JOURNALISM 205     NEWS WRITING  
3 CREDITS  
T, TH 9:45 – 11 A.M.

INSTRUCTOR: Elizabeth “Libby” Young  
OFFICE: Hale Akoakoa 239  
OFFICE HOURS: 1:30 – 3 p.m., T, Th or anytime by appointment  
TELEPHONE: 235-7396 libby@hawaii.edu  
EFFECTIVE DATE: Spring 2008

WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENT

Windward Community College is committed to excellence in the liberal arts and career development; we support and challenge individuals to develop skills, fulfill their potential, enrich their lives, and become contributing, culturally aware members of our community.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An introductory course in news writing, news gathering and journalistic ethics.  
Prerequisite: Eng 100

Activities Required at Scheduled Times Other Than Class Times: One or two field trips. Conferences on major assignments.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student learning outcomes for the course are:

1. Analyze the quality of coverage in stories produced by the mass media and other students to become a more informed consumer of news.
2. Identify basic journalistic concepts and principles, including news values, news and feature story structures and issues relating to communication law and ethics.
3. Apply basic journalistic concepts and principles to produce a range of articles (press release, short news, profile, timed deadline pieces, news story and in-depth news or feature) that meet standards for readability, accuracy, news style and mechanics.
4. Conduct background research and interviews to gather information accurately and comprehensively.
5. Edit and proofread their own and others’ stories for readability, clarity, accuracy, news value, conciseness and mechanics.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This course will be taught with a variety of methods, including considerable practical experience in writing, small group sessions and conferences for discussion and feedback on assignments, guest speakers from the press and field trips. Students will have story assignments that may involve fact-gathering and interviewing on campus or in the community. The emphasis will be on learning by doing.
COURSE CONTENT

Concepts or Topics

• Becoming a more informed consumer of news
• Sharpening communication skills to write effective news articles, including listening, observing, questioning, writing and editing.
• Developing an understanding of journalistic terms and principles.
• Developing news judgment and an appreciation of journalistic ethics.

Skills or Competencies

1. Develop intelligent questions and do background research for interviews.
2. Gather and organize facts; take accurate notes.
3. Distinguish fact from opinion; correct use of quotation and attribution.
4. Write strong lead sentences and readable stories in different formats.
5. Edit for clarity, conciseness and completeness
6. Explain and apply news terms
7. Use news style rules as well as correct grammar and mechanics.
8. Meet deadlines.
9. Read a newspaper regularly to develop awareness of issues and journalistic style.

COURSE TASKS

1. Complete a minimum of 70 percent of writing exercises and homework assignments at the OK (meets basic requirements) or + (above average level. Each assignment will focus on specific skills; the skills, in turn, will build on each other to improve your writing. In some cases, you may be asked to revise.

2. Complete at least five articles of varying lengths, including a press release, short news, feature profile, news event and a final in-depth story. These should show that you can fulfill the requirements for a particular type of story at a satisfactory level. Each assignment will have a rough draft and a final version.

3. Complete three sets of short, in-class writings to practice organizing information under time constraints.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of news terms and concepts, copy editing symbols and news style by scoring at least 60 percent on a final quiz.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Grades in this course will be based on:

1. Five story assignments and in-class writing with revisions required 70%
2. One in-class final quiz 15%
3. Class attendance, discussions and homework assignments 15%

The final course grade will be based on completion of all objectives at specified levels.* Improvement
over the semester is an important consideration in the final grade.

Articles will be evaluated according to criteria provided with each assignment. Generally, these grades reflect the following:

A = Excellent
Demonstrates a mastery of news writing skills. Fulfills all objectives of assignment.

B = Good
Demonstrates a growing news writing ability with only a few errors or areas of weakness. Fulfills most objectives of assignment.

C = Fair
Demonstrates some understanding of news writing skills but may have major weaknesses in content, organization or mechanics. Needs revision.

D = Poor
Demonstrates rudimentary grasp of news writing but has major weaknesses in two or more areas of content, organization and mechanics. Needs much revision.

F = Unacceptable
Return to the drawing board.

NOTE: All articles must be typed, double-spaced and follow news copy format. In accordance with the nature of the news business, the importance of meeting deadlines will be emphasized. Late assignments will be marked down one letter grade, unless there are extenuating circumstances. With the student’s consent, stories of high quality may be published in WCC’s campus newspaper, Ka ‘Ohana.

* FINAL GRADING:
A final A grade requires: At least 90% of exercises completed at OK or + level. Final quiz completed at A or B level. Completion of story assignments at A or B level. Completion of final article at A level. 90% and above attendance and active class participation.

A final B grade requires: 80% of exercises completed at OK or + level. Final quiz completed at B level or better. Completion of story assignments at B level. Completion of final article at B level. 80% and above attendance and active class participation.

A final C grade requires: 70% of exercises completed at OK or + level. Final quiz completed at C level or better. Completion of story assignments at a C level. Completion of final article at C level. 70% and above attendance and class participation.

A final D grade requires: 60% of exercises completed at OK or + level. Quiz completed at D level or better. Completion of story assignments at D level. Completion of final article at D level. 60% and above attendance and class participation.
W = Formal withdrawal
N = Less than minimal passing achievement
I = Incomplete. Assigned at the discretion of the instructor. A temporary grade for a student who cannot complete a small part of the course because of circumstances beyond his or her control.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Texts:
Required: Reporting for the Print Media, eighth edition by Fred Fedler.
Recommended: The Associated Press Stylebook

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

JOURNALISM 205

• Development and role of mass media and how it influences us.

• What is news? Discussion of factors that determine newsworthiness of events.

• Answering basic questions in a news story – 5W’s and H; the inverted pyramid story structure. ABCOH – Accuracy, attribution, balance, clarity, concisenessness, objectivity, human interest.

• The press release – How to get publicity for your event.

• A short news story – Interview someone about a subject on campus or in the community. Write a short article to interest readers.

• The feature profile – A story based on an interview with an interesting person of your choice. Speaker: A professional feature writer

• The longer news story – Find an issue or event and develop a story based on facts and quotes that is accurate, balanced and fair.

• TV news – Field trip to KITV to watch the 6 p.m. news cast, covering “breaking news.”

• Writing with a deadline – How to process information quickly and accurately.

• Editing for clarity, accuracy, grammar and style. • Journalism ethics, detecting bias, libel law.

• The in-depth final news or feature article – Your choice of subject to explore in depth, using several sources, facts, quotes, human interest examples and background research and drawing on all the skills you’ve learned during the semester.

• Final news quiz – Covers basic concepts learned throughout the semester.

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DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT
If you have a physical, sensory, health, cognitive, or mental health disability that could limit your ability to fully participate in this class, you are encouraged to contact the Disability Specialist Counselor to discuss reasonable accommodations that will help you succeed in this class. Ann Lemke can be reached at 235-7448, lemke@hawaii.edu, or you may stop by Hale ‘Akoakoa 213 for more information.