

STATEHOUSE PROGRAM – JO 546
SPRING 2023
Monday – Friday (By arrangement)

Prof. Jerry Berger
COM 216B
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Office Hours: Monday 11-12 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course, the prime component of the Boston Statehouse Program, provides students with the real-world experience of filing stories on state government and politics for newspapers, websites and other media outlets. A companion course, **Covering Government and Politics (JO511)**, provides additional instruction on government, political and public affairs reporting.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students develop reporting, writing and multimedia skills through daily coverage of state government for individual media outlets. Students who complete this course will come away with the tools necessary to work in a daily news environment, including interviewing, developing sources, archival research, deadline writing, video and audio gathering and the editing and updating of websites.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students must have completed at least one news writing and reporting course before applying to the Statehouse Program. Students apply to the Statehouse Program by submitting a resume, samples of work and scheduling an interview with the professor.

Normally we strive for a minimum of one story a week and a minimum of 10 stories for the semester. Stories include a mix of topics about state government with the goal of explaining how government issues will impact their audience. Students also will be expected to complete longer, news feature pieces for distribution to all the program's media members. Students are expected to spend at least 24 hours a week, reporting, writing and editing in consultation with their instructor and editor.

DAILY SCHEDULE:

Students will check in with the instructor by email, text or phone no later than 10 a.m., Tuesday through Friday, to discuss story ideas and plan the day. Similar conversations will be expected between the student and his/her member editor(s). The instructor and students will talk as needed through the day. Stories must be sent to the instructor for editing and student rework with enough time to meet deadlines. The student must be available by phone for questions and rework requests.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to do original reporting for all stories. Students will provide content free of errors in grammar, spelling and facts. Students also will be expected to know Associated Press Stylebook rules and style rules specific to their media members.

The instructor will provide regular assessment of each student's work. He will maintain regular contact with the editors to monitor student work and to address any issues. Students will be expected to gather all versions of their work and keep a portfolio that can be used for job hunting.

GRADING CRITERIA

- Class work (defined as participation, preparation, meeting deadlines) 15%
- Assignments (Writing test, weekly stories, off and running piece) - 50%
- Group and Final Project – 35%.

All assignments will be graded on reporting; writing/presentation; proofreading. Deadline skills and productivity will be factors, but students will **not** be judged solely by the number of stories produced. Depth and complexity will also be considered. Students are expected to show steady improvement; continued repetition of past errors will result in a lower grade. Stories must be submitted in Word or as a Google Doc. The same grade will also be applied to students enrolled in JO511.

THE RULES

- Call/text/email if you are sick. An unexcused absence isn't acceptable at work. Or here.
- Deadlines are just that. Miss a deadline, drop a half grade unless we discuss it and agree to adjustment.
- **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any kind of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the filing of academic misconduct charges. Any suspicious act/material/ etc. will be investigated to the fullest extent possible and those found guilty will be punished accordingly.**

-All BU students are bound by the [Academic Conduct Code](#). Please review to ensure you are acting responsibly and ethically in regard to your academics.

-All students must wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth. Anyone who fails to wear a mask, or removes it during class without my permission, will not be allowed to stay that day and will be permitted to return if/when they comply with the university mask mandate. You are responsible for getting notes about missed content and will not be permitted to make up missed work due to refusal to properly wear a mask.

-Boston University is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct – including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need. Confidential support and academic advocacy resources can be found with the Center for Sexual Assault Response & Prevention (SARP) at <http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/>.

-BU has strict guidelines on classroom behavior and practices when it comes to treatment of students and guests on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability, genetic information, military service, national origin, or due to marital, parental, or veteran status. Discrimination for any of these reasons is prohibited. Please refer to the [Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy](#) for more details.

-At your discretion, please alert me to anything related to preferred pronouns, preferred name or nickname, or any extenuating circumstances or trigger warnings (personal, medical, etc.) that might affect your classroom experience. I want to make sure you have the most positive experience in the classroom as possible.

-If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact the [Office of Disability and Access Services](#) (DAS) at 617-353-3658 to coordinate any reasonable accommodation requests. DAS is located at 25 Buick St., on the third floor.

-All student-athletes should be provided with a sheet from Student-Athlete Support Services regarding absences throughout the semester. These sheets should be handed in as soon as possible to avoid potential conflicts and so arrangements can be made to provide for missed lecture notes, classwork, or discussion.

-Classroom proceedings for this course might be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor's permission.

Required Text:

The Associated Press Stylebook

Other Resources:

Students will follow state government issues as reported by newspapers and broadcast outlets. They will have access to the **Statehouse News Service**, a web-based service that provides news, schedules and archives on state government and politics.