



Comm203-001 SYLLABUS: General Information

(General Syllabus information is similar for 002 section)

[sklein1](#) - 04:24pm Jul 31, 2007 EST

Steve Klein

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

COMMUNICATION 203-001 / FALL SEMESTER 2007

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALISM

INSTRUCTOR: Steve Klein, Coordinator of the Journalism concentration and the [Electronic Journalism Program](#) in the Communication Department

THE ESSENTIALS:

This class meets Monday and Wednesday (with the exception of Labor Day Monday Sept. 3 and Wednesday Nov. 21; also, we will meet on Tuesday Oct. 9 instead of the preceding Monday) over a total of 15 weeks and 28 sessions beginning Monday Aug. 27 and concluding Wednesday Dec. 5 from noon to 1:15 p.m. in 220-B Robinson Hall.

OUR CONTRACT: This syllabus represents an agreement (or contract) between the student and the instructor. By remaining enrolled in this course, each student is accepting the policies and guidelines covered in this syllabus. Therefore, please read it carefully and refer to it often.

NOTE: I have written this syllabus using [Associated Press Style](#). Please notice the differences from MLA and APA, with which you are likely more familiar.

KEY DATES:

Last day to add: Tuesday Sept. 11

Last day to drop with no academic liability: Sept. 28

For more information, go to:

<http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/fall07academiccalendar.pdf>

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students who do not confirm their registration by attending the first class meeting are subject to being dropped at the discretion of the department and instructor. Students must not assume that the department will automatically initiate a drop for not attending class. Students who register for courses that they do not attend are themselves responsible for dropping the class. If you miss the first class, you must contact me with your intention to remain registered or you can be dropped for a waitlisted student.

NOTE: Please let me know if you spot a typo or error in this syllabus. Yes, it's true: Even instructors/professors make mistakes!

HOW TO CONTACT MR. KLEIN:

GMU office: 219-B Thompson Hall

Office phone: 703-993-2199

GMU e-mail: sklein1@mason.gmu.edu

Web page: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~sklein1/>

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11-11:45 a.m. and 1:30-2:45 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; and by appointment. Changes in time or location are posted on my office door and updated weekly.

COURSE PREREQUISITES (prerequisites exist in order to give you the best opportunity to succeed):

You must have access to the Internet (on campus and/or at home) and be able to use Microsoft Word software. You will need to access [Townhall](#), a collaborative course software program, daily.

All coursework must be typed and double-spaced on a computer and properly headed/identified in a consistent manner. Failure to do so will be penalized. Multiple-page assignments must be stapled in the upper-lefthand corner.

All e-mail correspondence must use the SUBJECT line, include the course number and name (Comm203-001/Introduction to Journalism) and indicate what the message concerns. Why? Otherwise, my SPAM filter might kill it! I use your GMU e-mail address, so please keep your inbox cleaned out or messages will bounce.

OVERVIEW:

This three-credit course focuses on [media literacy](#). Because of the size of the class, there are limited writing assignments, but the feedback you will receive from them is important. Class discussion and participation is critical (as the grading reflects). The course is designed to introduce you to the field and business of [journalism](#) within the concepts of mediated and mass communication. However, journalism is in the midst of a participatory revolution that involves the Internet, weblogs, podcasts, social networking and citizen (or hyperlocal) journalism. We will read about and discuss these trends as well as news, public relations, advertising and the various media (television, radio, online, advertising and marketing). We will examine the history and power of the press, explore media economics, investigate ethical and legal concerns, and look at the latest directions media are heading. Whether you're a Communication major, an [Electronic Journalism minor](#) or just want to be more media literate, this class should have value for you. This course should help you to become a more thoughtful and critical consumer -- and perhaps participant -- of media while introducing you to the basics with which any journalist or media professional must be familiar.

You are expected to be actively involved in your learning: to be more than a passive recipient of information, to think critically, ask questions, and take a constructive role in learning. You will have the opportunity to both write and make multimedia presentations in this class.

GOALS OF THIS CLASS:

To learn about journalism by critically examining the news, industry trends and understanding the concept of bias.

To learn about and think critically about the process of mass communication and the various mass media, and how that relates to journalism.

To learn the basics of reporting and news writing.

REQUIRED TEXT (please bring your books to every class):

[The Media in Your Life: An Introduction to Mass Communication](#), by Jean Folkerts and Stephen Lacy, 4th edition (Allyn & Bacon, 2007)

[Mightier than the Sword: How News Media Have Shaped American History](#), by Rodger Streitmatter (any edition, Westview Press)

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

[The Associated Press Stylebook](#), Norm Goldstein, editor (Perseus Books Group, revised edition, 2007).

In addition, there will be readings accessed online in [Townhall](#).

You are expected to keep current with the news (read newspapers every day, read news magazines, watch TV news, listen to radio news and visit and read from selected websites).

