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JOURNALISM 0053 -- INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN JOURNALISM

Fall 2015

11 to 11:50 a.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Room 222, Biddle Hall

The Course

Welcome. This course is intended to provide a basic survey of American journalism. It is designed to provide the beginnings of a theoretical, historical and ethical framework for those who wish to pursue a career producing journalism, and it is intended to provide an understanding of American journalism with a critical eye for those whose role will be limited to consuming journalism. A significant portion of the course will be taught in a history context outside readings.

The Professor

Your professor's name is **Lee Wood** or **Leland Wood**. He was a daily newspaper journalist (a reporter, bureau manager, correspondent, business editor and deputy metro editor) for 15 years (1975-1991) at the Johnstown *Tribune-Democrat*; the former *Pittsburgh Press*; the Fort Myers, Fla., *News-Press*; the *Alexandria (Va.) Journal*; and the *Arlington (Va.) Journal*. During his career, Wood wrote an estimated 4,500 bylined stories. He was primary editor for more than 6,000 stories.

Wood was a part-time instructor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., from 1988-1991. He has been a full-time professor at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown since September 1991. He is an associate professor, with tenure.

Wood holds a master's degree in journalism from the Pennsylvania State University; a bachelor's degree in English Writing from the same university; and a Ph.D. in mass communication/journalism from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

Wood also has worked as a writing coach and consultant for newspapers and television, and he has been a coordinator and conference speaker for the Pennsylvania Society of Newspaper Editors. Wood has been a monthly columnist in the Johnstown *Tribune-Democrat* and he has written three stories for *Johnstown* magazine.

Office Hours

... are posted on the professor's office door frame at Room 222B, Biddle Hall. The hours are 10 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 2 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. If office hours do not suit your schedule, you can arrange an appointment.

Finding the Professor

Your professor, believing that journalism is learned through practice at least as much as in the classroom, is generally available on late Friday afternoons in the offices of the *Advocate*, the student newspaper, in Room 147 Student Union. Students with serious interests in journalism or writing in general should involve themselves in its practice by working at the newspaper. They can initiate their involvement by e-mailing the newspaper's editor-in-chief, Bobby Scott, at rjs115@pitt.edu.

You can telephone the professor, too, at 269-7146 (campus) or 269-3922 (before 8 p.m., or after 6:30 a.m.)

The professor does not recognize or accept computerized communication -- e-mails or IMs -- from students.

The Text

The text for this class is *Four Theories of the Press* by Seibert et al. It is an old book but, despite the publication of many new books, your professor has not found a newer suitable substitute. What the book does, despite its age, is provide you with different perspectives on the role of journalism through different political philosophies. You also learn from the reading how common people are viewed with different philosophies, the role of government and how a society finds truth.

The professor believes that you do not know the "truth" until you understand different perspectives -- that the "truth" has facets, like a diamond, and you see the truth only when you see or understand the different facets -- until you see the flash or sparkle of the diamond. Then you can appreciate something like the truth.

Your Attendance

You are expected to attend each and every class. If you don't attend, your grade likely will be affected adversely. Generally, any absence beyond three for the semester is considered when determining your final grade for the course.

Your Attendance, cont'd

(This doesn't mean you now should plan three absences. You should plan for zero absences.)

Your professor has an amazing attendance record. He has not missed a day's work since July 1980, a total of 35 years. He never missed a class as a student, dating back to June 1971, a total of 44 years.

The professor does not need to know the reason for any one of your absences and does not approve or disapprove of reasons for absence. As a college student, you are responsible for your attendance and making judgments on whether absences are justified. However, if, FOR ANY REASON, you cannot attend class for AN EXTENDED PERIOD, you MUST notify the professor as soon as possible. This does not apply to one-class absences, but absences covering an extended period -- a full week, for example, or several weeks or months. Excuses covering weeks or months after the fact are viewed with prejudice. There is almost no excuse for an inability to notify the professor of illness or inability to attend class for extended periods. If you cannot attend class for a substantial portion of the course, you should consider withdrawing from the course and re-enrolling when you are in a position in which you can attend classes regularly.

A record of student attendance will be maintained by the professor.

A Written Optional Paper

Students have the option of producing a paper for this class. All journalism majors enrolled are required to produce a paper at the class' conclusion. Other students can choose to produce a paper. Students who are not journalism majors may consider a paper if they do not perform well in pressurized test environments or if they wish to enhance their class experience with a paper.

