

**Bergen Community College  
Division of Arts and Humanities  
Department of Communication**

**Syllabus  
COM 110.001  
Print Journalism Production**

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**Instructor:**  
**Office:**  
**Office hours:**  
**Email:**

**Course Description** [<top>](#)

**COM-110 Print Journalism Production** is a hands-on course in which students learn to write for, edit and produce *The Torch*, the student newspaper of Bergen Community College. This course covers such topics as reporting, news story editing, ethical and legal issues for student newspapers, news photography and photo editing, formatting, layout and design.

**Welcome to *The Torch*, Bergen Community College's student newspaper.** [<top>](#)

*The Torch* fills a vital role at BCC – informing, educating and entertaining members of the college and the community at large about the diverse opportunities and experiences that make up our college life. *The Torch* reports on events, people and issues of interest to the college community, including featured speakers and presentations, theatre and music, and sports.

Participation on a college newspaper staff is an exciting and personally beneficial experience. Students will have an opportunity to know on a first-hand basis the people, events and philosophy that shape our campus. The newspaper provides an open public forum for the college.

Students in the course will help publish three issues of *The Torch* this semester. They will learn to report, write, edit and revise stories, take pictures, design pages and other elements of producing a monthly college newspaper.

**Course Objectives** [<top>](#)

COM 110 builds the foundation journalism skills in a hands-on, real-world setting. The focus in this course is on the development of critical-thinking skills needed by today's journalists, with an emphasis on integrity and on protecting and preserving our First Amendment press freedoms. The course examines current/past legal and ethical issues facing journalists. It aims to encourage students to develop a broader view of the diversity in which we live.

**Student Learning Objectives** [<top>](#)

During this course, you will:

- Develop the ability to write clear, concise, accurate and interesting news stories
- Demonstrate basic skills and techniques in newsgathering and newswriting
- Judge the newsworthiness of events and ideas and analyze stories for content, form and style
- Gain a wide range of practical experience in basic news coverage
- Demonstrate an understanding of major legal and ethical issues in journalism

- Develop style through writing, revision and editing
- Demonstrate the ability to select and edit news and feature photographs
- Learn the basics of design and layout of the student newspaper

### **Required Texts** [<top>](#)

Deborah Potter, *Handbook of Independent Journalism*, Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, 2006.

The Associated Press, *Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, latest annual edition.

### **Course procedures** [<top>](#)

*Reporting/Writing.* You will be reporting, writing, editing or revising stories virtually every week of the semester. You will report and write stories for each of the remaining editions of the semester.

*Team learning.* Occasionally you may work with other students to evaluate and suggest improvements in the first drafts of your stories, or to work as a team to gather photos for the newspaper and/or video for *The Torch* website. Journalism is an increasingly collaborative effort among writers, editors, designers, directors and producers. We will practice working together as a group of mutually supportive journalists with high standards for one another's work.

*Computers.* This course will be taught in a lab, where we will write and edit stories and learn layout techniques, and in *The Torch* newsroom, where we will work with the paper's editors. All stories and photos will be submitted online to me via Moodle and shared in Google Drive with section editors, who will edit them online. All quizzes and exercises will be done online via Moodle. All students are required to bring portable media (a jump [flash, thumb, etc.] drive) to every class or to have online cloud access to storage (OneDrive, DropBox, etc).

### **Classroom Policies and Procedures** [<top>](#)

#### *Class Attendance*

We meet in *The Torch* newsroom at 12:30 each Tuesday as a laboratory session and part of the regular Torch staff meeting, and on Thursday morning at 10:30 in W-110, a Mac lab. All sessions are equally important; you are counted on to be there for the Tuesday meetings as well as on Thursday.

From the college's attendance policy: "All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes."

Because so much of what we will do in this course requires your active participation, your consistent presence is required. Studies show that students learn as much from one another as they do from their instructor. Since your absence could affect someone else's learning, you must be in class. Each student is permitted four absences. Absences in excess of four will result in a loss of 10 percent of the class participation grade for each absence in excess of four.

#### *Tardiness*

Persistent tardiness will result in a loss of all class participation points assigned by the instructor.

#### *Cell phones*

Cell phones must be off or set to vibrate on incoming calls. Initiating calls, texting or sending tweets during class is rude and hinders your and your classmates' attention, and is thus not permitted. Violation of this policy will result in cell phone confiscation.