CLASS EXPECTATIONS:

You will read, view and discuss how news is presented on a daily basis throughout the semester.

Don't miss class. There are only 28 of them! Class participation in a variety of formats counts 20 percent of your final grade.

In-class quizzes and tests cannot be made up unless excused in advance.

Out-of-class exercises must be turned in on time (on deadline) without exception.

Guest speakers may occasionally contribute to the class's understanding and study throughout the semester.

ALL assignments must be typed and double spaced with standard margins. Hand-written writing assignments will NOT be accepted. All multi-page assignments must be stapled together in the upper-lefthand corner.

Rather than a cover sheet, type the following information (single spaced) in the upper LEFTHAND corner of the assignment:

YOUR NAME

COMM203-001 / Date

Your GMU e-mail address

A title (or 1-to-3 word SLUG) for the assignment

ASSIGNMENTS:

Readings from "The Media in Your Life; An Introduction to Mass Communication" will

be assigned and paired, as appropriate, with readings from *Mightier Than the Sword*. EVERY student (some in teams) will be responsible for outlining a chapter from the texts, leading the class in a multimedia discussion of that chapter, and providing the outline to the class.

Presentations should go beyond mere outlining and/or regurgitating the material. This is an opportunity for you to be creative and bring your own experience outside the text into the classroom.

You will have **one MAJOR reporting-and-writing assignment** for this class due at the start of class on Wednesday Oct. 10 (that's at the end of the 7th week of the semester). Make sure you follow the assigned format below.

Grammar, punctuation and spelling ALWAYS matter and affect your grade. You may use [MLA](#) or [APA](#) style. [AP Style](#) IS preferred IF you are familiar with it. Paragraphs should, however, meet journalistic standards and NOT exceed 4-to-5 typewritten lines (that's typewritten lines, NOT full sentences). We will discuss this in class.

DEADLINES are important in journalism.

Technical failure ("my printer doesn't work," "my computer crashed," "the lab was down") or similar excuses simply will not be accepted.

Missing a deadline will automatically lower your grade by a full grade; a full day late will mean a further full grade deduction; each ensuing day another full grade. Turning in work late is better than never turning it in at all; never submitting it is a zero.

The only acceptable excuses for missing a deadline are serious illness, serious family emergency, or [a major religious holiday](#). To miss a deadline without penalty, you must notify the instructor prior to that deadline, and you must bring a note from a doctor (or medical professional) or parent (in the case of a family emergency). The university requires (really!) a copy of a death certificate in such unfortunate instances.

Given the size of the class, and out of fairness to your peers, there can be no exceptions. If you wait until the last minute to do this MAJOR assignment, which is worth 20 percent (200 points) of your grade, the quality of your work will no doubt reflect it.

Instructions for your reporting-and-writing assignment:

-- Find and report a feature news story; in all likelihood, this will be a soft-news story (as opposed to a hard-news story). A good place to look for stories on campus is

[Today@Mason](#).

-- You'll have to **GO someplace**. You can't Google this assignment! It is NOT a research paper, although you may have to do some background research.

-- Do some **reporting**: Find out ALL about it! We will talk about reporting early in the class. Reporting means talking to sources.

-- **Do interviews**. We will talk about interviewing techniques early in the class. You must quote (talk to) a minimum of three sources in your story and attribute the quotes properly. Attributing is not the same as citing. You can see how this is done as simply as looking at the newspaper.

-- Try to be as **unbiased** and fair as possible. Do not include your opinion. Get BOTH sides of the story. Do not write in the first person (no "I," "me" or "we" except within quotations unless cleared in advance with the instructor). This is NOT a column or a review. We will discuss the concepts of **bias, fairness, objectivity and subjectivity** in

class.

-- Write your story as an exercise in journalism, NOT an academic paper. **TIP:** Observe how stories are written in the newspaper (notice the short paragraphs and differences in style!), online or reported on television and radio. There are examples in Townhall.

-- **FOCUS!** If you try to write about everything, your subject will be too broad! Every story should have an **ANGLE:** the **SO WHAT** of the article.

--Your story should be about 700 to 900 words (did you know that Microsoft Word can count the words for you?).

-- **Can you rewrite your story?** Yes, BUT only if you turn in the story at least one week before the final deadline (that means at the end of Week 6, or Wednesday Oct. 4). I strongly recommend doing this. Early stories will be edited with suggestions for improvement (feedback), graded and returned in class the following week. I suggest you see me during office hours as soon as possible to review the feedback. You will have one week to return the story to me.

-- **You MUST e-mail a FOCUS SENTENCE and your sources to the instructor NO LATER THAN Oct. 4** (one week earlier if you are taking advantage of the early deadline). This counts as a **GRADED** assignment. The **FOCUS SENTENCE** is a simple declarative sentence; if you can't state your story idea in one sentence, the story likely lacks focus. This assignment should also include your sources: who (in general if not specifically) do you plan to talk to? For example, it is not enough to say that you are writing a story about Black History Month. **WHAT** about Black History Month?

