 400 words) during class. (20 points) Your story is due at the end of class.

Due TODAY: Press conference story due at the end of class.

Homework: Weekly News Brief (#5). And read the following articles...

- [Turn the Beat Around by Diana Sugg](#)
 - [How to Redesign the Beat](#)
 - <https://www.poynter.org/news/6-ways-journalists-can-use-press-releases-effectively>
-

Oct 17, 2018

WEEK EIGHT– Working a Beat

As a professional reporter you will probably be assigned to a beat. Today we'll consider what that means. We'll also aim to talk about developing sources and maintaining a professional relationship with sources.

Due TODAY: Weekly News Brief (#5).

Homework: Do **NOT** prepare a Weekly News Brief for Oct 24. Instead, you will be assigned a “beat” and create a “Beat Memo” summarizing the beat. Your memo must include the following information:

- Brief background on the beat's history or important stats:
 - Which topics and issues fall in your beat? (What are the current stories/conversations/issues?)
 - What regular meetings or other events would you need to cover?
 - What are the gathering places – in person and online – you would need to frequent?
 - What publications should you regularly follow and what publications/books/films provide background?
 - Who are the 2-3 main reporters covering this beat?
 - Who are the officials you would need to visit regularly?
 - Who are the unofficial experts on the beat? And/or who else would you want to talk to regularly?
 - Who does this beat impact?
-

Oct 24, 2018

WEEK NINE– All the President’s Men

Today we’ll watch the greatest film ever made about journalists: All the Presidents Men. (Spotlight is a great movie too.)

Due TODAY: Beat Memo

Homework: Weekly News Brief (#6) and I will post a feature article for you to read on Blackboard.

Oct 31, 2018

WEEK TEN– The “Newsy” Feature

I will introduce the elements of a feature story and discuss your up-coming feature assignment.

Due TODAY: Weekly News Brief (#6)

Homework: Weekly News Brief (#7). Plus, in class next week you will “pitch” two story ideas for your feature assignment. (5 points) Type your ideas in two or three sentences – no more! Your ideas must be based on facts; don’t make up stuff. Each of you will discuss your ideas in class, then turn in the printed document.

Nov 7, 2018

WEEK ELEVEN – Features continued and catch up day

We will continue discussing features today and you will pitch your feature story ideas in class.

Due TODAY: Feature story pitches. Weekly News Brief (#7).

Homework: Feature story. **Feature Story (40 points)** - You will write a 600-word feature story. Your feature will include: a headline, a lede, a nut graph, body, and kicker. You must interview 2-3 people and correctly include quotes. Your draft is due in class on Nov 14. I will edit and grade your draft and return it to you after Thanksgiving. You will revise the draft and turn in a final draft as part of your portfolio that is due on Dec 12.

Nov 14, 2018

WEEK TWELVE – The Story Changes with the Medium

We’ve focused on writing for print/online news sources up until now. Today we will examine how the structure of the story changes when you write for visual news mediums. Learning to “write to picture” is weird at first, but fun once you get the hang of it.

Due TODAY: Feature Story Drafts (40 points).

Homework: Eat turkey. Rest. Start assembling your portfolios. Have a Weekly News Brief ready for Nov 28.

Nov 21, 2018

WEEK THIRTEEN – No class. Happy Thanksgiving! Gobble, gobble!

Nov 28, 2018

WEEK FOURTEEN – Writing Obituaries: What to do and not to do

We'll start by comparing these: [The New York Times' obit on author Colleen McCullough](#), and [The Australian's](#). Then we will practice writing a short obit in class.

Due TODAY: Weekly News Brief (#8) – the last one of the semester!

Homework:

- Respond to these questions in **less than 200 words**. (10 points) **Due by 11:59 p.m. on 12/5**
 - What is the role of the professional journalist in today's society?
 - Predict how you will answer this same question in 2024.
 - As part of the portfolio you submit on 12/12, you will write a **400-500-word celebrity obituary**. We'll decide the subject in class. Read the following articles before diving in to this assignment: "[The art of writing an obituary](#)," from The Economist June 5, 2017. Also read The Economist's 1994 article, "[The art of the obit](#)." As time permits, browse: "[Not Forgotten](#)," memorable obituaries from The New York Times.
-

Dec 5, 2018

WEEK FIFTEEN – Last day of class

We'll have a wrap-up discussion of reporters' ethics and the SPJ and Associated Press Codes of Ethics. We may break into groups to talk about the Associated Press, [RTDNA](#) and [Washington Post](#) codes of ethics: Should anything be stricken? Should anything be added?

Due TODAY: Statement & Prediction – Due at 11:59 p.m. tonight

Homework: Work on your portfolios! **On December 12, you will turn in a portfolio (100 points) of work completed in this class. Your portfolio will include the following pieces:**

- Breaking News Story
 - Original draft submitted on Oct 3
 - Revised draft
 - Press Conference Story
 - Original draft submitted on Oct 10
 - Revised draft
 - Feature Story
 - Draft submitted for grading on Nov 14
 - Final Draft
 - Obituary
 - Only one draft. It should be a FINAL draft. SO, consider having a classmate read and edit a rough draft.
 - Self-Evaluation Statement
 - Write 200 - 300 words (NO MORE!) analyzing your work, your improvement, etc.
-

Dec 12, 2018 - FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED for 4:30 – 7:15 p.m., but you will NOT take a final exam in this course. We will use this time slot ONLY if we have fallen behind in the schedule due to inclement weather or other unexpected class cancellations.

Your portfolios must be delivered today by 5 p.m.

You may hand deliver them to my office. Please keep in mind that the Northeast Module front door locks at 5 pm.

Wishing you a fun, festive and restful winter break!