

YEARBOOK WORKSHOP

May 31 - June 2, 2012
New Orleans, La.

Attendees: Alex Sanchez, Katherine Hoke, Chelsea Brown

Covering Sports

This course was also taught by Texas Tech adviser Andrea Watson. She focused on new ways for books to cover sports and tips for editors to get sports reporters to think differently about their coverage. One helpful suggestion that would really improve our sports coverage is to encourage observational reporting, explaining to reporters that the main difference between covering an event in person and watching it on TV is the ability to see what's going on OFF the court or between timeouts and other stoppages. A few ideas Watson suggested were profile a couple that got engaged at halftime, pre-game rituals and student athletic trainers. She also suggested US press wire as a photo wire service. You can buy sports photos from them for \$15 each for away games or games that you can't get a photographer out to. – *Alex Sanchez*

This class was very discussion based which allowed for myself, Alex, and Chelsea to ask question that specifically related to Agromeck. I got to ask Andrea, the instructor, about different ways to cover the sports we already cover as well as talk through ideas of new things to cover. Though she didn't explicitly teach any tactics from this course I think we have some great new ideas for sports coverage this year. For example we may do coverage on crazy fans that go to every sporting event, particularly cool tailgating traditions, how rivalries have changed over the years, and the people who coordinate the events/travel. – *Katherine Hoke*

Covering Sports was a really good class for our staff to take. We learned how to capture the sports season without doing a general recap. Andrea was a great teacher and provided really constructive feedback on our spreads and ideas. Looking through her yearbook gave us a lot of good ideas on how to find an interesting story behind each game. Taking these new ideas into account, I was able to start thinking about how I wanted the sports pages to be designed to incorporate certain content. I'm really glad that Alex, Katherine and I took this class together because covering sports is something that needs improvement in all areas of our book. Having someone there from each section helped us develop every aspect of how we wanted to cover sports in the book. – *Chelsea Brown*

Second Opinions Needed

This critique session, led by Texas Tech adviser Andrea Watson, was designed to help provide feedback on the previous year's book as well as offer different perspectives on pages already in progress. There were three students total in the class, so we each received about 30 minutes of individual attention looking over our pages. Andrea said she thought we were doing a good job of breaking up everything chronologically, and the monthly timelines worked well and fit with the rest of the book. She thought the photography and design were overall pretty strong, and provided suggestions for ways we could improve our coverage by finding different angles and ways to cover things. She also liked the "day in the life" that we did for Art2Wear and suggested we make it a recurring thing for other campus events. After the class, I asked her to critique the pages again for Chelsea and Katherine and she did, answering questions they had

and giving us more in-depth insight. I also made sure Katherine and Chelsea took this year's pages to as many of their instructors and classmates as they could during the workshop. – *Alex Sanchez*

Leadership 101 for Editors

This class, taught by Frank Ragulsky, a former yearbook adviser and current Hewlett-Packard employee, focused on common mistakes of new editors and suggested ways to avoid them. One of the best pieces of advice he offered, citing [this article](#) by Poynter's Jill Geisler, was to avoid doing your old job. He reminded us that as managers, our responsibilities need to lie with the team as a whole rather than just our old staff (in my case, photo). Good editors need to distribute their efforts evenly across all avenues of their publication to ensure that their employees are getting the help they need. For me, this means spending less time trying to micromanage the photo staff and more time making sure writers and designers (and their respective editors) are getting the help and training they need.

In addition to that piece of advice, Ragulsky also encouraged us to set high goals, have enthusiasm and set a good example for our staffs. He said that the role of an editor is that of a coach, counselor, cheerleader and manager all in one, and that the best way to build relationships and respect among your staff is to always be around and keep things fun. Being in the office often also helps with communication, which is another common problem for editors and staffs. It's much easier to get work done when everyone is in the same place at the same time. A few suggestions the instructor made that I'd like to adopt are an application/interview process for new staff members, celebrating staff birthdays, having weekly or bi-weekly scrums (quick meetings), and scheduling performance reviews for staff members. – *Alex Sanchez*

Interactive Design Using InDesign CS5

This class, taught by an Adobe employee, was incredibly informative and straight-forward. Mike started off by showing a flash brochure he made for online publishing to give us a feel for what InDesign can do with the new interactive features in CS5. We then each created the same document with Mike's guidance. In this document we learned to edit all document pages at once, create a navigation bar that appears when one moves their cursor in its direction, and create buttons that lead to other document pages. In the short time we had I learned a lot about InDesign which I hope to put to use for Agromeck. – *Katherine Hoke*