Your story and ALL assignments must be typed and double-spaced with standard margins.

Rather than a cover sheet, type the following (single spaced) in **the upper lefthand corner** of the assignment:

YOUR NAME

COMM203-001 / Date

Your GMU e-mail address

A title (or slug) for the assignment

Part of the challenge of this assignment is sorting fact from opinion and avoiding bias. While it is all right for you to report others' opinions, leave your own opinion out of your story. Also, leave yourself out of the story: **NO FIRST PERSON!**

GRADES:

The final grade for this course will be based on the quality of your work and in-class participation, which includes:

Your classroom ethic: Regular attendance, timeliness (walking into class late is rude to your classmates and the instructor), active participation, civility and attentiveness are expected. Classes will begin on time -- just as you expect them to end on time.

Cellphones and beepers: Turn them off before class (except in pre-arranged, emergency situations).

Readings: Every student (some in teams) will outline a chapter from the text, lead the

class in a discussion of that chapter, and provide the outline to your classmates.

Deadlines: Adherence to deadlines plays an important role in this course. Journalists meet deadlines; their job is on the line if they don't. Deadlines set for assignments in this course are final; those turned in late without an excused absence will not be accepted.

Attendance: You must e-mail the instructor if you miss class because of illness or emergency. I consider these e-mails part of your class participation. **In-class exams cannot be made up.** If you think that a class may be cancelled because of bad weather, listen to TV or radio, check the [GMU homepage](#), or call 703-993-1000.

GRADING CRITERIA:

GMU utilizes a 10-point +/- grading scale. The Department of Communication has adopted the following scale for core and basic courses, which will be used to assign final grades in COMM203:

A+: 97 to 100 (exceptional work!).

A: 93 to 96 (outstanding work; writing of publishable quality).

A-: 90 to 92.

B+: 87 to 89.

B: 83 to 86 (writing is publishable with editing/minor changes).

B-: 80 to 82.

C+: 77 to 79

C: 73-76 (writing meets standards)

C-: 70-72

D: 60 to 69 (writing is not publishable because of fundamental writing and reporting problems).

F: 59 or less (work not submitted).

ASSIGNMENT PERCENTAGE for FINAL GRADE:

-- **The reporting-and-writing assignment counts 20% of your final grade (200 points).**

-- **All other writing assignments and homework combined count 15% of your final grade 150 points).**

-- **Classroom participation (5%), your chapter presentation (5%) and ONE THING classnotes (10%) counts 20%; I take the ONE THING seriously and so should you (200 points).**

-- **Exam No. 1 counts 10% of your final grade (100 points).**

-- **Exam No. 2 counts 10% of your final grade (100 points).**

-- **Exam No. 3 counts 10% of your final grade (100 points).**

-- **Quizzes from "Mightier Than the Sword," to ensure that you read the book, count 15% of your final grade (150 points).**

-- **There will be occasional extra-credit opportunities built into the semester but NOT added on late in the semester to bolster a weak grade.**

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

-- GMU allows instructors to take class attendance into consideration toward your final

grade. If you miss a class, you **must** explain the absence in an e-mail to me **before the next class**. I consider that communication part of your class participation.

If you missed work, you inform your employer. If you miss class, inform me.

-- **THE ONE THING** exercise (10 percent of your final grade) will be explained during the first class. You are responsible for a minimum of 24 entries (a minimum of 2 per week except for exam days). You should do this beginning with the first class (Aug. 27). Additional participation and civil discussion with your classmates (and me) is encouraged and will be rewarded. **You should reread and edit your posts before publishing them.** I firmly believe that the errors that creep into IMs, e-mails and discussion group postings find their way into your more serious writing. You have until 11:30 a.m. the next class to post for the preceding class. That means you have a shorter deadline for Wednesday classes. I strongly suggest that you post as soon as possible after class and revisit the discussion as often as possible to make additional comments. Doing this improves the quality of the discussion.

-- You are each responsible for a presentation to be assigned during the first week (yet another reason not to miss the first class and week). This should not be a regurgitation of textbook material (you'll find your classmates will get bored quickly if you do), but an intelligent discussion of the material, based on the text AND utilizing real-life examples. A full range of multimedia is available in the classroom.

-- Part of your class participation grade (5 percent) is subjective, based on my impression of your active participation and contribution to the class. **Remember:** We all learn from each other! This will be as good a class as YOU make it.

-- I strongly encourage each of you to take advantage of my office hours or to make appointments.

Comm203-001 SYLLABUS: Your weekly schedule

[sklein1](#) - 04:26pm Jul 31, 2007 EST
Steve Klein

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change based on class progress, speaker availability and breaking news as it impacts the subject matter throughout the semester. Some topics may continue into the next class. Changes will be communicated through [Townhall](#), by e-mail and in class.

