**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: EN206 Survey of Journalism**

**Home Department: English**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information:** Lynn Domina, [ldomina@nmu.edu](mailto:ldomina@nmu.edu), 227-2711

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course:** Every semester

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content

Course examines the origins, history, and traditions of journalism, and the role the free press has played in the development of political and democratic processes in the United States.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

EN206 requires students to read essays, critical analysis and news stories, watch films and newscasts, and keep up with current events through media to inform their understanding of the changing role the free press has played in American society. Through these activities, students fulfill the requirements critical thinking and perspectives on society, enabling them to consider the manner human and historical events are covered and interpreted by the press.

***Critical Thinking***

Critical thinking undergirds all of the written and oral work students engage in for EN 206. This course requires students to read essays, critical analysis and news stories, and watch films and newscasts from around the world. Students will critically analyze how stories are presented and how journalists take various perspectives, taking into account the cultures and histories that influence the media. Students will compose several written, oral, and/or multimodal assignments.

* In order to satisfy the ***Evidence*** learning outcome dimension, students will be required to recognize key journalistic elements using a heuristic (who, what, when, where, why, how) and apply theory to the practice of print journalism.
* For the ***Integration*** learning outcome dimension, students will synthesize and integrate knowledge of the traditions of American print journalism, and the role the press played in the development of our political and democratic processes.
* For the ***Evaluate*** learning outcome dimension, students will incorporate and explore ethical, legal concerns, and privacy issues faced by working journalists and the people who appear in their stories. For instance, how was the accidental dumping of oil into our oceans handled by the media (i.e., Exxon Valdez or B.P.) and whose stories were told first and whose stories might not have been told.

*Perspectives in Society*

* *For the* ***Analysis of Society***dimension,students will investigate issues such as the first amendment and its role in American society after the Revolutionary War; and how yellow journalism affected the public’s impression of the press.
* *For the* ***Ethical issues***dimension, students will explore issues related to decision-making about what stories get told and from whose perspective. Additionally, issues of ethics such as transparency, providing context, taking responsibility for the accuracy of their work, seeking truth, minimizing harm, etc. will be explored.
* *For the* ***development and context of society*** dimension, students will discuss and explore the changing role of journalists in American society andhow technology is challenging how truth is reported and in what format stories are told (i.e., multi-media sites such as Upworthy and newspapers moving to online components).

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)

Freshman and sophomores, and students considering a journalism or history major/minor, as well as those interested in studying political science, philosophy, pre-law, education, or other social science programs.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

The course is part of the English Department minor in Journalism and the Interdisciplinary Journalism Major.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

N/A

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | ***Task Type:*** Students will participate in course conversations, create discussion questions, and/or produce oral presentations and generate and support assertions by creating **short essays** and/or participate in several **forum/classroom discussions**. *Evidence* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least twice  **Overall Grading Weight: 10-**20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:** The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Task Type: Students will produce papers or exam answers that require them to read critically and analytically and produce a coherent, critical argument. *Integration* dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least twice  **Overall Grading Weight: 10-**20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:** The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | **Task Type:** Students will construct written assignments (i.e., study guides) and/or exams by integrating theory with analysis of journalistic principles as applied to news stories. Evaluation dimension is assessed via assignment-specific rubrics.  **Frequency:** at least once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 10-20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:**The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY**

*Attainment of the PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIETY Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this learning outcome. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Analysis of society** | Analysis of social issues, structures and processes or events | **Task Type**: Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze the changing structure, laws, and mores of society that are expressed through the free press and its journalistic practices. Assessment occurs in written, evidenced papers, short-essays quizzes and group presentations.  **Frequency:** at least once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 10-20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:**. **Expected Proficiency Weight:** The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |
| **Ethical Issues** | Addressing ethical issues in society | Task Type: Ethical issues in news coverage are addressed through a written critical paper, a group presentation on a case study of press ethics, and through periodic tests of lecture material.  **Frequency:** at least once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 10-20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:**The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |
| **Development and context of society** | Explore themes in the development of human society | Task Type: Developments of a free press from Gutenberg in the 1500s, to the Penny Press of 1830s, the Yellow Press of the 1890s to 24-hour news networks are themes and issues measured through lectures, tests, and group exercises.  **Frequency:** at least once  **Overall Grading Weight**: 10-20%  **Expected Proficiency Weight:** The criterion weight level for *proficient* is at 75% because this is an introductory, two hundred-level course. |

# EN 206: Survey of Journalism

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**Winter 2015 James McCommons**

**Mon/Wed 4 to 5:40 p.m. 3246 Jamrich Hall**

**Jamrich 3103 . Work: 227-2674**

[**jmccommo@nmu.edu**](mailto:jmccommo@nmu.edu)

*Office Hours*:

M-W Noon to 1:30 p.m.