Papers are due Dec. 9. For those students doing papers, proposals and discussions of the proposals are expected throughout the semester with an initial proposal due Sept. 28.

Papers should be at least 10 pages. If you have a problem choosing a subject, one will be assigned. This paper is YOUR responsibility. If you submit a proposal and haven't heard any feedback, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to find out whether your proposal is acceptable.

Your paper proposal should include original research. Original research is something you do to gather information that no one, anywhere, has ever done. It can be interviews with people. It can be a content analysis.

Optional Paper

Original research should not include incestuous interviews with family or friends (convenience samples) or surveys or questionnaires. You need roughly 700 + answers to surveys or questionnaires from a random sample of people to attain a 95 percent reliability and a margin of error of 5 percent -- in other words, to be of any value in drawing conclusions that are based on anything other than your wet finger in the wind. We can forget surveys.

Readings, Quizzes

This course requires only five reading assignments to prepare for classes. If, in the professor's opinion, students indicate a general unwillingness or inability to keep up with these few readings, unannounced short tests will be given.

You are expected to keep up with the journalism of the day by reading a newspaper every day, probably the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat. You also should read the weekly campus newspaper and you should be tuned into television and radio broadcasts that are news-oriented. If the president speaks on television, you should watch him. You also can check web sites daily for news.

Your Grade

You will have at least three opportunities to perform for a grade during the course. One opportunity will be a comprehensive final examination.

All tests are designed to be difficult to distinguish among student performances. Grades will be awarded on a curve based not on any statistical format, but on your ability to distinguish yourself, which you can do in both positive and negative ways.

Your final grade in this course will be subjective, based on supposedly objective information. There will be a consideration for lack of attendance in the final grade if absences exceed three, and there will be consideration for class participation. Indications that you are learning and improving your grades also will be considered.

Some consideration will be given for students who do not function well with pressurized in-class tests. In other words, if you are a student who gets an "A" on a paper and proposal and C's on your tests, some consideration will be given weighing toward a better grade than the average of your grades.

Your Grade, cont'd

If you disrupt the class or distract the professor (by balancing your checkbook, for instance, during discussion; texting family or friends during video presentations; or by doing homework from another class), you will be asked to leave the classroom, and you will be considered absent that day whether you leave or not. Such behavior, if it recurs, will be considered in your final grade. If you have homework for another class that you must complete, don't come to this class to do it.

First Test = 30 percent Second Test = 30 percent Final = 40 percent

Class Participation = plus 10 percent, possibly

Attendance = possible deficit of 15 percent.

Paper Option

Students who do a paper are subject to the following grade determination:

First Test = 15 percent Proposal = 15 percent Second Test = 20 percent Paper = 25 percent
Final = 25 percent.

Extra Credit

The easiest way to get extra credit is to participate in class discussions. Extra credit also will be offered to students who present topics for class discussion from outside the classroom. The material collected outside the classroom is defined broadly so that it could include a print or broadcast presentation of journalism or, for example, an observation of a friend's television-viewing habits with an analysis of those habits based on the Uses and Gratifications approach to mass communication studies.

You are welcome to bring up any topic for class discussion related to journalism, but, to receive full extra credit, you should submit your material in a printed or written form to the professor with some discussion on how it relates to the class.

Three Credits

University officials say that three credits include three hours of classroom time each week and six hours' work each week outside the classroom. Students taking 15 credits, in other words, are expected to spend 15 hours in class and 30 hours' work outside class, or a total of 45 hours. That's the equivalent of more than a full-time job.

Three Credits. cont'd

This is a three-credit course. You take care of the classroom time requirement by attending class. The work outside the classroom includes studying for your tests; working on your paper; reading all assigned materials; and reading a newspaper or magazine and watching news-oriented television or listening to radio broadcasts. You should ask yourself at the end of each week whether you have spent six hours on this course beyond your attendance.

Week 1

Aug. 31 WELCOME. Syllabi/Milton distribution. Your professor. Library visit for students doing papers. Journalism definition.

READ for next class period: This syllabus and the Milton handout.

Sept. 2 What is journalism?

READ: Milton, *Aeropagitica*, again.

