

# Student Media Lab JMC 321. \_ \_

Section .01 (Optimist staff)  
Instructor: Optimist adviser

Section .02 KUF-TV staff  
Instructor: KUF adviser

**NOTE TO SPIG COLLEAGUES:** *Since this course was approved, we also have added sections for the student-run Ad/PR agency and the FM radio station.*

Office: Don Morris 301  
Phone:  
Email  
Office Hours:

## I. GOAL OF THE COURSE

**The goal of the course is to enhance students' journalistic skills through regular participation on the staff of a student medium, resulting in enhanced student understanding of several important aspects of media, including:**

- A. The interdependence of staff members on one another, regardless of whether a given individual's primary responsibility is reporting, editing, videography, production, photography, design or management.
- B. The essentiality of setting and meeting deadlines.
- C. The complexity of achieving broad yet thorough community coverage.

## II. NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course is a required, non-credit, on-campus laboratory experience. Journalism majors on all tracks must enroll for two semesters as staff members of a student medium. One of those semesters must be on the *Optimist*; the second may be on the *Optimist* or on the yearbook or TV staff. Only one lab credit can be earned in a given semester. Students must have sophomore standing or higher to enroll in the lab.

A course fee of \$35 is charged for each semester. The lab can be completed during semesters in which the student is serving in a volunteer or paid capacity on the staffs. Students should not assume that enrolling for the lab will assure them a paid staff position.

Students must complete weekly assignments that may include but are not limited to news or feature stories, columns, photos, page editing, design, shooting, editing, and/or producing stories or segments for broadcast. These requirements are in addition to any assignments a student may be required to complete because of enrollment in another JMC course, i.e. Basic News, Reporting, Copy Editing, Feature Writing, Opinion Writing, Studio Production, Field Production, Broadcast News. Thus students are encouraged to choose wisely the best semesters for lab enrollment in order to perform all the required tasks well and on deadline.

Students also are expected to attend weekly staff meetings and any other special meetings that may be required by the editor or producer, such as weekly department meetings, i.e. photo staff, editorial board.

### III. UNIQUE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

The ACU mission, to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world, has special significance for practitioners in journalism and mass communication.

Media practitioners face many pressures and challenges in this fast-paced, information-laden society. Words and images are powerful tools. Your ability to use them wisely is stewardship of God-given talent, and is essential in order to support the media's responsibility to inform its readers and viewers of campus events and issues. Your responsible participation with co-workers builds an ethic of being accountable to others, and holding others accountable to journalistic excellence in truth telling, whether in the content of a story or photo, or in working relationships on the staff.

### IV. Required texts

Note: Which book is required will depend on the section.

AP Broadcast stylebook (most recent edition)

AP stylebook (most recent edition)

Answerbook (most recent edition)

### V. ATTENDANCE

Participation in staff meetings, the fall planning retreat (for students enrolled in the fall *Optimist* section), and special called meetings or department meetings is required. In order for any absence to be excused, the editor or producer must approve the absence in advance.

A student with three or more unexcused absences from required meetings will be dropped from the lab for that semester.

Excused absence from a staff meeting does not relieve staff members from learning about and submitting any assignments on deadline. Students who repeatedly miss deadlines also will be dropped from the lab for that semester.

In the event of a major catastrophe (death in the family, serious auto accident, etc.), the supervisors intend to deal with circumstances with integrity and compassion and make decisions accordingly.

### VI. GRADING

Grading for this course will be on a credit/non-credit basis. Grades will be assigned by the editor or producer and approved by the faculty adviser.

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

Attendance – 50 percent

Students are expected to attend staff/production meetings that may be called as often as weekly, depending on the production schedule of the medium. Any absence should be approved ahead of the meeting time by the editor/producer and/or the faculty adviser. Failure to attend at least 80 percent of staff/production meetings will result in a failing grade for this portion of the course.

Completion of weekly assignments on deadline – 50 percent

The nature of assignments will vary among media, but may include writing stories, designing pages, shooting or editing video, participating in studio production, taking or editing photographs, producing or posting online material.

Students enrolled for the lab course must meet 90 percent of deadlines or receive prior approval from the editor/producer and/or faculty adviser in order to receive a passing grade in this portion of the course.

Students who regularly attend staff meetings, complete weekly assignments as directed and meet deadlines will receive credit. Failure to meet either the attendance or deadline requirements will result in a non-credit designation.

The editor or producer works under the supervision of a faculty adviser. Regardless, in this lab these individuals have responsibilities comparable to the editor or producer in a professional context and they should be awarded the same respect and cooperation that would be due a supervisor in the professional context.

## **VII. ABOUT CHEATING**

In the world of professional media, cheating is a firing offense. When writers plagiarize the work of others, when they falsely report something as true, when they fabricate quotes, sources or information, when images are manipulated to betray truth, these people are driven from the media business decisively, even ruthlessly. Cheating in various sectors of our society is usually discovered sooner or later. Dishonesty in the JMC Department and on student media staffs is taken very seriously. Plagiarism and other forms of journalistic dishonesty in service to the student media will result in a Non-credit grade for the semester and depending on the severity of the infraction may result in suspension from the department for an entire semester.

The JMC Academic Integrity Policy is posted on the JMC website.

## **VIII. DEPARTMENTAL EMAIL USAGE**

Because of the growing importance of email usage in the business community, as well as on our campus, students are required to obtain and use a university email account. Most communication within the JMC department, including that about meetings, special events, departmental chapel, etc., will be done using email. For example, staff assignments are sent twice weekly by the managing editor or assignments editor to one or both publication staffs. *Students are responsible for checking email and responding to it in a timely manner when appropriate.*

**If the email account that you check most often is not your acu.edu account, you should have your ACU email forwarded.**

### **Department policies:**

**The JMC Department has published policies regarding attendance, academic integrity and student complaints regarding faculty or courses. These policies are posted on the bulletin board across the hall from the department office, Don Morris 301. They also are available at the JMC Web site, <http://www.acu.edu/jmc>**