Correcting Flesh Tones in Photoshop like the Pros

This class was extremely disappointing. Much of our short time was wasted by the instructor waiting for people, going on tangents, and having conversations with people who entered the room. The little he showed us of color correcting I already knew, however, he gave us a sheet of notes outlining the steps he takes to color correct. I will try his method so I have multiple styles to choose from for maximum efficiency. This will also come in handy if I need to train anyone in color correcting. – *Katherine Hoke*

Conquering Your Fear of Adobe Illustrator

The class I took on Adobe Illustrator really helped me understand the program a lot better. I have a much better foundation on the program than I did before. We learned a lot of basic techniques involving lines and type, and think we will definitely be able to use some of them to our advantage for info-graphics and possibly the cover. I have enough knowledge and

understanding of the program to teach myself some more advanced techniques. I conquered my fear of Illustrator! – *Chelsea Brown*

Track 4: Good Ideas to Make a Good Book

This track, led by Andrea Watson, posed some interesting questions. She encouraged us to rethink our coverage, asking ourselves what purpose our yearbook serves on campus, whether or not it's relevant and if this changes from year to year. She also said to ask whether photos or copy are more important, thinking about whether one feeds off the other. The answers to these questions should drive content for a yearbook.

Taking this class helped me realize that *Agromeck* is in a great position when compared to some of these other college yearbooks/publications. We can cover just about anything and are completely independent of the University's administration, whereas some schools are limited because their administration treats the yearbook as more of a PR tool. Watson encouraged us to cover controversial topics or events so long as they are representative of the events of the school year. These kinds of things include taking on controversy in athletics, covering violent crimes or disasters on or around campus and looking in to topics like drugs, alcohol and birth control.

In terms of stories, Watson encouraged us to keep them short, explaining that no one wants to read a 1,000 word story, no matter how well-written it is. She also said to make sure the 300-400 word stories that appear in the book are well-done and take on events (especially recurring ones) with fresh angles. This is something I've decided to make a goal in our coverage for this year. I'd like to either a) cover things we've covered in the past different or b) cover something else instead. Watson also warned against overuse of Q and As, which are usually looked at as lazy reporting. She did, however, say that they can be used as sidebar or alt to accompany a story. She also said to be on the lookout for good narratives, and not to be afraid to ask people to share their story instead of doing regular coverage.

On the last day, we went over tips and strategies to improve reporting and stories. These included avoiding worthless quotes, fluff, overuse of the school name or the word 'students,' injecting the publication into the story and editorializing. To improve writing, she suggested that writers and editors go in-depth whenever possible, maintain consistency throughout the book, and stick with things that happened rather than what *might* happen next year. – *Alex Sanchez*

Photo Track

We did a fair amount of jumping around to different topics but the most helpful part of this track was going out and shooting as a group. The first time we went out the instructor, Randy, set up a portrait using over camera flash and an umbrella. Because I have very little experience using off camera flash this was really helpful to watch. The second shooting session was in the garden across from the hotel. In this session I made up a story that would likely be published in a yearbook that we had to shoot photos for. We purposefully chose an area with terrible lighting so that we would have better experience working in harder conditions. It was a great learning experience to use his reflector, a piece of equipment I had never used before, to create a more appealing atmosphere. Additionally, using classmates as models helped me to become better at giving directions for posing. At the end of this session, it was interesting to be able to look at the photos everyone took to see how differently people interpreted the assignment. For the last shooting assignment we were on our own and had to capture photos

with a forced perspective. This assignment was challenging and I learned a fair amount from going out and shooting with the other students in my track. Though the track was not specifically designed for editorial photography I look forward to applying the new skills that I learned when shooting for Agromeck. – *Katherine Hoke*

Design Track

My design track taught me a lot about what not to do. It was obvious that our staff was one of the more developed and advanced at the convention. A lot of the spreads displayed in my class needed some work, but I got a lot of good information about consistency and typography from the critiques. I was also able to get opinions from other yearbook advisers on our pages so far. Consistent spacing on the page was something I learned that I need to work on to improve the overall design of our book. The class also allowed me to play around with new design layouts and helped me finalize the character styles in the book. I learned that the color scheme idea that I had going into the convention was out of style and boring to design with, so I created a new color pallet to help make the book more trendy and fun to design. – *Chelsea Brown*