

Student Journalism Co
Fall 2024 • Sundays from 3-4

Taught by:

Nikki Keating Editor-in-Chief of *The Oberlin Review*
nkeating@oberlin.edu | (202) 689 7235

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Journalism has fundamentally changed over the past quarter century. In this class, we will look at the unique challenges and advantages of student journalism, as well as try our own hands at journalistic interviewing, writing, editing, and story pitching. Students will also have the opportunity to write for *The Oberlin Review* as well as be put in touch with other publications across campus. By the end of the class, students should have a better understanding of journalistic writing and what being a journalist means in this day and age. Whether you've written for the *Review* or another student publication in the past, or if you have zero journalism experience, this class will help you jump into local reporting and hone your journalistic writing.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Starting to write for a student publication can be intimidating, especially when it requires managing multiple perspectives on a controversial subject, talking to strangers, and writing on a deadline. But the same aspects that can seem scary at first are exactly what makes journalism so exhilarating: you can learn about new corners of Oberlin's town and campus, amplify issues people are passionate about, and become more confident in your writing. You will leave this class a published student journalist! Additionally, you'll have the opportunity to think deeply about journalism's role in politics, activism, community building, and fighting for equity.

CLASS STRUCTURE

In-class time will be discussion-based, but will look a bit different each week. Some weeks we'll have editors from other sections (Arts, Opinions, Sports, News) talk about their section and what they look for in a good article.

While there will be some required articles to read and podcasts to listen to, the primary "work" in this class will be hands-on experience with journalism! You will write twice for the *Review* — once in the first module, and once in the second. You get to look for a topic that excites you and pick which weeks to write. You will work with an editor, who will help guide you through the process of finding contacts, interviewing, and writing.

In order to pass the class, you must attend 10 out of the 12 class sessions as well as complete your two stories. Please let me know if this is not accessible for you.

CLASS OVERVIEW

CLASS	CONTENT	REQUIRED PREP
1 Week of September 2	<p><u><i>Intro to the Review</i></u></p> <p>In this class we'll discuss how the Review runs, what our production process looks like, and our favorite parts of student journalism. We'll also talk you through how we find and pitch stories and have you envision how something from your own life could become a story.</p>	None
2 Week of September 9	<p><u><i>Why is local journalism important?</i></u></p> <p>We'll talk about the political science behind local journalism's impact on partisanship, trust in the media, and engagement with democracy.</p>	None Totally optional listening: The Ezra Klein Show, The crisis in the news
3 Week of September 16	<p><u><i>Writing a story</i></u></p> <p>We'll go over what makes a solid and timely story pitch. We'll also talk about different types of writing, from more editorialized personal narratives to more formally written reported pieces. Additionally, we'll learn about the dreaded "pyramid structure" and why it's actually an incredibly useful tool to focus your writing on the things that actually matter.</p>	Bring a story from a news outlet you find interesting!
4 Week of September 23	<p><u><i>How To Interview</i></u></p> <p>We'll discuss everything from interview prep, to the art of follow-up questions, to how to write emails that are hard to ignore.</p>	Required watching: Journalism: How t... Journalism: How to Lead an Interview
	Week of september 30th TBH	
5 Week of October 7	<p><u><i>Story check-ins – ExCo Direction</i></u></p> <p>We'll talk about how folks in the class are doing with stories. By this point in the semester some of the class will have completed a story and we'll talk to those folks about how it went and any challenges they faced. Others will be in various parts of the writing process, and we'll troubleshoot any problems that arise</p>	
6 Week of October 14	<p><u><i>Unique challenges of reporting in a small community</i></u></p> <p>Journalists who write about national issues never have to worry about running into someone they wrote about in Ben Franklin — but they often don't have the deeper understanding of a story that someone who spends every day in a community has. In this class, we'll discuss the</p>	Required Reading: Roderick P. Hart, <i>Can Citizenship be Revived?</i> Pg 31-43 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108525138.002

