

The Process to the Press: Understanding College Print Publications (98-148: “StuCo: College News”) Spring 2012

Instructors:

Greg Hanneman ghannema@andrew.cmu.edu
Patrick Gage Kelley pkelley@andrew.cmu.edu

Spring 2012 Meeting Times:

Thursdays, 6:30 to 7:50 p.m., Baker Hall 237B

Course Description:

This course gives students an in-depth look at the entire process of creating a collegiate print publication. We intend to guide the class on a journey through creating a finished newspaper. Students will explore story creation and topic selection, writing an article with a section focus (news, sports, science and technology, culture, opinion), editing articles and helping junior writers, and understanding the final copy, layout, and publication process. Along the way, we will highlight aspects of the process unique to collegiate journalism and survey the ways in which student newspapers address them.

Course Goals:

- To understand how the writing, editing, and publication processes work in the context of college print publications.
- To understand how a college paper is developed and run as a cohesive whole.
- To experience the publication process first-hand. You will end this class with at least one publishable college newspaper article, one piece of in-depth reporting, and approximately five hours of hands-on experience with production work.

Website:

<http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~ghannema/collegenews>

We have posted a weekly schedule that will be updated with exact discussion topics, homework, and other resources as the semester progresses.

StuCo Policies:

As a StuCo course, “The Process to the Press” is required to conform to several policies set up by the StuCo organization.

- **Attendance:** We will take attendance, and you must miss no more than two classes in order to pass.
- **Midterm:** There must be a midterm. Ours will take the form of a publishable article for The Tartan or another university newspaper.
- **Final:** There must be a final exam. Ours will consist of one completed in-depth journalism piece. This includes your original proposal with interview sources, all your interview notes, edited versions of your article, and the final publication-ready text.
- **Grading:** You will be graded pass/fail, both at midterms week and at the end of the semester. This course is worth three units.

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General Schedule

This is an outline of the topics we plan to cover this semester. For week-to-week specifics, check the updated schedule on the course website as the semester progresses.

UNIT 0: INTRODUCTION (Approximately Weeks 1–3)

- Course introduction
- The landscape of college print publications.

UNIT 1: THE WRITING PROCESS (Approximately Weeks 4–7)

- Types of college newspaper content and “good” stories
- Story assignments
- Sources, research, and interviews
- The structure of a story

UNIT 2: THE EDITING PROCESS (Approximately Weeks 8–9)

- The role of a section editor
- Editing practicum

UNIT 3: THE PRODUCTION PROCESS (Approximately Weeks 10–12)

- Overview of newspaper production
- Layout practicum
- Financing a college newspaper

UNIT 4: INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM (Approximately Weeks 13–14)

- Presentation of investigative projects