There will be additional readings posted in Townhall or via e-mail on occasion.

Homework is due the next class unless otherwise indicated.

Late assignments, unless excused in advance, will not be accepted without penalty -- one full grade per day late.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for submitting the work on time.

In-class work, particularly exams and quizzes, cannot be made up.

I strongly advise that you make a "class buddy" you can contact in person, by telephone

or by e-mail.

I always recommend to my students that getting together for study groups equates with success. That takes some extra planning on your part. But this class, like most, cannot be completed successfully without working outside of class.

Get Involved! Here are some GMU campus outlets to help you improve your communications skills:

-- **Broadside (campus paper):** Editor-in-Chief (EIC@broadside.com) or call (703) 993-2944; Kathryn Mangus, advisor, kmangus@gmu.edu, or call (703) 993-3004.

-- **WGMU (campus radio):** Call (703) 993-2940; Rodger Smith, advisor, rsmith6@gmu.edu, (703) 993-2940.

-- **Mason Cable Network:** Koorosh Farchadi, executive director, kfarcahdi@gmu.edu, or call (703) 993-3996; Michele Braithwaite, advisor, mbraithw@gmu.edu, or call (703) 993-2874.

-- **Forensics Team:** Dr. Peter Pober, ppober@gmu.edu.

-- **Debate Team:** Warren Decker, wdecker@gmu.edu.

-- **Lambda Pi Eta (honorary research society):** Susie Tomasovic, stomasov@gmu.edu.

-- **Student Video Center:** svc@gmu.edu.

-- **PRSSA (Public Relations):** Mike Dickerson, mdickers@gmu.edu.

-- **IABC (International Association of Business Communicators):** admin@iabcdc.org.

-- **SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists):** GMU Chapter, Kathryn Mangus, advisor, kmangus@gmu.edu or call (703) 993-3004.

WEEK #1 (Aug. 27 & 29)

OVERVIEW: Introductions, review of the syllabus, using Townhall, and "How to Succeed in 203."

LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS:

-- What is journalism and who is a journalist in the 21st century?

-- A discussion about mass media, media literacy and media usage.

-- A discussion about the Journalism concentration and the Electronic Journalism minor.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Chapter assignment from the class texts.

VIDEO: "Gilda Live!" and "EPIC 2015" and "BBC 2010"

JOURNALISM BASICS: How writing for the media is different from other writing disciplines. How quoting is different from citing.

REMINDER: Your first two Townhall entries must be made no later than a half hour before the start of the following class to receive credit.

WEEK #2 (Sept. 5; NO CLASS Monday Sept. 3)

OVERVIEW:

-- Catch up from WEEK#1 (as necessary): review of the syllabus and Townhall.

LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS:

-- The communication process and some journalism history.

JOURNALISM BASICS:

-- What is news?

- The Five Rules of Journalism.
- Basics of Good Journalism.
- How to Read a Newspaper (and assignment #1: Your Media Pyramid).
- How to Write a News Story in 15 Steps.

Reading due for discussion THIS week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

1. Chapter 13, Ethics, **Elaheh and E-beth on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

2. Introduction, **George on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #3 (Sept. 10 & 12)

OVERVIEW:

- Bias in the Media: Understanding the concepts of objectivity, subjectivity, balance and fairness (and the difference between a bias, biases and being biased).

JOURNALISM BASICS (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: Speak Up! I Can't Read You).

- Commonly Misused Words.
- Punctuating Quotations.
- Active and Passive Voice.
- Commas (and why they're important!).

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

3. Chapter 1, We the People: Media and Communication, **Catrice on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

4. Chapter 1, Sowing the Seeds of Revolution, **Ally on WEDNESDAY**

Assignment No. 2:

Identify an example of bias (as opposed to opinion) in the media and write a short, well-written, grammatically correct paper (one-page ONLY, double spaced).

DUE on Monday Sept. 17.

WEEK #4 (Sept. 17 & 19)

OVERVIEW:

How to report a story.

GUEST SPEAKER on MONDAY: Gordon Trowbridge, Detroit News Washington Bureau reporter and former Air Force Times senior reporter who has been an embedded journalist in Iraq.

Assignment No. 3 DUE before class begins on Monday: Bring a TYPEWRITTEN, double-spaced question for Gordon Trowbridge to class. Hand-written questions won't be accepted (check your syllabus!).

JOURNALISM BASICS: (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: Writing the Story: A checklist):

- More on How to Write and Report a Story.
- How to conduct an Interview.
- Attribution tags.

-- How Reporting Is Different from Researching.

