**Professor:** Christopher Boyd

**E-mail:** cboyd16@valenciacollege.edu **Office:** West 3-150B

**Office hours:** By appointment

**News Reporting (MMC 1100) — Spring 2015**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., West Campus, Bldg. 3, Room 151A**

Please regularly check your Atlas account for excessive absence notices, grade warnings, instructor emails, etc.

Email must use a Valencia email address. I must be able to tell who the e-mail is from without opening it.

**DISCLAIMER:** Changes to the syllabus may be made at any time during the semester by announcement of the professor.

**CORE COMPETENCIES**

Valencia College has established four core-competency goals for Valencia graduates. They are:

• Think: Think clearly, critically, and creatively; analyze, synthesize, integrate and evaluate

in many domains of human inquiry.

• Value: Make reasoned judgments and responsible commitments.

• Communicate: Communicate with different audiences using varied means.

• Act: Act purposefully, effectively, and responsibly.

For more on Valencia's core competencies, visit: http://www.valenciacc.edu/competencies/

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Fundamental instruction and practice in writing for journalism, advertising, broadcasting and public relations. Pre-professional course for students majoring in journalism and communications. This course will introduce students to the challenges of writing for different media. Along the way, they will acquire research skills, understanding of specialized techniques, and a practical knowledge of media law and ethics. Course consists/ of lectures, class discussions, numerous writing exercises and assigned reading.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

Required texts:

“Inside Reporting,” (Third Edition) by Tim Harrower

“The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual,” by The Associated Press

Recommended text:

“The Elements of Style” (Fourth Edition) by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Attendance (5 points per 28 class sessions, 140 total)**

You are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. You will be considered absent if you arrive more than 15 minutes late. A first absence will result in a loss of 14 attendance point. A second absence will lower your attendance grade an additional 20 percent, or 28 points. If you are absent a third time, you will be withdrawn from the course. THERE IS NO MAKE-UP WORK! ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY THE SPECIFIED DEADLINE, WHETHER YOU ABSENT OR NOT. Returning to class after leaving the room is not permitted without an excuse. You must notify me in advance for clearance to leave early, and you must have a valid medical reason for departing. Leaving early without an excuse constitutes an absence.

**Late Arrivals and Excuses:** If you arrive after the start of class but are less than 15 minutes late, see me after class to explain your tardiness and sign the attendance sheet. You will only be allowed two such excuses. A third tardiness is counted as an absence. Absences will only be excused is they are verifiable in writing and are for emergencies such as illness, death in the family, jury duty, religious holidays or military commitment. No more than two excused absences will be granted, and concrete evidence is required. Notification by email or phone call before or after the absence are NOT acceptable. Excuses from friends and family members are not sufficient.

**Reporting assignments (3 at 70 points each, 210 total)**

You will write three graded pieces, each targeted at a different form of media, including print, advertising, social media, public relations and broadcast. The content of some pieces will be mandated, while require you to choose topics and approaches. You will be graded on your ability to write clearly and concisely, with flawless attribution, and proper organization and structure. Your writing must be free of grammatical, mechanical and style errors. If an assignment involves a broadcast or podcast, a script for the broadcast or podcast must be submitted with the finished piece. Your grade will be determined largely by how prepared each piece is for publication or distribution. All pieces must be printed and turned in to the professor. In addition, your work must be posted to My Blackboard for class discussion. A grading rubric will be provided.

**Writing and news analysis exercises (multiple in-class exercises, with two graded at 20 points each, 40 total)**

You will tackle in-class exercises. You will be told in advance which work will be graded.

**Quizzes (4 to 6 at 10 points each)**

Quizzes from textbook and/or AP stylebook. Quiz questions will be derived from assigned reading and in-class lectures and discussions.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Deadlines**

Because this course represents preparation for the news world, deadlines are critical. ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE! All stories must be posted to Blackboard prior to the date due.

**Backup Copies**

Make a backup copy of all of your work, and store it on a personal computer, a flash drive, cloud backup, or e-mail it to yourself.

**Plagiarism / Cheating**

If you plagiarize in any way, you will receive a zero for the work in question. In some cases, the

college may punish plagiarism with suspension or expulsion. (Valencia policy on academic dishonesty: http://valenciacc.edu:80/generalcounsel/policydetail.cfm?RecordID=193)

**Grading**

Assignments are subject to change during the semester, and total points may change. It is your responsibility to stay current on papers and quizzes, and to submit all work by the due date.

Attendance (28 classes @ 5 points) 140 90-100 percent = A

Writing assignments (3 @ 70 points) 210 80-89.99 percent= B

Writing exercises (2 @ 20 points) 40 70-79.99 percent= C

Quizzes (6 @ 10 points) 40-60 60-69.99 percent = D

Below 60 percent = F

**STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM — 1-800-878-5470**

Valencia College offers a free, confidential student assistance program. Sometimes the pressure from college and life can snowball. Don’t be afraid to call if you’re feeling overwhelmed by:

• Academic stress

• Alcohol/drug use

• Peer pressure

• Problems at home

• Work/study schedule

The confidential toll-free number is available to help you 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

1-800-878-5470. (Link: http://net4.valenciacollege.edu/promos/Internal/documents/Valencia\_SAP.pdf)