*Computers/ e-mail:* *The Torch* is a modern student newspaper, produced entirely on computers, with stories submitted via Google Drive and, if necessary, e-mail. You must have access to a computer outside of the weekly class sessions, and set up a gmail.com e-mail account, which will allow Torch editors to share stories with you in Drive. Use a recognizable form of your name (e.g., G.Smith@gmail.com, not IEatGlue@gmail.com).

#### *Students with disabilities*

It is the policy of Bergen Community College to provide equal access to employment and educational programs, benefits, and services to any qualified individual, without regard to disability. Individuals with disabilities are responsible for reporting and supplying documentation verifying their disability. Requests for accommodations must be initiated through the Office of Specialized Services, Room L-116, Pitkin Education Center (<http://www.bergen.edu/pages/676.asp>).

### *Safeguards*

It's always better to be *prepared* for disaster rather than *surprised* by it. **YOU MUST KEEP BACKUP COPIES OF ALL ASSIGNMENTS, INCLUDING STORIES AND PHOTOS.** In the event that an assignment is lost, you must produce the backup in order to get credit and for the assignment to be published in *The Torch*.

### *Plagiarism*

College policy is clear that copying another person's work, downloading without documenting sources and/or using another's ideas as if they were your own are serious violations. If discovered, plagiarism will result in your failure of that assignment and can lead to failure of the course and your suspension from the college. **All stories will be checked with plagiarism-detecting software (Turnitin.com).** It's serious. Don't do it. If you are unsure about this policy, check out <http://www.bergen.edu/pages/2307.asp> and [http://wps.prenhall.com/hss\\_understand\\_plagiarism\\_1/](http://wps.prenhall.com/hss_understand_plagiarism_1/)

### *Pay attention to your health; watch out for stress*

The American College Health Association reports that stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, relationship/family problems, loss, alcohol/drug use are among the top 10 health reasons why students perform poorly in College. If you or a friend is in distress, consider contacting a Personal Counselor for a confidential, free appointment. They can be reached in either HS-100 (201-447-9257) or in A-118 (201-447-7211), or [personalcounseling@bergen.edu](mailto:personalcounseling@bergen.edu) (for non emergency matters). Counseling is confidential and free.

## **Student and Faculty Support Services <top>**

### **The Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center**

The Tutoring Center, English Language Resource Center, and Writing Center are collectively known as the Henry and Edith Cerullo Learning Assistance Center. The Cerullo Learning Assistance Center is located in the Pitkin Education Center, Room L-125; the telephone number is 201-447-7489.

### **The Tutorial Center**

The Tutoring Center, staffed with peer and professional tutors, offers free individual and group tutoring, supplemental instruction, and online tutoring for subjects offered at the college.

### **The English Language Resource Center**

The center is located in Ender Hall, Room 126, and provides help to students whose native language is not English.

### **Writing Center**

The Writing Center, located in the Learning Assistance Center (L-125), is designed to help students improve their writing. Individualized tutorials in all facets of the writing process including the development of ideas, organization, editing and proofreading are available to all students enrolled in college-level courses. Many Writing Center resources are also available online at <http://www.bergen.edu/owl>.

### **Sydney Silverman Library**

This course will take full advantage of the Sydney Silverman Library (2<sup>nd</sup> level, Pitkin Education Center), and at least one class session will be held there. The library is an important resource for information, study and intellectual enrichment, is an integral part of the College's educational programs. To support the curriculum, the library acquires, organizes, and provides access to a variety of print, media, and electronic resources for individual and classroom use. The library is open seven days a week during the fall and spring semesters, and weekdays during the summer.

## **GRADING** [<top>](#)

Your grade will be based on accumulation of points for work accomplished through a combination of quiz and exercise results, class participation and written work, as follows:

### **Story suggestion and “pitching” (up to 100 points)**

Students are expected to suggest and support story ideas: What’s happening on campus, or that affects the college community? What issues should *The Torch* be covering?

### **Class participation (up to 200 points)**

Based on your presence and input during class (being in class but mute isn’t participating).