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

5. Chapter 10, Journalism: Information and Society, **Fardous on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

6. Chapter 2, Abolition: Turning America's Conscience Against the Sins of Slavery,
Laura Cryan on WEDNESDAY

WEEK #5 (Sept. 24 & 26)

OVERVIEW:

Writing Feature Stories; All About Public Relations; All About Advertising.

JOURNALISM BASICS:

-- How to Write a Strong Lead.

-- How to Structure a News Story.

-- How to Structure a Feature Story.

MORE JOURNALISM BASICS (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: In the Beginning: Rethinking the Draft)

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

7. Chapter 11, Public Relations, **Aaron and Jacquie on MONDAY**

8. Chapter 12, Advertising, **Carolyn, Lubna, Sania and Jormery on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

9. Chapter 3, Slowing the Momentum for Women's Rights, **Libby and Jaimie on MONDAY**

Reporting Assignment is due on Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

Focus sentence due no later than Oct. 3 (graded assignment).

Early deadline is Oct. 3!!!

WEEK #6 (Oct. 1 & 3)

OVERVIEW:

Specialty Stories; Your First EXAM is on Wednesday Oct. 3!!!

JOURNALISM BASICS:

-- More on Interviewing Techniques.

-- More on Writing Features.

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Sword*

10. Chapter 4, Attacking Municipal Corruption: The Tweed Ring, **Elliot on MONDAY**

EXAM #1 Wednesday Oct. 3:

-- Covers *Media,* chapters 1, 10, 11, 12, 13 ONLY.

FINAL DEADLINE for the Reporting Assignment is Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

Focus sentence due no later than Oct. 3 (graded assignment).

Early deadline is Wednesday Oct. 3!!!

WEEK #7 (Tuesday Oct. 9 & 10)

OVERVIEW: All About Publishing: Newspapers, Magazines and Books -- and How to Read Them!

JOURNALISM BASICS:

-- Common Errors to Avoid (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder).

Return Exam#1

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

11. Chapter 3, Newspapers, **Jasmine and Christine on MONDAY**

12. Chapter 5, Books, **Lauren on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

13. Chapter 6, Muckraking: The Golden Age of Reform Journalism, **Bridget on WEDNESDAY**

FINAL DEADLINE for the Reporting Assignment is Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

WEEK #8 (Oct.15 & 17)

OVERVIEW: Magazines; The Internet, Cross-Media Journalism, Integration and Convergence

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

14. Chapter 4, Magazines, **Kristen, Elaheh, Fardous and Ashley on MONDAY**

15. Chapter 9, Computers and the Internet, **Tim and Matt on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

16. Chapter 5, Journalism as Warmonger: The Spanish-American War, **Lindsey on MONDAY**

WEEK #9 (Oct. 22 & 24)

OVERVIEW:

Catchup or guest speaker on Monday; second EXAM on Wednesday Oct. 24!!!

Reading due for this week:

-- *Sword*

17. Chapter 9, Creating "Rosie the Riveter": Propelling the American Woman into the Workforce, **Marco on MONDAY**

Exam #2 on Wednesday Oct. 24 deals with "Media" chapters 2, 3, 4 & 9 ONLY

WEEK #10 (Oct. 29 & 31)

OVERVIEW: All About Radio – and How to Listen to It!

Return Exam#2

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

18. Chapter 6, Radio, **Sam and Laura on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

19. Chapter 8, Father Coughlin: Fermenting Anti-Semitism via the Radio, **Kristen and**

Carolyn on MONDAY

20. Chapter 14, Rush Limbaugh: Leading the Republican Revolution, **Josh on MONDAY**

21. Chapter 13, Watergate Forces the President to His Knees, **Shannon on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #11 (Nov. 5 & 7)

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 5 in class: Bobbi Bowman, Diversity Director, American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE).

There will be a pre-class homework assignment associated with this presentation.

OVERVIEW: All About Television -- and How to Watch It!

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

22. Chapter 7, Television, **Elena and Jackie G. on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

23. Chapter 10, Exposing Joe McCarthy: Television's Finest Hour, **Ashley on WEDNESDAY**

24. Chapter 12, Vietnam War: Bringing the Battlefield into the American Living Room, **Teresa on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #12 (Nov. 12 & 14)

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 12 in class: Don Stumpo, Producer, News4.

OVERVIEW: Out to the Movies

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

25. Chapter 5, Movies, **Josh and Lisa on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #13 (Nov. 19; NO CLASS Wednesday Nov. 21)

This Week's Overview: The Sound of Music and All That Jazz

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

26. Chapter 8, Music and the Recording Industry, **Catrice, Shannon, Sam, Laureen, Sania, Jormery and Ally on MONDAY**

WEEK #14 (Nov. 26 & 28)

OVERVIEW: The media's coverage of the Civil Rights Movement

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 26 in class: Dr. Roger Wilkins, former Robinson Professor and civil rights leader.

-- *Sword*

27. Chapter 7, Defying the Ku Klux Klan, **Raj on WEDNESDAY**

28. Chapter 11, Pushing the Civil Rights Movement onto the National Agenda, **Alexis on WEDNESDAY**

(with special video presentation)

Wrapping up "Mightier Than the Sword" ... Catch-up as necessary ... media videos.

WEEK #15 (Dec. 3 & 5)

OVERVIEW:In-class Careers Day on Monday; third EXAM during final class on Wednesday Dec. 5!!!

Course evaluations Wednesday Dec. 5

Guest speakers on Monday: Ann Mills of the GMU Careers Center and Richard Leonard, director of news recruiting for Gannett, on careers, resumes, internships, interviewing.

SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: PoynterOnline on Your Work as Your Best Resume: Tips on Clips

Resources:

-- [Washington Post Careers page](#)

-- [GMU Career Services](#)

-- [Careers at Gannett](#)

-- [Detroit Free Press Jobs Page](#)

Exam #3 Wednesday Dec. 5: "Media" chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8 ONLY.

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[sklein1](#) - 06:44pm Aug 1, 2007 EST

Steve Klein

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I always recommend to my students that getting together for study groups equates with success. That takes some extra planning on your part. But this class, like most, cannot be completed successfully without working outside of class.

Get Involved! Here are some GMU campus outlets to help you improve your communications skills:

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- **WGMU (campus radio):** Call (703) 993-2940; Rodger Smith, advisor, rsmith6@gmu.edu, (703) 993-2940.
- **Mason Cable Network:** Koorosh Farchadi, executive director, kfarcahdi@gmu.edu, or call (703) 993-3996; Michele Braithwaite, advisor, mbraithw@gmu.edu, or call (703) 993-2874.
- **Forensics Team:** Dr. Peter Pober, ppober@gmu.edu.
- **Debate Team:** Warren Decker, wdecker@gmu.edu.
- **Lambda Pi Eta (honorary research society):** Susie Tomasovic, stomasov@gmu.edu.
- **Student Video Center:** svc@gmu.edu.
- **PRSSA (Public Relations):** Mike Dickerson, mdickers@gmu.edu.
- **IABC (International Association of Business Communicators):** admin@iabdc.org.
- **SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists):** GMU Chapter, Kathryn Mangus, advisor, kmangus@gmu.edu or call (703) 993-3004.

WEEK #1 (Aug. 27 & 29)

OVERVIEW: Introductions, review of the syllabus, using Townhall, and “How to Succeed in 203.”

LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- What is journalism and who is a journalist in the 21st century?
- A discussion about mass media, media literacy and media usage.
- A discussion about the Journalism concentration and the Electronic Journalism minor.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS: Chapter assignment from the class texts.

VIDEO: “Gilda Live!” and "EPIC 2015" and "BBC 2010"

JOURNALISM BASICS: How writing for the media is different from other writing disciplines. How quoting is different from citing.

REMINDER: Your first two Townhall entries must be made no later than a half hour before the start of the following class to receive credit.

WEEK #2 (Sept. 5; NO CLASS Monday Sept. 3)

OVERVIEW:

- Catch up from WEEK#1 (as necessary): review of the syllabus and Townhall.

LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- The communication process and some journalism history.

JOURNALISM BASICS:

- What is news?
- The Five Rules of Journalism.
- Basics of Good Journalism.
- How to Read a Newspaper (and assignment #1: Your Media Pyramid).
- How to Write a News Story in 15 Steps.

Reading due for discussion THIS week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

1. Chapter 13, Ethics, **Julie on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

2. Introduction, **Karim on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #3 (Sept. 10 & 12)

OVERVIEW:

-- Bias in the Media: Understanding the concepts of objectivity, subjectivity, balance and fairness (and the difference between a bias, biases and being biased).

JOURNALISM BASICS (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: Speak Up! I Can't Read You).

-- Commonly Misused Words.

-- Punctuating Quotations.

-- Active and Passive Voice.

-- Commas (and why they're important!).

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

3. Chapter 1, We the People: Media and Communication, **Amber on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

4. Chapter 1, Sowing the Seeds of Revolution, **Andrew on WEDNESDAY**

Assignment No. 2:

Identify an example of bias (as opposed to opinion) in the media and write a short, well-written, grammatically correct paper (one-page ONLY, double spaced).

DUE on Monday Sept. 17.

WEEK #4 (Sept. 17 & 19)

OVERVIEW:

How to report a story.

GUEST SPEAKER on MONDAY: Gordon Trowbridge, Detroit News Washington Bureau reporter and former Air Force Times senior reporter who has been an embedded journalist in Iraq.

Assignment No. 3 DUE before class begins on Monday: Bring a TYPEWRITTEN, double-spaced question for Gordon Trowbridge to class. Hand-written questions won't be accepted (check your syllabus!).

JOURNALISM BASICS: (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: Writing the Story: A checklist):

-- More on How to Write and Report a Story.

-- How to conduct an Interview.

-- Attribution tags.

-- How Reporting Is Different from Researching.

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

5. Chapter 10, Journalism: Information and Society, **Brittany on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

6. Chapter 2, Abolition: Turning America's Conscience Against the Sins of Slavery, **Kelsey on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #5 (Sept. 24 & 26)

OVERVIEW:

Writing Feature Stories; All About Public Relations; All About Advertising.

JOURNALISM BASICS:

- How to Write a Strong Lead.
- How to Structure a News Story.
- How to Structure a Feature Story.

MORE JOURNALISM BASICS (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: In the Beginning: Rethinking the Draft)

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

7. Chapter 11, Public Relations, **Belle and Karim on MONDAY**

8. Chapter 12, Advertising, **Brian on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

9. Chapter 3, Slowing the Momentum for Women's Rights, **Mia on MONDAY**

Reporting Assignment is due on Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

Focus sentence due no later than Oct. 3 (graded assignment).

Early deadline is Oct. 3!!!

WEEK #6 (Oct. 1 & 3)

OVERVIEW:

Specialty Stories; Your First EXAM is on Wednesday Oct. 3!!!

JOURNALISM BASICS:

- More on Interviewing Techniques.
- More on Writing Features.

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Sword*

10. Chapter 4, Attacking Municipal Corruption: The Tweed Ring, **Jonathon on MONDAY**

EXAM #1 Wednesday Oct. 3:

-- Covers *Media,* chapters 1, 10, 11, 12, 13 ONLY.

FINAL DEADLINE for the Reporting Assignment is Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

Focus sentence due no later than Oct. 3 (graded assignment).

Early deadline is Wednesday Oct. 3!!!

WEEK #7 (Tuesday Oct. 9 & 10)

OVERVIEW: All About Publishing: Newspapers, Magazines and Books -- and How to Read Them!

JOURNALISM BASICS:

-- Common Errors to Avoid (SEE "How to Write a Story" folder).

Return Exam#1

Reading due for discussion this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

11. Chapter 3, Newspapers, **Erin on MONDAY**

12. Chapter 5, Books, **Lauren on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

13. Chapter 6, Muckraking: The Golden Age of Reform Journalism, **Travis on WEDNESDAY**

FINAL DEADLINE for the Reporting Assignment is Wednesday Oct. 10!!!

WEEK #8 (Oct.15 & 17)

OVERVIEW: Magazines; The Internet, Cross-Media Journalism, Integration and Convergence

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

14. Chapter 4, Magazines, **Mary on MONDAY**

15. Chapter 9, Computers and the Internet, **Brandan on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

16. Chapter 5, Journalism as Warmonger: The Spanish-American War, **Terence on MONDAY**

WEEK #9 (Oct. 22 & 24)

OVERVIEW:

Catchup or guest speaker on Monday; second EXAM on Wednesday Oct. 24!!!

Reading due for this week:

-- *Sword*

17. Chapter 9, Creating "Rosie the Riveter": Propelling the American Woman into the Workforce, **Brooke on MONDAY**

Exam #2 on Wednesday Oct. 24 deals with "Media" chapters 2, 3, 4 & 9 ONLY

WEEK #10 (Oct. 29 & 31)

OVERVIEW: All About Radio – and How to Listen to It!

Return Exam#2

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

18. Chapter 6, Radio, **Devin on MONDAY**

-- *Sword*

19. Chapter 8, Father Coughlin: Fermenting Anti-Semitism via the Radio, **Diana on MONDAY**

20. Chapter 14, Rush Limbaugh: Leading the Republican Revolution, **Christina on MONDAY**

21. Chapter 13, Watergate Forces the President to His Knees, **Diana on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #11 (Nov. 5 & 7)

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 5 in class: Bobbi Bowman, Diversity Director, American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE).

There will be a pre-class homework assignment associated with this presentation.

OVERVIEW: All About Television -- and How to Watch It!

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

22. Chapter 7, Television, **Kris on WEDNESDAY**

-- *Sword*

23. Chapter 10, Exposing Joe McCarthy: Television's Finest Hour, **Christian on WEDNESDAY**

24. Chapter 12, Vietnam War: Bringing the Battlefield into the American Living Room, **Matt on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #12 (Nov. 12 & 14)

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 12 in class: Don Stumpo, Producer, News4.

OVERVIEW: Out to the Movies

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

25. Chapter 5, Movies, **Christina, Andrew and Amber on WEDNESDAY**

WEEK #13 (Nov. 19; NO CLASS Wednesday Nov. 21)

This Week's Overview: The Sound of Music and All That Jazz

Reading due for this week:

-- *Media in Your Life*

26. Chapter 8, Music and the Recording Industry, **Christian, Kelsey, Terence, Mary, Devin, Brittany and Lauren on MONDAY**

WEEK #14 (Nov. 26 & 28)

OVERVIEW: The media's coverage of the Civil Rights Movement

GUEST SPEAKER on Monday Nov. 26 in class: Dr. Roger Wilkins, former Robinson Professor and civil rights leader.

