Texas A&M University  
Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications

AGCJ 313 – Sections 901 and 902  
Agricultural Media Writing I  
Fall 2014

Instructors:  David Walther  
Office:  AGLS 265B  
Email:  david.walther@tamu.edu

Office Hours:  Mondays and Wednesdays, 9am to 12n.  Students may also visit by appointment.

Deborah Dunsford  
Office:  AGLS 269  
Phone:  979-458-3389  
Email:  dunsford@tamu.edu

Office hours are by appointment. Please use the department’s online system:  
http://tx.ag/ALECAdvising

Sections 901 and 902 course lecture:  MW, 11:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. in AGLS 115

Section 901 lab (Walther):  MW, 12:40 to 1:50 p.m.  Location: AGLS 111A

Section 902 lab (Dunsford):  MW, 2:10 to 3:20 p.m.  Location: AGLS 111A

Prerequisites:  Grade of C or better in AGCJ 105 and AGCJ 312.

Course Description:  News gathering, writing, editing and ethics for current and emerging mediums used in agricultural communications; includes news identification, basic news writing methods, introduction to public relations, broadcast and Internet writing; interviewing skills, proper use of direct quotes and other news styles; credit cannot be given for both AGCJ 313 and JOUR 203.

Required Course Texts:


Course Objectives/Outcomes:
- Learn to write clear and tight copy using inverted pyramid style
- Learn basics of straight news and feature reporting
- Learn appropriate styles for print, Web and broadcast media
- Develop knowledge of Associated Press Stylebook
- Develop critical thinking skills appropriate for targeted audiences, including agricultural stakeholders
**Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend every class session and be on time. In the event of illness or other conflict please notify the instructor prior to class via email. Missed quizzes and lab exercises may only be made up for University Excused Absences and those approved by the instructor. Unexcused late submissions of major writing assignments will result in a loss of 10 points for every day late.

The University views attendance as the responsibility of the individual student. University rules related to absences are available online at [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07).

You are encouraged to respond in class as questions are directed to you. Please feel free to ask questions or raise points for discussion. Civility is expected in class at all times. Please conduct yourself as a professional journalist.

**Graded Activities:**

*Fifty percent of your grade will be derived from four major writing assignments (each assignment worth 12.5 percent of overall course grade):

1) one single-source feature
2) one multi-source feature
3) one speech or press conference
4) one ‘your choice’ feature story

*Forty percent of your grade will be based on unannounced current events quizzes, AP style quizzes, and lab writing exercises. A total of twenty grades will be provided for a combination of the quizzes and lab exercises (each of the twenty grades is worth two percent of overall course grade).

*A comprehensive final exam will be given (worth ten percent of overall course grade).

**Grading Scale:** Letter grades will be based upon the normal 90-100%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D, less than 60%=F.

**Writing Format:** Use Microsoft Word only, double spaced, 12-point, indented paragraphs. Your name and the assignment title should be positioned in the upper right corner of the paper. Use -30- to end your story. AP style is mandatory. Word counts will be provided for each assignment.
**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disabilities Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit [http://disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu)

**Faculty Senate Statement on Plagiarism and Aggie Code of Honor:** Scholastic misconduct is defined broadly as “any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work or that involves misrepresentation of your own work.” Plagiarism is one of the worst academic offenses, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student.

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do.”

The Aggie Code of Honor is an effort to unify the aims of all Texas A&M men and women toward a high code of ethics and personal dignity. For most, living under this code will be no problem, as it asks nothing of a person that is beyond reason. It only calls for honesty, and integrity, characteristics that Aggies have always exemplified. The Aggie Code of Honor functions as a symbol to all Aggies, promoting understanding and loyalty to truth and confidence in each other.

If you have questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, Part 1, Section 20, which can be found online at [http://student-rules.tamu.edu](http://student-rules.tamu.edu). Any suspected instances of scholastic dishonesty will be investigated and resolved according to the procedures outlined in the new Aggie Honor System ([http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonors](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonors)).

**Copyright Policy:** Please note that all handouts and supplements used in this course are copyrighted. This includes all materials generated for this class, including but not limited to syllabi, exams, in-class materials, review sheets, and lecture outlines. Materials may be downloaded or photocopied for personal use only, and may not be given or sold to other individuals.

**Syllabus Revision Policy:** Revisions to this syllabus will be made at the discretion of the instructor. Modifications (if any) will be announced in class, and may not be communicated in writing.
### AGCJ 313

**Tentative Outline of Course**

(Outline may be adjusted as guest speakers are added to schedule)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of January 13</th>
<th>Course Overview; Syllabus; Intro to AP Stylebook</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week of January 20</td>
<td>Intro to News Gathering; WWWW WH Reporting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of January 27</td>
<td>WWWW WH cont.; AP Style A-B; Punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of February 3</td>
<td>Single Source Feature Writing; AP Style C-G</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of February 10</td>
<td>Single Source Feature – cont.; AP Style H-P</td>
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**Single Source Feature Article due no later than 11:00pm on Friday, Feb. 14**

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<tr>
<th>Week of February 17</th>
<th>Multi Source Feature Writing; AP Style Q-Z</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week of February 24</td>
<td>Multi Source Feature cont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week of March 3</td>
<td>Media Law &amp; Management</td>
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**Multi-Source Feature Article due no later than 11:00pm on Friday, March 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of March 10</th>
<th>Spring Break!!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week of March 17</td>
<td>Speeches &amp; Press Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of March 24</td>
<td>Speeches cont.; Public Relations</td>
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**Speech or press conference due no later than 5pm on Friday, March 28**

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<tr>
<th>Week of March 31</th>
<th>Choice Article; Enterprise Journalism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week of April 7</td>
<td>Intro to Broadcast &amp; Web</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of April 14</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
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**Choice Article due no later than 5pm on Friday, April 18**

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<tr>
<th>Week of April 21</th>
<th>WWWW WH (again)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week of April 28</td>
<td>Redefined. Class meets Monday only.</td>
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**Final Exam will be scheduled on Wednesday, May 7, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**