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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-10 a.m. and 2-3 p.m.;
and by appointment.

Fall 2013
2 credits
T, R 1-1:50 p.m.
CF 226

Welcome to Jour 106 Writing Structure

Catalog description: Analysis of and skill development in sentence structure, syntax, English grammar, mechanics, usage and punctuation as applied to journalistic writing.

Course procedure and goals:

Media require information to be prepared quickly and accurately for immediate consideration by readers, viewers and Web site visitors.

Journalistic writing, a process to provide such information, is conducted under pressure of deadline and requires full and immediate knowledge of and ability to apply specialized and correct English grammar, mechanics and punctuation, as well as syntax and usage.

The course will develop understanding, knowledge and abilities of students in such areas and is intended primarily to meet the need of those Western Journalism students who desire a bridging class between J207 Newswriting and J309 Editing. However, the course is suitable for all Western students wishing to refine their command of the English language.

Through practice exercises, group work, individualized assignments and tests, students will work toward these goals:

- to understand and use well phrases and dependent and independent clauses
- to recognize and maintain correct and consistent subject/verb agreement
- to recognize and use active voice and to avoid passive voice, oversubordination and dead constructions in sentences
- to recognize and maintain correct and consistent pronoun/antecedent agreement and to avoid vague pronoun references
- to recognize and use appropriate pronoun case
- to recognize and appropriately use verb tenses
- to punctuate correctly with periods, commas, question marks, quotation marks, hyphens, dashes, colons, semicolons, ellipsis dots and apostrophes
- to improve writing clarity, conciseness and coherence, reduce wordiness, and achieve cogency
- to recognize and use modifiers appropriately
- to improve spelling ability
- to improve syntax, and enhance style and sensitivity

Required Texts: *Working with Words: a Handbook for Media Writers and Editors* (8th edition is preferred) by Brian S. Brooks, James L. Pinson, Jean Gaddy Wilson, Bedford St. Martins; a college-level dictionary.

Recommended: A more detailed grammar guide, such as:
Chartbook: Fundamentals of English Grammar, by Betty S. Azar
Fowler's Modern English Usage, by R. W. Burchfield

Grading:

Grades for the course will be based on in-class exercises, an individual project, a brief presentation and two quizzes. More than half of the grade will be based on work related to exercises done in class; students should expect to attend regularly and will find they benefit most when:

- they do not miss classes,
- work intensely on the written exercises,
- and practice skills between class sessions.

The **individual project** asks each student to identify errors he or she commonly makes in writing assignments for other classes or in articles written for publication and to form effective strategies for naming, understanding and correcting the errors.

A brief **class presentation** will be done on one typical kind of error, plus the grammar resources that have been most helpful in finding a solution. **The written component** includes: sample pages showing the errors, narrative explaining the problems as well as the solutions, and the list of sources consulted. This paper is due on Thursday, Nov. 14.

A classroom atmosphere conducive to learning is important, so students are expected to treat one another with mutual respect and to avoid disrupting the learning of others.

Points:

Eight in-class exercises:	150 points
Two quizzes (25 points each)	50 points
Written project	40 points
Brief class presentation	10 points
Total	250 possible points

Letter grades are at least: A = 90%; B = 80%; C = 70%; D = 60%

The plus/minus grade system will be used. Incompletes will be granted only as specifically provided for in Western's catalog. Late assignments are penalized 10 percent for each day late (weekends count as one day late). In-class assignments cannot be done later unless arrangements are made and proof of major illness or family emergency is provided to the instructor.

Reading assignments and topics:

(Assignments are for the 8th edition of Working with Words.)

Sept. 26 Introduction, overview and theory; for Tuesday, read “Introduction for Students” and Ch. 1 “Grammar Basics.”

Oct. 1 Exercise 1 due: aspects of language, 15 points.

Oct. 3 Reading: Ch. 2 “Phrases, Clauses and Sentences,” and Ch. 6 “Modifiers and Connecting Words.”

Oct. 8 Exercise 2 due: sentence forms; verbals and prepositions, 20 points.

Oct. 10 Reading: Ch. 4 “Verbs,” pages 56-75.

Oct. 15 Exercise 3 due: sequencing tenses; active and passive voice, 20 points.

Oct. 17 Research proposals due; Reading: Ch. 3 “Subjects and Objects.”

Oct. 22 Exercise 4 due: personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and case, 20 points.

Oct. 24 Review for quiz.

Oct. 29 Reading: Ch. 4 “Verbs,” pages 76-83; introduction to the three moods.

Oct. 31 Quiz 1 – 25 points. Open book, open notes, but individual effort. All exercises from the first part of the quarter must be turned in by this day to receive points.

Nov. 5 Exercise 5 due: Writing with a range of moods, 15 points; Reading: Ch. 5 “Making the parts agree.”

Nov. 7 Introduction to agreement and parallel structure.

Nov. 12 Exercise 6 due: singular-plural agreement, parallel structure, 20 points. Reading: Ch. 9 “Punctuation”; introduction to Exercise 7.

Nov. 14 Research papers due, 40 points; presentations begin, 10 points.

Nov. 19 Exercise 7 due: punctuating conversation and quotation, 20 points.

Nov. 21 Reading: Ch. 7 “Getting Words in the Right Order,” and Ch. 8 “Usage: Finding the Right Word”; introduction to syntax and semantics.

Nov. 26 Reading: Ch. 12 “Conciseness,” and Ch. 13 “Sexism, Racism and other ‘isms.’”

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving holiday, no class.

Dec. 3 Exercise 8 due: syntax; trimming jargon, wordiness and bias, 20 points.

Dec. 5 Reading: review Ch. 1 “Grammar Basics.” Course review and evaluations. All exercises from the second part of the quarter must be turned in by this day to receive points.

Finals week exam time: Quiz #2, 1-3 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 10, 25 points.

Open book, open notes, but individual effort. Instructor will return any remaining work.