Sept. 4 Virtue, truth and common people. Arguments against the licensing of books in 1644. Milton makes sense? Do his arguments apply today?

READ: The Authoritarian Theory in your textbook. Be ready to answer these questions: How do authoritarians view common people? How is truth found in an authoritarian society? What is the state's role in an authoritarian society? What is the role of the mass media in an authoritarian society?

Week 2

Sept. 7 NO CLASS. LABOR DAY

Sept. 9 The Authoritarian Theory. Is Milton an authoritarian? Are you an authoritarian? Is America authoritarian? How does a society or civilization advance, according to authoritarians? Methods of media control: sedition, libel and slander. Treason.

READ: The Libertarian Theory in your text and be ready to answer these questions: How do libertarians view common people? How do they view the role of the state? How is the truth found? What's the role of journalism in a libertarian society?

Sept. 11 The first American journalists and the first newspapers. Journalism practice in an authoritarian system.

Week 3

Sept. 13 Libertarian Theory. How does a society/civilization advance? How do libertarians and authoritarians differ in their views of how a society advances?

FIND AND READ: The Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights (the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution).

Sept. 15 The Declaration of Independence. The Bill of Rights. The First Amendment and the Freedom of Speech, the Press, Religion, and Protest/Assembly. The Party Press and the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

Sept. 17 The early 1800s. The first black newspaper, Freedom's Journal. The first Indian newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix.

Week 4

Sept. 20 The Penny Press and the Moon Hoax.

Sept. 23 Horace Greeley and the telegraph.

Sept. 25 The Civil War and military censorship.

Week 5

Sept. 28 After the Civil War. The Atlantic Cable. Joseph Pulitzer. Edward Wyllis Scripps.

Sept. 30 Test Review.

Oct. 2 **TEST**

Week 6

Oct. 5 Tests returned.

Oct. 7 Yellow Journalism.

Oct. 9 The muckrakers.

Week 7

Oct. 12 Fall Break.

Oct. 14 The Espionage Act of 1917. The Sedition Act of 1918. Clear and present dangers.

Oct. 16 Jazz Journalism and Radio.

Week 7, cont'd

Oct. 16 The Radio Act of 1927. The Communications Act of 1934.

READ: The Social Responsibility Theory in your text. What role does the state fulfill in society? What role does the mass media fulfill? How are common people viewed? What is truth?

Week 8

Oct. 19 The 1930s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Press Lords.

Oct. 21 The Social Responsibility Theory. A need to adapt Libertarian Theory: The concentration of media ownership in relatively few hands. What does Freedom of Speech mean to a citizen without access to a printing press? Who has Freedom of Speech? Do those who have it, who buy ink by the barrel, have a responsibility to the rest of us? Do they have a Social Responsibility.

Oct. 23 Near vs Minnesota. World War II and Douglas MacArthur and military censorship.

READ: The Soviet Communist Theory of the Press from your textbook

Week 9

Oct 26 Soviet Communist Theory, bottom man on top now. How are common people viewed? What is the state's role? What is the truth? What is the role of journalism in a Soviet Communist society?

Oct. 28 Review.

Oct. 30 **TEST.**

Week 10

Nov. 2 Tests returned.

Nov. 4 Television and the U-2 Incident. Sullivan vs. The New York Times. New Journalism and Janet Cooke. The market and journalism. Who controls American journalism? Corporations? The media? Consumers?

Nov. 6 We open a discussion on mass communication research. Who's in charge? Who determines the meaning? What determines the effect? Are there effects? Hypodermic/Propaganda/Bullet Theory; Uses and Gratifications; the Play Theory.

Week 11

Nov. 9 Functions and dysfunctions. Media attributes. Do people believe print or oral communications more? When and why?

Nov. 11 Tom Bell. Objectivity and Enduring Values.

Nov.13 Conflicts of Interest.

Week 12

Nov. 16 Privacy.

Nov. 18 Privacy and Rape.

Nov. 20 Ethics.

Week 13

Nov. 23 Catchup.

Nov. 25 and 27 THANKSGIVING BREAK.

Week 14

Nov. 30 Ethics.

Dec. 2 Hidden cameras and ethics.

Dec. 4 Hidden cameras and ethics.

Week 15

Dec. 7 The motivation of journalists. Why do they do what they do?

Dec. 9 Catchup and wrapup

Dec. 11 Review?

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