T-TH 10 a.m. to Noon

Also by appointment

# Course Description

The NMU University Bulletin defines the course in this way*: “Theory and history of print journalism. Introduction to the fundamentals of news writing, reporting and editing.”*

Our primary emphasis will be on the theory and practice of journalism, in particular newspaper journalism, the oldest and most fundamental news medium. Despite the growth of radio, television and on-line media, print still employs the most journalists in the United States.

We begin by looking at the origins, history, and traditions of American print journalism, and the role the press played in the development of our political and democratic processes. We’ll examine the practical workings of a newsroom, how reporters and editors make decisions and cover stories, and the business of journalism. Later in the course, we examine the ethical, legal concerns, and privacy issues faced by working journalists and the people who appear in their stories. And throughout the semester, we will be looking at the current coverage of news events.

**Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, you will have a:

An informed understanding of the changing role the free press has played in American society.

An enhanced ability to think critically about ethical issues involving free speech and coverage of new events.

An understanding of the nuances of press freedom and the changing notions about privacy, defamation, and transparency of public information.

# Required Texts

*Mightier Than the Sword*, Rodger Streitmatter

Supplemental readings, podcasts as assigned

### Lectures and Readings

The course is delivered via lecture with accompanying PowerPoints. Nearly all of your quiz questions will come from these lectures. To get the most out of the lectures, you need to keep up with your readings, take detailed notes on the material and join the discussions in class. I will provide study guides to the readings that you will complete and hand-in for credit. Study guides will count toward your participation grade. It is important to complete them. The quizzes, which account for a significant portion of your grade, will motivate you to keep current with both the lectures and readings.

As well, I suggest you read a couple of daily newspapers on-line and keep current with the news of the day. On your quizzes, there will be bonus questions on current events. I will draw the questions from the following news sources.

USA Today [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com)

CNN.com [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)

AP <http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/fronts/HOME?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME>

# Grading

Quizzes 50 percent

Participation/attendance 15 percent

Paper 10 percent

Group project 10 percent

Final Exam 15 percent

# Grading Scale

90-100 = A- to A

80 to 89 = B- to B+

70 to 79 = C- to C+

60 to 69 = D- to D+

Below 60 = F

**Some Advice on Grades**

If you get an A in this class, you have done nothing short of outstanding, exemplary work. If you get a B, do not lament. It is a good grade. If you get a ‘C’, it means you have done average work. It is only when a grade is a C- or below that your performance can be considered poor. An A student attends all classes, actively participates in discussions, keeps current on the readings and the day’s news, writes a well-thought out paper, studies for quizzes and generally does outstanding work. A handful of students earn an A.

Students who have difficulty in the course invariably miss several classes, take sparse or slipshod notes, read haphazardly, and simply do not study for quizzes and tests.

When students do poorly in the writing assignments, it’s often because they have not followed directions, executed the assignments as requested, or handed in a paper riddled with spelling and grammar errors. If you are having trouble with the mechanics of writing, my suggestion is to run your paper by tutors in the Writing Center located in the LRC.

**Extra Credit**

I will give extra credit to any student who publishes a news or feature story in The North *Wind*. If you publish two stories, you will receive an additional 8 percent of your final earned grade in extra credit. If you publish one article, you will receive a 5 percent boost in your final earned grade. You are limited to two articles. Each article must be 300 words or more and must carry your byline. There is no other extra credit in this course.

Also, be aware that I will not give you an incomplete for this course unless there are extenuating circumstances documented by the Dean of Students Office.

### Late Work/Make ups

Handing in late assignments without prior permission from the instructor hurts your grade. I deduct 10 points per day. Miss the deadline by 10 days and you get a zero. Prior permission to hand in late assignments is not given easily. Journalism is all about meeting deadlines, and though this is not necessarily a writing class, I expect you to meet your deadlines.