### **Written Work (up to 600 points)**

- You are expected to write for the three remaining monthly print editions of the paper and for the online edition, which is updated in between the print editions. You will also write stories based on class assignments. The monthly stories for potential publication are worth up to 100 points each; the weekly class assignments up to 25 points each.
- Written assignments will be evaluated with respect to both the *content* and *quality* of the work. Content includes proper sourcing, use of quotes, accuracy, fairness and completeness of the story. Quality includes clarity, coherence, unity, grammar, spelling and adherence to journalistic standards.
- Writing assignments will be graded based on their “publishability” as follows:

A = Outstanding. Publishable with little or no editing. Well-written nut graph and limited grammatical/AP style/direct quotation issues. Excellent flow to story. Must include suggestions for photos/graphics, source sheet, and suggested headline.

B = Superior. Publishable with minor editing. Nut graph more difficult to locate. More grammatical/AP style/direct quotation issues. Flow not as strong. Missing suggestions for photos/graphics, source sheet, or suggested headline.

C = Adequate. Portions of the copy need to be rewritten and closely edited before publishing. Obvious grammatical/AP style/direct quotation issues. Written in 1<sup>st</sup> person. Fewer than three sources. Missing suggestions for photos/graphics, source sheet, or suggested headline.

D = Marginal. Copy contains major factual, structural, writing and usage flaws and needs major revision for publication. Extensive grammatical/AP style/direct quotation issues. Written in first person. Fewer than three sources. Failed to meet final deadline (does not appear in issue).

F = Assignment not fulfilled, work not turned in. **Note:** Written work is based on available assignments. If the total potential points fall short of the maximum number, grading will be proportional based on the number of points earned versus the total potential points. Grades are assigned based on the percentage of possible points achieved, thusly:

A 90% - 100%

B 80% - 84.9%

C 70% - 74.9%

F 0% - 64.9%

B+ 85% - 89.9%

C+ 75% - 79.9%

D 65% - 69.9%

**Tentative Class Schedule [<top>](#)**  
**COM 110.001**

(This schedule may change based on deadline demands, story coverage and production issues)

| <b>Dates</b>              | <b>Topic</b>   | <b>Reading</b>  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| During pre-semester break | Pre-semester meetings of editors and senior staff, Torch office. Draw up story budget, assign stories, establish publication schedule for semester, and edit stories for first edition of semester.  |   |
| Weeks 1 -2                | Producing the first edition, preparing for second edition  |   |
|                           | Official opening, welcome. Review of course syllabus and assignments. Discuss staff organization, expectations, deadlines, skills, and work ethics. Story idea brainstorming; distribute and discuss story budget for next edition. Tour of Torch newsroom. What is news, especially on the college campus? Writing the news story: Covering campus events, especially speeches, presentations. Introduction of legal concepts. First story reporting exercises. | Potter Ch.1-3   |
| Weeks 3 – 6               | Producing the second edition, preparing for third edition  |   |
|                           | Work on and expand second edition story budget and brainstorm story ideas. Review the Associated Collegiate Press Model Code of Ethics. Legal and ethical issues, including copyright and the internet, libel and privacy. Report, write and upload your second edition stories. Edit the early version of the second edition dummies.   | Potter Ch. 4, 6, 7;<br>AP Stylebook on Media Law      |
| Weeks 7 – 10              | Producing the third edition, planning for fourth edition   |   |
|                           | Check out the third edition story budget and brainstorm story ideas. Report, write and upload your third edition stories. Writing and editing for the Web. Using Internet images legally. Photojournalism: storytelling by visual journalists; the dangers of Photoshop. Edit the early versions of the November dummies.  | Potter Ch. 5, AP Stylebook on social media guidelines |
| Weeks 11 – 13             | Producing the final edition  |   |
|                           | Check out the fourth edition story budget. Elements of newspaper layout and design; review Society of News Design’s best. Headlines, cutlines, captions and teases. Introduction to InDesign. Exercises in layout and design. Edit the latest versions of the last edition dummies. Report, write and upload your final edition stories. Elections for spring editorial board.   | Potter Ch. 4,<br>Poynter.org, Society of News Design  |
| Weeks 14 - 15             | Brainstorming the first edition of next semester   |   |
|                           | Story idea brainstorming, story budget planning for first edition of next semester. Editors offer input on staffers’ skills and contribution to the paper over the semester. Penultimate and final assignments. Course review and evaluation.  |   |