

# COURSE SYLLABUS



## Reporting II

**Course code:** JRN 201

**Term and year:** Spring 2026

**Day and time:** Thursdays 15:00-17:45

**Instructor:** David Vaughan

**Instructor contact:** [david.vaughan@aauni.edu](mailto:david.vaughan@aauni.edu)

**Consultation hours:** Half an hour after class in the classroom

<b>Credits US/ECTS</b>	3/6	<b>Level</b>	Intermediate
<b>Length</b>	15 weeks	<b>Pre-requisite</b>	Composition II, Reporting I
<b>Contact hours</b>	42 hours	<b>Course type</b>	HSC el, PS el, JC req, CEA

### 1. Course Description

The course moves beyond the introduction to journalistic reporting and writing of JRN 200. Presuming basic skills like leads, story organization and use of quotes, it immerses students in reporting, writing, editing and pitching articles. We'll work on the reporting skills necessary to produce good copy, and the writing and editing skills necessary to make it shine. The course material is applicable to all forms of journalistic writing, including writing for audio and video formats.

### 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Apply the practical and professional skills necessary to perform as news reporters
- Apply editing priorities and techniques to news copy
- Carry out research and write their own stories
- Find story ideas and conduct interviews and carry out investigative research
- Be aware of different types of writing for different media
- Be able to pitch stories and write for the University's print and online student magazine, *The Lennon Wall*.

### 3. Reading Material

#### **Required Materials**

1. Carole Rich, *Writing and Reporting News*, 4th Edition (2004). **Most of our assigned reading is here, in this older textbook. Individual student copies must be signed out for the semester at AAU Library and brought to every class unless otherwise instructed.**
2. The Missouri Group, *News Reporting and Writing*, 11th ed. (2013), ISBN 978-1457653544. **We just have two copies of this newer textbook, which will have some individual chapters as assigned reading on the NEO site. The two hard copies will be on reserve at AAU Library.**

Students should also keep up with current events. At a minimum, they should read [The Lennon Wall](#), follow events in the Czech Republic through *Radio Prague International*

and other news publications including ČTK, and should follow world news and news from their home country. Particularly recommended for international issues and commentary are *The New York Times*, *The Economist* and *The Guardian*. *Transitions Online* is often a good source of story ideas within the Czech Republic and eastern-central Europe.

#### 4. Teaching Methodology

The class will run like a newsroom; it will be informal and interactive, a “newswriting lab”. Students will learn by doing. Their stories will be discussed in class by the instructor and by the students themselves. The instructor will also provide feedback to students individually about their work. Please also be ready to do in-class writing assignments on deadline. These in-class writing exercises will help acquaint you with common reporting situations and writing formulas.

We’ll develop story ideas and discuss how your stories can be effectively reported and written. Your stories will be critiqued in class, and often you will be asked to acquire more information or to do rewriting.

#### 5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Class 1 Feb 5	<b>Topic:</b> Review of Reporting I. <b>Description:</b> Recap of reporting basic concepts, leads, inverted pyramid, use of quotes, sources, attribution, article structure, hard news vs. long-form, etc. Outline of work for the term. <b>Reading:</b> “The Inverted Pyramid.” The Missouri Group, <i>News Reporting and Writing</i> 2014 (11 <sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 176-75. (handout) and Writing and Reporting News, Chapter 5, page 75 to page 80. “Curiosity and Story Ideas”.
Class 2 Feb 12	<b>Topic:</b> writing under pressure/getting the facts right/AI and newswriting <b>Description:</b> Newswriting: writing workshop <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> newswriting exercise/identifying mistakes and inaccuracies
Class 3 Feb 19	<b>Topic:</b> Newswriting and AI <b>Description:</b> Getting the story right – in-class exercise
Class 4 Feb 26	<b>Topic:</b> Reporting skills <b>Description:</b> Getting the details, covering events, interviewing tricks and techniques
Class 5 March 5	<b>Topic:</b> Elements of good writing <b>Description:</b> What to avoid: clichés, stereotypes, etc. Creating a sense of time and place. <b>Assignments/deadlines: reporting in the field</b>
Class 6 March 12	<b>Topic:</b> Field trip: Czech Radio <b>Description:</b> how a radio news team works, radio in the age of multimedia. Knowing your audience.
Class 7 March 19	<b>Topic:</b> Editing <b>Topic:</b> Case Study <b>Description:</b> Analyzing and reviewing the Radio Prague International website. <b>Reading:</b> “Covering A Beat” in The Missouri Group, <i>News Reporting and Writing</i> 2014 (11 <sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 287-312

