

American University of Beirut
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences

SBHS 205, Basic News Reporting

1. Course Learning Outcomes:

Introduction to the basic conventions of journalism with a focus on developing writing, researching, interviewing and organizational skills, including:

- Grammar use and newspaper style writing
- Covering and writing for different beats
- The importance of research, observation and interviews
- Gathering and writing news, including effective leads
- Professional practices and journalism ethics.

This course introduces students to the basics of journalistic writing with a special emphasis on developing story ideas, researching, organizing material, writing, and re-writing. Students are introduced to and have a chance to write different types of story leads, and then several types of stories.

2. Resources Available to Students

- Textbook: Itule, Bruce D. and Anderson, Douglas A. *News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media*. 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill International Editions. 2000.
- The Daily Star and International Herald Tribune
- Other newspapers
- Internet
- Newspaper archives
- Reuters lab

3. Grading Criteria

Class work and quizzes – 20%

Tests – 30%

Writing Assignment – 25%

Final Exam - 25%

4. Schedule

The following topics will be covered sequentially.

- What is news
- Different kinds of news stories
- A reporter's role
- What is a Lead
- The 5 Ws and the H
- Writing a Lead
- Sharpening the lead
- Feature and other leads
- Organizing a news story
- The Inverted Pyramid style
- The Hourglass style
- Developing a news story

- Covering developing stories
- How to use quotations
- How to attribute quotations
- Objectivity
- The IMPORTANCE of accuracy and spelling
- Interviewing
- Doing the research
- Making the appointment
- Checklists and guidelines
- Conducting the interview
- Q & A
- After the interview
- Covering a speech
- What to look for at press conferences
- News versus Features
- What makes a good feature
- Writing and organizing effective feature
- Broadcast styles
- Writing for Radio/Television

5. Course Policy

Plagiarism is explained and discussed at length. Students are warned that any work handed in which is plagiarized, even in part, will be reported, and the paper/assignment will receive a 0.