

## Expert Explains Secrets of Media Industry to UW Students

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WATERLOO – Most students of journalism talk about objectivity and uncovering the truth when describing the role of the news media. Those ideals shifted for a class of fourth year UW rhetoric students when print media veteran Louisa D’Amato discussed the realities of the media during a February 7, 2002 interview. The University of Waterloo’s Writing for the Media class hosts local media guest speakers each term to elaborate on the ideas taught in class.

“There is no such thing as objectivity in the newspaper,” said Luisa D’Amato of the KW Record, “but there is fairness.”

Her message may ring of disillusionment, but D’Amato is far from disheartened with the industry, saying, “I love my job. Sometimes I can’t believe that I get paid to do what I do.” In 17 years at the Record, D’Amato covered a wide variety of stories and angles.

From the University beat to investigative reports, D’Amato’s stories about her experiences in the newspaper world give students an inside perspective on the life of a journalist. She explains that the whim or personal interests of a paper’s editor influence the news story selection process, rather than objectivity or a search for the truth.

In an effort to determine the effectiveness of a change in smoking legislation, D’Amato enlisted an underage smoker and began testing stores’ procedures for determining the age of buyers. D’Amato discovered that a major grocery store chain, Zehrs, had the worst procedures for verifying the age of buyers. Nervous about the impact D’Amato’s story might have on Zehrs’ purchasing of advertising space in the Record, the editor nearly scrapped the story.

When it comes to writing news stories, D’Amato says writers “have to understand what people want, then take what people need and make it what they want.”

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