

Reflection

Entering this journalism course, I had a clearer sense of my goals and expectations than after the JRNL 1000 course I took. As a journalism major, I was already comfortable with writing and familiar with the basic principles of news structure but my experience with in depth reporting was limited. I enrolled in this class to strengthen my reporting skills, gain more hands on experience, and better understand how professional journalists research, verify, and present information. I also hoped to refine my writing through repeated practice and learn how to apply journalistic standards more consistently.

Throughout the semester, the course delivered on these goals, particularly through its emphasis on practical, hands on work. Nearly all of our assignments required active reporting rather than theoretical analysis, which allowed me to learn by doing. We completed explanatory features, speech stories, breaking news stories, and profiles, each of which required a different approach to research, interviewing, and writing. This variety reinforced the idea that journalism is a flexible practice and that effective reporting depends on understanding the purpose and audience of each story.

Reviewing my five completed stories and the revision summaries, I can clearly see growth in both my reporting and writing. While my writing skills are naturally weaker I made significant progress improving them. I also improved significantly in terms of clarity, structure, and efficiency. I became more comfortable writing concise, informative leads and learned how to better organize stories so that information flowed logically. My reporting skills came more naturally to me, so the more I interviewed people the more I learned. Learning and applying AP Style was also an important part of this development that I consistently struggled with throughout the year although, over time, some parts of using AP Style became more intuitive, and I became more confident editing my own work to meet professional newsroom standards.

One area where I noticed particularly strong growth was in reporting and interviewing. Researching topics and speaking with sources felt like a natural strength for me, and this class allowed me to build confidence in those skills. I learned how to prepare for interviews more effectively, ask focused questions, and identify which quotes best supported the story. I also became more aware of the importance of accuracy, verification, and ethical reporting, especially when working on breaking news stories, where there is pressure to report quickly without sacrificing credibility.

That said, the course also highlighted areas where I can continue to improve. At times, I struggled with balancing detail and conciseness, particularly in explanatory pieces where it was tempting to include too much background information. I also noticed that I sometimes relied on similar types of sources instead of pushing myself to seek out a broader range of perspectives. Identifying these patterns has been valuable, as it has helped me better understand my tendencies as a writer and reporter.

Overall, this semester exceeded my expectations. I genuinely enjoyed the process of researching, reporting, and writing, and the class reinforced my interest in journalism as a field. It also deepened my understanding of the role journalists play in shaping public knowledge and discourse. As a news consumer, I now read stories with a more critical eye, paying closer attention to sourcing, framing, and credibility. As a citizen and participant in society, this course emphasized the importance of responsible journalism in an era where misinformation spreads easily.

Looking ahead, I would like to continue developing my reporting skills by seeking out more complex stories and diverse sources. I also want to keep refining my writing to be sharper, more efficient, and more engaging while maintaining objectivity and accuracy. This class not only strengthened my technical skills but also confirmed that journalism is a field where I feel both challenged and capable, making it a valuable and rewarding experience.