You are responsible for all material covered in class—whether you were there or not--and for meeting the same deadlines as classmates who were present. If you miss a quiz without getting *prior* permission, you cannot make it up. Quizzes will be announced a week in advance and there will be review sessions.

**Gizmos**

There will be no use of laptop computers, cell phones or other handheld devices in the class. Turn off all your devices and put them away when entering the classroom. All notes will be taken the old fashioned way—on paper—which is actually good practice if you decide to pursue journalism. I expect you to come to class and be engaged. I expect you to be quiet, attentive and respectful of me and of others.

# Attendance

Apathy, tardiness and unexcused absences hurt your final grade. If you do miss class, you should promptly get lecture notes and homework from a classmate. If there is something you don’t understand after reviewing those notes, you can stop in and see me during office hours or by appointment. I don’t respond to requests to “tell me what I missed” because I cannot repeat an entire class. Nor do I respond to e-mails that require long and involved responses. Come see me or call.

**Excused Absences/Get out of Jail**

You are given two unexcused absences (unless there is a quiz, group presentation or assignment deadline that day). Using the Monopoly analogy, consider this a “Get of Jail Free Card.” Use your card when you feel ill, but not ill enough to visit the medical center. Use it when you belong to an organization and must travel to miss class. Use it when you can’t get to school because of bad weather. Use it wisely because it is all you get. I give you these absences so I am not the arbiter of what a legitimate absence is and what is not. Mainly, I don’t need to know why you missed class—except if you have a death in the family, a serious illness, or another “real” emergency. Then please talk to me and provide documentation.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the borrowing, quoting, and copying of someone else’s written work without attribution. If you are found to be guilty of plagiarizing someone’s work or papers or downloading off the Internet, you will fail the course and may even be suspended from the university. All incidences of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students.

I’m a pretty good spotter of plagiarism and frequently use Internet sites and computerized tools to verify my suspicions. The worldwide web may make plagiarism more tempting, but it also makes detection quite easy.

#### **Conferences/Office Visits**

I do not schedule individual conferences, but you are always welcome to see me during office hours. If you can’t make it during those hours, we can schedule another time.

I’m willing to discuss grading practices, read drafts of assignments and offer comments, and help students sincerely interested in improving their performance. Any time you want to know where you stand in your overall grade, simply ask me or look on the EduCat gradebook.

# Disability Statement

If you have a need for disability-related accommodations or services, please inform the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Dean of Students Office at 2001 C. B. Hedgcock Building (227-1700). Reasonable and effective accommodations and services will be provided to students if requests are made in a timely manner, with appropriate documentation, in accordance with federal, state, and University guidelines.

**Disclaimer**

This syllabus is an approximation of the topics covered in the course and the timeliness in which we will cover them. We may spend more or less time on some subjects. Consequently this syllabus, schedule and any related deadlines are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. All changes will be announced in class and communicated to you via e-mail and/or EduCat.

# SCHEDULE

**Week One/January 12 & 14**

Course Overview

What is a Newspaper?

**Week Two/ January 21**

Introduction to History

Early Printers

Journalism Emerges in Europe

The Press in Colonial America

**Week Three/ January 26 & 28**

The Zenger Trial

The Press During & After the American Revolution

The First Amendment

**Week Four/ February 2 & 4**

The Early 1800s

The Technological Revolution

The Penny Press

The Civil War/Telegraphy

**Week Five/ February 9 & 11**

The Civil War—the First Crusade

Yellow Journalism

The Muckrakers

The Rise of Objectivity

Standards/Professionalism Emerge

# Week Six/ February 16 & 18

# The Great War-The Sedition Act

Circulation Decline

The Tabloid Press

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week Seven/March 9 & 11**

Radio Emerges

World War II

McCarthyism and the Red Scare

**Week Eight/March 16 & 18**

Vietnam

TV Civil Rights

The ‘70s

**Week Nine/ March 23 & 25**

Watergate

The Pentagon Papers

**Week Ten/** **March 30 & April 1**

Covering War

The Media/9-11

24 Hour News Cycles

# Week Eleven/ April 6 & 8

First Amendment

The Language of Journalism

**Week Twelve/ April 13 & 15**

Community Standards

Attribution/Transparency Background

Privacy and Compassion

Ethics