

## **MCOM 4183 – Mass Media Internship**

Fall 2009 – 3 credits

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Office Hours: Monday – 9-10 a.m., 3-5 p.m.;  
Tuesday – 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Wednesday – 9-10 a.m., 2-4 p.m.;  
Thursday – 11 a.m. -12:30 p.m.; Friday – 9-10 a.m.  
Also by appointment

### Prerequisites

- Completion of MCOM 1243 – Newswriting I
- Completion of MCOM 3133 – Electronic News Gathering
- Junior standing
- Consent of instructor

### Course Objectives/Description

- Students will obtain practical experience in a professional setting.
- Students will receive feedback, critique and guidance from a qualified supervisor.
- Students will be able to apply skills learned in the classroom and through extracurricular activities at MSU.

### Grading

An internship is not like other courses in which there are set meeting times. The Mass Communication Department considers the internship a form of employment, and as such, students are expected to conduct themselves as employees with little faculty oversight. This means it is up to you to attend regularly, arrive on time, dress appropriately, conduct yourself professionally, meet deadlines, and participate as a team member, among other responsibilities. As I will not be there day to day to make sure these responsibilities are met – as I would be in a traditional course – I rely on students to behave as adults. I also rely on reports from your supervisor.

You are expected to communicate with me and/or your supervisor about any problems that occur during the internship.

Your contract has further details about grades. As stated in the contract, grades are based on timely submission of weekly logs, a final paper and a letter from your supervisor. As stated in the contract, the due date for completion of hours, final paper and your supervisor's letter will be December 1, 2009.

Logs are to be kept and submitted weekly. Do not submit several weeks' worth of logs at the end of the internship. Logs must be written using standard grammar, spelling and punctuation (in other words, don't send logs written as if u r sending a txt-msg). Handwritten logs will not be accepted. If your logs fail to follow these guidelines, you will be asked to revise and resubmit.

### Example of Weekly Log

Monday, January 20, 2008      4 hours

I arrived at 9 a.m. and met with Sally, the news director, to discuss assignments for the day. I attended the news budget meeting at 9:30 a.m. and observed how reporters pitch their story ideas. I left with Brandon at 10 a.m. to work on a story about the storms the night before. When we got back to the station at around 1 p.m., I helped write and edit the story. I was happy that Brandon listened to my suggestions. We then met with Susan, the assignments editor, for a first read-through. I don't think I'd like her job because she has to constantly tell reporters things they don't want to hear.

Total hours this week: 12  
Hours to reach 120: 100

You may submit your logs via e-mail, fax (397-4909) or mail; or you may put them in my mailbox in the front office. I will verify that I have received your logs.

You are expected to accumulate 120 hours. This can be done in any combination as agreed to by you and the supervisor (e.g., 10 weeks for 12 hours per week; 6 weeks for 20 hours per week; etc.), as long as you reach 120 before the final due date, December 1, 2009. While I strongly believe interns should be paid for their efforts, the reality is that most are not. This aspect of the internship is strictly between the student and the employing organization.

The final paper should address the following topics:

- Duties
- What you learned
- What you enjoyed/did not enjoy
- Your strengths/weaknesses during the internship
- How this experience will or will not have an impact on your career/career choices
- Whether you received proper guidance/critique from your supervisor, and how it did or did not affect you
- Whether you would recommend this organization/internship for a future student from MSU.

The supervisor's letter will address not only your achievements in terms of work quality, but also your ability to conduct yourself professionally (see below). It is your responsibility to make sure the letter from your supervisor arrives on time. A copy of this syllabus will be provided to your supervisor.

If you produce any materials for the organization (e.g., articles, press releases, tapes), samples must be submitted before final deadline.

Around the time you achieve approximately 60 hours, I will contact your supervisor for a midterm report on your progress.

You are required to remember that you are representing the department and the university during your internship. As such, you are expected to conduct yourself in ways that will not bring embarrassment to the department or university. It is on you to meet responsibilities in such a way that a supervisor does not say, "We will never have an intern from MSU again."