	moral, emotional, and economic implications of student and hyper-local journalism.	(Will provide PDF)
	Week of October 21 Fall Break	
7 Week of October 28	<p><u><i>News at the Review</i></u></p> <p>This is the first of four sessions to get you used to each section of the <i>Review</i>. Every section has different quirks, energy, and style. Writing for News is fast-paced, straight-forward, and obsessively objective. It's where you get to dig into controversies and find out the truth. In the <i>Review</i>, the News section covers both College and City news — we send reporters to City Council meetings, interview local politicians and College deans, and are the first to check out that new business. Writing in News can be stressful, but it can get your name on the front page.</p>	<p>Required reading: News articles!</p> <p><u>Students for A Free Palestine Hold Demonstrations During Board of Trustees Visit to Campus</u></p> <p><u>Legal Clinics at Oberlin Community Services Provide Aid to Town Residents</u></p>
8 Week of November 4	<p><u><i>Arts & Culture at the Review</i></u></p> <p>The Arts & Culture section covers everything from on-campus performances to quirky features on the Feve's long island night or the culture that Art Rental creates. The Arts section explores complicated topics and focuses more on the voice of the writer. The writing style for Arts tends to be more creative, and you can get away with a lot more shenanigans.</p>	<p>Required reading: Arts articles!</p> <p><u>Liz Burgess Retires, Ginko Gallery & Studio To Close</u></p> <p><u>Willkommen, Bienvenue: Cabaret Delights Students in Six Sold Out Performances</u></p>
9 Week of November 11	<p><u><i>Ops at the Review</i></u></p> <p>The Opinions section is a chance to discuss your feelings on the issues most important to you. Writing an Ops piece is a great way to start a conversation or highlight a story that you have strong emotions about. Because there's less of an imperative to report "objectively," the Ops section gives the writer the most freedom.</p>	<p>Required reading: Ops articles!</p> <p><u>Indifference to Palestine Exposes False Progressiveness at Oberlin</u></p> <p><u>Scensible Bags Not So Sensible</u></p>

10 Week of November 18	<p><u><i>Sports at the Review</i></u></p> <p>The Sports section isn't just about covering competitions! It's about finding creative and innovative ways to center the human sides of athletics. The Sports section is a chance to highlight Oberlin athletes in both their athletic and non-athletic pursuits. We also publish pieces on nationwide sports issues, such as how the NBA is responding to COVID or how the WNBA uses its platform to promote activist pursuits.</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <p>Sports articles!</p> <p>Oberlin Track & Field Competes at NCAC Indoor Track & Field Championships</p> <p>WWE Entertains Fanbase With Unique Characters</p>
	Week of November 25 Thanksgiving Break	
11 Week of December 2	<p><u><i>Journalism Standards & Ethics</i></u></p> <p>Everyone and their grandma has an opinion on what steps journalists need to take for their stories to be ethical. The answers aren't always clear in every situation, but there are some guiding principles that journalists follow. We'll help you examine your position to a story, whether you're covering all the perspectives, and how to report on allegations. We'll also share some stories we covered that were particularly tricky to navigate.</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <p>Who We Are - Ethical Journalism Network</p> <p>SPJ Code of Ethics - Society of Professional Journalists</p>
12 Week of December 9	<p><u><i>Equity in reporting</i></u></p> <p>There is a growing conversation around the ways that traditional journalism often fails historically marginalized communities. Sometimes the concept of "objectivity" is used to devalue or detract from the lived experiences of individuals. We'll talk about everything from word choice, sentence structure, and evaluating your own biases.</p> <p><i>SECOND MODULE ENDS, YOU NEED TO HAVE WRITTEN YOUR ONE ARTICLE BY THIS POINT</i></p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <p>Trial & Tribulation: Racism and The Media PBS</p> <p>Majority of Black Americans see racist or negative depictions in news media, new study finds PBS NewsHour</p>