-- *Sword*

27. Chapter 7, Defying the Ku Klux Klan, **Steven on WEDNESDAY**

28. Chapter 11, Pushing the Civil Rights Movement onto the National Agenda, **Kris on WEDNESDAY**

(with special video presentation)

Wrapping up "Mightier Than the Sword" ... Catch-up as necessary ... media videos.

WEEK #15 (Dec. 3 & 5)

OVERVIEW:In-class Careers Day on Monday; third EXAM during final class on Wednesday Dec. 5!!!

Course evaluations Wednesday Dec. 5

Guest speakers on Monday: Ann Mills of the GMU Careers Center and Richard Leonard, director of news recruiting for Gannett, on careers, resumes, internships, interviewing.

SEE "How to Write a Story" folder: PoynterOnline on Your Work as Your Best Resume: Tips on Clips

Resources:

-- [Washington Post Careers page](#)

-- [GMU Career Services](#)

-- [Careers at Gannett](#)

-- [Detroit Free Press Jobs Page](#)

Exam #3 Wednesday Dec. 5: "Media" chapters 5, 6, 7 & 8 ONLY.

George Mason University Course Policies

[sklein1](#) - 04:23pm Jul 31, 2007 EST

Steve Klein

ALL ABOUT ACADEMIC ETHICS and CHEATING:

Honesty is a given for those who engage in journalism. When you violate the trust of your readers or audience, whether you report and write for the mainstream media or a blog, you lose your most important commodity: your credibility.

George Mason University's "[Honor System and Code](#)" is explained in the 2007-08 University Catalog as part of the "[Academic Policies](#)" section.

With regard to this course, acts of dishonesty include, but are not necessarily limited to, cheating on examinations, plagiarizing material from other sources (you must always credit sources), making up material or sources of information, and/or submitting work for this course originally completed for other courses. The penalty for academic dishonesty is failure of the course -- and you will be reported to the [Honor Committee](#).

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions or factual information from another person or source without giving full and proper credit. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic or journalistic setting.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:

In all discussions and assignments, this course emphasizes the importance of avoiding identifications and descriptions that serve to perpetuate stereotypes about gender, age, dialect, disability, national origin, race, religious affiliation and sexual preference. It is expected that discussions will be open and honest, but abusive language or behavior will not be tolerated.

No food will be allowed in the classroom, nor will smoking be tolerated.

Common courtesy should always prevail.

Your **regular attendance** in this class will have a great impact on your final grade. Your in-class participation is critical (in other words, you want me to know your name as early in the semester as possible!). I will create a seating chart since there's a learning curve (for me) to remember your names.

The only acceptable excuse for [missing class](#) is illness, serious family emergency, or a major religious holiday.

For an excused absence, you must bring a note from a doctor (or medical professional) or parent (in the case of a family emergency).

Any application for an excused absence must be submitted in writing with a copy for my records.

Missing class without an approved written excuse will mean a failing grade for any in-class work or exam.

If the number of missed classes add up, you will discover that you are failing that portion of the class. Equally important, it will strongly affect your final grade in other ways: missing important information that impacts your ability to successfully complete assignments and exams.

If you are sick or can't attend class for whatever reason, I expect an e-mail explaining the absence (just as you would do for an employer). I consider this part of your class participation. This policy remains in force from the first class to the last.

Classes will start on time; it is rude to your fellow students and instructor to be late and costs them classtime if I need to repeat material for your benefit.

Be aware of traffic and parking patterns in and around campus, especially during the first week of the semester.

It is [the policy](#) of George Mason University and this instructor to make every reasonable effort to allow members of our diverse university community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. However, it your responsibility to provide me with advance written notice of the dates of any major religious holidays on which you will be absent (the earlier notice the better please).

I have office hours and encourage you to use them -- as well as making mutually convenient appointments as necessary.

Students who proactively visit with their professors before a situation becomes a problem tend to avoid problems and do better in class.

Conversations about grades or individual problems are best dealt with in my office during office hours.

This university and this instructor are committed to providing an equitable learning environment for every student. I will readily adjust for those students with special needs. If you have special needs in the classroom, please provide a letter from [Disability Support Services](#) confirming and describing your special needs at the start of the semester. You may have Disability Support Services contact me directly. This information will be kept in confidence.

Finally, you will find that I'm extremely responsive to e-mail. However, it is important that you **include Comm203-001/002 and an applicable title or headline in the SUBJECT line** or your note may go unanswered (or end up in my SPAM folder).