UWRP 3020: Writing on the New York Times
Fall, 2005
Instructor: Juliet Wittman

Office hours: MWF 1 to 2 p.m. and by appointment, Environmental Design Building (ENVD) IB80
(lower level); (303) 735-4772
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Texts:

The New York Times. Subscribe at 1-888-698-2655

Articles and essays as assigned.

Student papers: Papers will be workshopped in class, and you will need to make copies of your
papers for distribution to your fellow students.

Relevant websites:
The Guardian: www.guardian.co.uk
Times of London: www.thetimes.co.uk
British Broadcasting Corporation: www.news.bbc.co.uk
The Paperboy (a gateway to newspapers from around the world): www.the-paperboy.com
Accuracy in Media: www.aim.org
Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting: www.fair.org

Recommended supplemental texts:

* The Elements of Style, Strunk and White
* On Writing Well, William Zinsser
* A first-rate dictionary and a college handbook, such as The Everyday Writer, Andrea A.
  Lunsford, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Course description:

In this class, you will learn to:
--Write clearly-thought-out analytic and argumentative pieces
--Hone research skills
--Practice revision. Learn to critique both your own writing and that of others
--Read closely, so that you not only understand the primary meaning of a given text, but are
also alert to preconceptions, cultural bias and attempts—both honest and dishonest—to persuade
--Start to understand the role of news in society, as well as how your own world view is shaped
by the mass media

Attendance and participation:
Since this is a workshop class, attendance is crucial; participation counts for 15 percent of your
final grade. More than three unexcused absences can result your final grade falling by one
fraction of a letter (from A to A-, etc.); six absences may earn you an F.

Writing Center: Individual tutoring is available for students at every writing level. You can make
an appointment at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html

Aug. 22-26: The role of the newspaper; alternative sources of news
Read articles by Postman and Rosenblatt; also Brit vs. Yank (handouts)

Aug. 29-Sept. 2: Objectivity—an attainable goal? A desirable one?
Sept. 5 to 9: Labor day; Pressures on the newspaper; how editors and reporters select and present the news

Sept. 12-16: Liberal versus conservative: dueling truths

Sept. 19-23: Bias and objectivity continued; the uses of argument
*Read George Orwell, Politics and the English Language*

Sept. 26-30: Small group critique; clear writing; the danger of cliche

Oct. 3-7: Research topics; the uses of interviews
*Select topic. Set up your interview*

Oct. 10-14: How to structure interviews; use of quotations; fall break

Oct. 17-21: Conducting research

Oct. 24-28: Small-group critique; thesis statement; conferences

Oct. 31-Nov. 4: Research continued; style and structure; how to write a lit. review

Nov. 7-11: Presentations

Nov. 14-18: Presentations

Nov. 21-25: Small group critique; Thanksgiving

Nov. 28-Dec. 2: Descriptive writing; the purpose of obituaries and reviews

Dec. 5-7: The future of the media

**Assignment sequence:**

*Sept. 2: Personal narrative on how I get my news and the ideal newspaper (2-3 pages)*

*Sept. 23: Argument paper on objectivity in the media (3-5 pages)*

*Sept. 30: Rewrite of argument paper*

*Oct. 21: Interview (3-4 pages)*

*Oct. 31: Interview rewrite*

*Nov. 7: Literature review*

*Nov. 18: Research paper (9-10 pages)*

*Dec. 2: Research paper rewrite*

*Dec. 7: Review or obituary (2-3 pages)*

Some books on the press

Speaking of Journalism: 12 Writers and Editors Talk About Their Work, by William Zinsser, HarperPerennial
The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists and the Stories that Shape the Political World, by Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Paul Waldman, Oxford University Press

A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper, by John Allen Paulos, Basic Books

What Liberal Media? The Truth About Bias and the News, by Eric Alterman, Basic Books

Blinded by the Right: The Truth About Bias and the News, by David Brock, Crown

Bias: A CBS Insider Exposes How the Media Distort the News, by Bernard Goldberg, Perennial Currents

We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People for the People, by Dan Gillmor (http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/wemedia/book/index.csp)

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