Class 8 March 26	<b>Topic:</b> Editing <b>Description:</b> Editing workshop: editing, less is more, writing in pictures. Peer feedback. <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> midterm article DUE!
<b>April 2</b>	<b>MIDTERM BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
Class 9 - April 9	<b>Topic:</b> Finding stories <b>Description:</b> Looking for the story that has not yet been told, finding your angle. Developing Assignment 2.
Class 10 – April 16	<b>Topic:</b> Pitching stories <b>Description:</b> How to “sell” your story to your editor, pitch-writing exercise. Presenting Assignment 3 stories.
Class 11 – April 23	<b>Topic:</b> Reporting back to Radio Prague International <b>Description:</b> presentations based on student monitoring of RPI’s output.
Class 12 – April 30	<b>Topic:</b> Reporting in the field <b>Description:</b> Observation/description skills/recording material <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Rough draft of final article due.
Class 13 – May 7	<b>Topic:</b> The long view. <b>Description:</b> Lessons to be learned from historical precedent; conundrums and ethical issues, balance and taking sides. <b>Assignments/deadlines:</b> Final article submitted for peer review
Class 14 – May 14	<b>final article DUE!</b>

## 6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (hours)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	20	Apply the practical and professional skills necessary to perform as news reporters	1, 2
Assignment 1: In-class graded exercise	25	15	Apply the practical and professional skills necessary to perform as news reporters Apply editing priorities and techniques to news copy	1, 2, 3
Assignment 2: Article	30	25	Carry out research and write their own stories Find story ideas and conduct interviews and do investigative research Be aware of different types of writing for different media	1, 2, 3
Assignment 3: Article	33	30	Carry out research and write their own stories	1, 2, 3

			Find story ideas and conduct interviews and do investigative research Be aware of different types of writing for different media Be able to pitch stories and write for the University's print and online student magazine, <i>The Lennon Wall</i> .	
In-class graded exercises, pitches and writing lab	20	10	Apply the practical and professional skills necessary to perform as news reporters Apply editing priorities and techniques to news copy Carry out research and write their own stories Be aware of different types of writing for different media	1
TOTAL	150	100%		

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

## 7. Detailed description of the assignments

**Assignment 1:** *In-class writing exercise: writing a news story from multiple sources.*

### Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content – recognizing what is important	50%
Writing – clarity and accuracy of writing	50%

**Assignment 2:** *Midterm Article: A 600-word newsworthy article with a clear lead, nut graph and at least three sources.*

### Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content: accurate and well-researched	50%
Clarity of writing	25%
Creativity	25%

**Assignment 3:** *An 800-1000-word feature article with a clear lead, nut graph and at least three sources.*

### Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Content: accurate and well-researched	50%
Clarity of writing	25%

Creativity	25%

## **8. General Requirements and School Policies**

### ***General requirements***

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

### ***Electronic communication and submission***

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

### ***Attendance***

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

### ***Absence excuse and make-up options***

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

**Late work:** No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

### ***Electronic devices***

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

**Eating** is not allowed during classes.

### ***Cheating and disruptive behavior***

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc. Examples are:

- **Verbatim plagiarism:** verbatim use of another's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** paraphrasing someone else's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **Data plagiarism:** use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **False quotation:** publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Fictitious citation:** quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
- **Inaccurate citation:** citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
- **Ghostwriting:** commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own,
- **Patchwriting:** using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
- **Self-plagiarism:** unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
- **Collaborative plagiarism:** delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating

circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make the plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

### ***Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center***

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback in order to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above). AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance. A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author's work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality, and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited. If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

### ***Course accessibility and inclusion***

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

## 9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95-100	<b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90-94	
B+	87-89	<b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	<b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	65-69	<b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60-64	
F	0-59	<b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: David Vaughan

Date: 30.10.2025

Approved by:

Date: