



The mission of Concord University is to provide quality, liberal arts based education, to foster scholarly and creative activities and to serve the regional community (<http://www.concord.edu/academics/>).

**Course Prefix, Number and Title:** MCOM 218 – Writing for Electronic Media

**Course CRN # and Section:** 20292 - 01

**Semester Taught (including year):** Spring 2019

**Professor:** Ms. Heather Hamilton

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Office Location:** Fine Arts M03

**Prerequisites:** ENG 102, JOUR 211

**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00 – 10:50

TR 12:30 – 1:30

By Appointment

**Course Time (if applicable):** MWF 11:00 – 11:50

**Email:** hmhamilton@concord.edu

**Building and Room Number (if applicable):** Fine Arts M011 **Phone:** 304-384-5303

**Course Description/Rationale:** This course is an extensive writing course which focuses on how to write for electronic media. Students will learn how writing for television, radio and the Internet differs from writing for print journalism. This course will examine the following:

- Strengths of broadcast news
- Mechanics of script writing (including PSA's and commercials)
- Writing news leads and closes
- Interviewing
- Using effective soundbites
- Key elements of writing for radio
- The producer's job
- Creation of newscasts
- And much more

**Course Management System** (Blackboard/Moodle or other systems): Blackboard

**Hardware/Software Needed** (include privacy policies, if applicable): Reliable Internet

**Text requirements:**

Dobbs, Greg. *Better Broadcast Writing, Better Broadcast News*.

Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon, 2005. Print.

Hewitt, John. *Air Words: writing broadcast news in the Internet age*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.

**Concord University Educational Goal(s):**

Goal 1.1: “Effective inter-communication skills and literacy adapted as needed for the demands of various kinds of discourse: listening and speaking, reading and writing, graphic communication, and media and technological literacy.”

Goal 1.6: “An ability to apply and to transfer academic and experiential learning appropriately from one context to another.”

**National Standards** (if applicable): N/A

**Specific Learning Outcomes:** The primary focus of this class is to help you write broadcast scripts. By the end of this course, I hope you will have learned the following:

- To learn broadcast writing style, structure, grammar, and vocabulary
- To learn broadcast spot and continuity writing forms and formats
- To learn how writing for electronic media differs from writing for print journalism
- To become more proficient in writing overall through homework and class exercises

**Course Requirements**

<b>Exams . . . . .</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Writing Exercises . . . . .</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>In-Class Assignments. . . . .</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>Quizzes . . . . .</b>	<b>200</b>
<b><u>Attendance/Participation . . .</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>1,000</b>

**Grading Policy and Scale, Make-up Policy, Late Work**

**Scale:**

- 100 – 90 . . . . . A**
- 89 – 80 . . . . . B**
- 79 – 70 . . . . . C**
- 69 – 60 . . . . . D**
- Below 59 . . . . . F**

### **Late Work:**

Deadlines are a major part of your educational career and will be in your professional career. Therefore, it is your responsibility and highly important to consistently meet the deadlines assigned for this class. With that said, **if an assignment or activity is not received by your instructor prior to the deadline, 10 points will be deducted from your assignment. If the assignment is not handed into your instructor by the next class period, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment.**

Should extenuating circumstances arise, you are responsible for contacting me as soon as possible, preferably beforehand, for consideration.

### **Reading:**

You are responsible for all assigned reading. You should have the chapter(s) completely read before the class hour, so that you can ask questions, discuss points, and/or complete an assignment in and out-of-class. Throughout the semester, you should also be watching various newscasts and listening to different radio shows. You will be watching and listening some of these pieces for assignments, but you should also be watching and listening to these on your own.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism—the act of presenting the ideas and/or words of an outside source, published or not, as if they were one's own—***will not be tolerated*** and is subject to the most stringent punishment, including failure on the assignment, failure in the course and/or dismissal from the college. Please be responsible in this regard.

### **Attendance:**

Your university experience calls for the same level of professionalism and punctuality as employment. It is expected that everyone attend class on a regular basis to ensure the greatest chance for learning and understanding. Each student is given ***four absences*** to be used for illness, interviews, school sponsored events or other personal circumstances. Every additional absence results in a ***10-point deduction from the final grade.***

Just as with an employer, it is expected that you inform me when you miss class. For extenuating circumstances (e.g., death of close family, jury duty, etc), I ask that you tell me as soon as possible so I can work with you to reach some sort of compromise. With the availability of e-mail and cellphones, there is no excuse for not contacting me about situations that arise.

### **Classroom Conduct:**

It is important that everyone behave professionally in order to accommodate learning and show respect. Your conduct should never disrupt the ability of others to listen.

Disruptive behaviors that violate this right to listen will be subject to the strictures of the Academic Catalog; whereby, students will be given a warning if they are disruptive. Further disruptions in that or future lectures can result in the dismissal from that day's class and/or dismissal from the course.

Please refer to the Academic Catalog at [catalog.concord.edu](http://catalog.concord.edu) for any additional information.

## **Course Timeline (Schedule of Assignments/Assessments/Presentations)**

Course Schedule is attached to the back of this syllabus

### **Accessibility/Accommodations:**

Concord University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please inform your instructor at the beginning of the class semester if you have a disability and are requesting accommodations. It is your responsibility to self-disclose that you are requesting accommodations. The University and instructor will provide you with a reasonable accommodation. You should register with CU's Disability Services Office, located in the Athens campus Jerry and Jean Beasley Student Center, Bottom Floor, across from the Campus Post Office. The Disability Services Office phone is 304-384-6086 or you can email the Director, Nancy Ellison, at nellison@concord.edu for assistance.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is morally unacceptable as well as destructive to the learning and teaching atmosphere. Academic dishonesty includes the giving or receiving of improper help on examinations or assignments, falsifying documents, and plagiarism (the act of stealing and using, as one's own, the ideas or the expression of the ideas of another). Such dishonesty can lead to a variety of penalties — including but not limited to failure of assignment, failure of course, loss of institutional privileges, or dismissal from the University. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### **Concord University Honor Code**

A Concord University Honor Code was approved by students, staff, faculty, administration, and the CU Board of Governors. The Code states:

*"As a member of the Concord University Community I will act with honesty and integrity in accordance with our fundamental principles and I will respect myself and others while challenging them to do the same."*

The Honor Code is intended to unite the Concord community behind a culture of honesty, integrity, and civility.

### **Class/Online Attendance Policy**

Regular class attendance is part of a student's academic obligation at Concord. Irregular attendance may affect academic performance adversely and is detrimental to the atmosphere of a class. (See University Catalog Academic Policies and Procedures.)

### **Emergency Alert System**

In an effort to increase safety and security on our campus, Concord University encourages everyone to register for instant text message alerts. Alerts will only be used for security and safety notices. All students, faculty, and staff are eligible to receive text message alerts on their cell phones or email alerts. Please contact the IT Help Desk for further assistance (304-384-5291).

## **Emergency Information**

Emergency/courtesy telephones are located at the main entrance of each residence hall and at various other locations on campus. Emergency telephones can be identified by the flashing blue light and will provide the user with a direct link to Public Safety at the press of a button. To report an on-campus emergency, call 304-384-5357 or 911. The Office of Public Safety is located on the bottom floor of the Rahall Technology Center. For further emergency information go to:

<http://www.concord.edu/administration/office-public-safety>.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

As a general policy, the University will remain in normal operations during adverse weather conditions. In the event of severe weather conditions, the following may occur:

### University Closure

No students or employees are to report.

### Classes Cancelled

Students do NOT report BUT employees are expected to report to work at their normal time.

### Operating on an Inclement Weather Delay

Under this schedule, all 8 a.m. classes will start at 10 a.m. Students and faculty will follow the Inclement Weather Schedule. (See <http://www.concord.edu/emergency-alerts> for Athens/Beckley Inclement Weather Schedules.)

*\*Announcements invoking the late schedule or other options referenced above are aired on area radio and television stations and are sent as text and email messages to those enrolled for this service.*

## **Student Conduct**

In classrooms, online, laboratories, and during any activities that are part of course requirements, students are expected to observe reasonable rules of conduct.

## **Sexual Harassment & Assault**

Federal law, Title IX, and Concord University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can receive confidential counseling support through the Concord University Counseling Center (304-384-5290). Alleged Violations can be reported non-confidentially to the Concord University Title IX Coordinator at 304-384-6327 or [titleix@concord.edu](mailto:titleix@concord.edu). Reports to Campus Security can be made at (304-384-5357). As an employee at Concord University, I am a mandatory reporter which means I must report any sexual misconduct I am made aware of. This includes verbal or written (such as in an assignment) disclosures of sexual harassment or sexual assault.

## **Technology Services**

Contact the CU Help Desk at extension 5291 from campus or 304-384-5291 off campus. You may also e-mail [cuhelpdesk@concord.edu](mailto:cuhelpdesk@concord.edu).

## **Miscellaneous:**

- All work completed outside of class must be typed, in script format when appropriate and stapled (if necessary)
- Assignments should be typed in Times News Roman 12 pt. font unless otherwise specified by the instructor

## **Syllabus Disclaimer**

**"This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Please check it regularly."**

## MCOM 218 – Writing for Electronic Media Semester Schedule

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

### Room M011

Week 1 Mon. Jan. 14: Introductions and Syllabus

Wed. Jan. 16: Understanding What Your Audience Needs (H – Chp. 1)

Frid. Jan. 18: Media Ethics (H – Chp. 18 & D – Chp. 20)

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Week 2 Mon. Jan. 21: MLK Day – NO CLASSES

Wed. Jan. 23: Making Some Major Changes (H – Chp. 2)

Frid. Jan. 25: The Right Words, The Right Stuff (D – Chp. 1)

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Week 3 Mon. Jan. 28: The Wrong Way to Write It (D – Chp. 2)

Wed. Jan. 30: A Closer Look at Grammar and Word Choice (H – Chp. 3)

Frid. Feb. 1: Being Perfectly Clear/Writing Sports Copy (D – Chp. 3)

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Week 4 Mon. Feb. 4: The Right Way to Write It: Avoiding Deadly Copy Mistakes

(D – Chp. 4)

Wed. Feb. 6: Saying it Twice/ Catch-up/ Review for Quiz (D – Chp. 5)

Frid. Feb. 8: **Quiz #1**

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Week 5 Mon. Feb. 11: Review Quiz 1/ The Story of the Story (D – Chp. 6)

Wed. Feb. 13: Organizing Your Facts (D – Chp. 7)

Frid. Feb. 15: Choosing Your Lead (D – Chp. 8)

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Week 6 Mon. Feb. 18: Writing Lead Sentences (H – Chp. 4)

Wed. Feb. 20: Choosing Your Close (D – Chp. 9)

Frid. Feb. 22: Completing the Story Essentials (H – Chp. 5)

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Week 7 Mon. Feb. 25: Holding on to Your Sources (D – Chp. 19)

Wed. Feb. 27: Catch-up Day/Review for Midterm

Frid. March 1: **Midterm Exam**

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Week 8 Mon. March 4: Review Midterm Exam/ New Hunter and Gathers (D – Chp. 12)

Wed. March 6: The Actuality: Gathering Useful Soundbites (H – Chp. 6)

Frid. March 8: Using Soundbites from Those Interviews (H – Chp. 7)

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Week 9 Mon., Wed., Frid., March 11, 13, 15: **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

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Week 10 Mon. March 18: Running in Place (D – Chp. 13)

Letting It All Hang Out (D – Chp. 14)

Wed. March 20: Proofreading (D – Chp. 10)

Frid. March 22: The Correct Corrections (D – Chp. 11)

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Week 11 Mon. March 25: Writing PSA and Commercial Scripts

If the Shoe Fits (D – Chp. 16)

Wed. March 27: Catch-up Day/ Review for Quiz

Frid. March 29: **Quiz # 2**

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Week 12 Mon. April 1: Review Quiz

Building Packages with Bites and Tracks (H – Chp. 8)

Wed. April 3: Even More Ways for Radio (D – Chp. 18)

Frid. April 5: Writing to Stills and CG's (H – Chp. 9)

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Week 13 Mon. April 8: Writing to Stills and CG's cont. (H – Chp. 9)

Wed. April 10: Understanding Video Sequences (H – Chp. 10)



Frid. April 12: Writing the VO Story to Accompany Video (H – Chp. 11)

TV: Writing the VO/Sound (H – Chp. 12)

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Week 14      Mon. April 15: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words (D – Chp. 15)

Fitting it all In (D – Chp. 17)

Wed. April 17: Breaking News and Feature Video Packages (H – Chp. 13)

Frid. April 19: **NO CLASS**

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Week 15      Mon. April 22: **NO CLASS**

Wed. April 24: Live Shots and Remote Live Reporting (H – Chp. 14)

Frid. April 26: Producers Develop Individual Stories (H – Chp. 15)

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Week 16      Mon. April 29: Producing Effective Newscasts (H – Chp. 16)

Wed. May 1: On Air News and Website Coordination/Resume Writing

Frid. May 3: Last Day of Class/ Review for Final Exam

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Week 17      Mon. May 6 – 11:30 – 1:45: **FINAL EXAM**

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\*H – Hewitt

\*D – Dobbs

*\*Note: This semester schedule is subject to change. You will be notified when such changes take place.*