If you cannot make it a priority to behave responsibly and professionally, please drop now. If you cannot make it a priority to represent the department and the university in ways that will keep our reputation intact, please drop now.

**By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand my expectations regarding attitude and professionalism, as well as the grading policies.**

A final note on grading: Critics from both within and outside of higher education have accused faculty of engaging in "grade inflation," the idea that grades don't truly reflect quality and instead have been devalued to the point that an A means very good, a B means average, and anything less

than a B is failing. I'm not sure whether those people would include me in their criticisms, but I do know I try my best to adhere to the system as I understand it: an A means outstanding, a B means above average, and a C means average. Please remember these interpretations as the semester progresses.

#### An Important Note to Graduating Seniors Regarding Deadlines

If you plan to graduate at the end of this semester, please take note: if the logs, final essay and letter from your supervisor are not received by deadline, I will be forced to assign a grade of Incomplete for the semester. Those with Incompletes on their transcripts are automatically removed from degree candidacy, and at best the degree will be conferred at the end of the following semester. I will not simply lower your grade if any of the above requirements are missing; you will be assigned an Incomplete. Know that you have predecessors whose degrees were delayed, and do not make the same mistake.

#### Ethics

The MSU Student Honor Creed, written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate, covers expectations related to cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty. The main statement from this document is:

**“As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so.”**

All students in my courses are expected to abide by this student-produced document, as well as all other related university policies. I will provide copies of the MSU Student Honor Creed to any student who requests one. It is also on page 4 of the 2009-2010 MSU Student Handbook (the handbook is also available online at <http://forms.mwsu.edu/uploaded-forms/Student-Handbook-2009-10-20090810-080535.pdf>).

In addition, the university requires faculty to provide this statement to all students:

**By enrolling in this course, the student expressly grants MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by the student for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and educational purposes.**

**By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand the statement provided above and agree to comply with it.**

I require **COMPLETE** honesty in producing your work. Working professionals are often encouraged to confer with their colleagues on strategies and wordings, but there is a difference between advice and blatant plagiarism.

Past students will tell you I take this issue very seriously and have not hesitated to confront them. A slightly higher grade is not worth the extremely unpleasant experience of taking an accusation of academic dishonesty through the university hierarchy. Please don't force me to do it.

**I reserve the right to drop any student with an F if he/she engages in any form of academic dishonesty. I further reserve the right to recommend other sanctions as may be appropriate. Students are also encouraged to consult the following sources for additional discussion of students' rights and responsibilities regarding cheating, attendance and general conduct:**

- **The MSU Student Honor Creed**
- **Pages 22-24, 84-89, 90 and 94-97 of the 2008-2010 MSU Undergraduate Catalog**
- **Pages 4, 35-46, 55-80 of the 2009-2010 MSU Student Handbook (the handbook is also available online at <http://forms.mwsu.edu/uploaded-forms/Student-Handbook-2009-10-20090810-080535.pdf>).**

**By accepting this syllabus and remaining enrolled in this course, you are indicating that you understand the seriousness of academic dishonesty and realize I will impose the harshest sanctions possible if I can prove you have engaged in academic dishonesty. You are also indicating that you understand what constitutes academic dishonesty; I will not tolerate the excuse that the student did not know he/she was engaging in academic dishonesty.**

#### Privacy

Federal privacy law prohibits me from releasing information about students to certain parties outside of the university without the signed consent of the student. Thus, in almost all cases I will not discuss your academic progress or other matters with your parents. Please do not have them call me. Regardless of these important legal considerations, it is my general policy to communicate with the students, not their parents. College students are adults and are expected to behave accordingly.

### Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities or who are in need of special arrangements should see me as early as possible in the semester. I will do what I can within reason to accommodate your needs. Please note that in order to qualify for consideration of special accommodations, you must be registered with the MSU Office of Disability Support Services, and I must have a memo on file from that office, along with the Special Accommodations Request form.