

Course Title

Journalism I

Course Instructor

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Course Description

Students will meet daily for 50-minute periods in this semester-long course. Students will gain a broader understanding of the writing process as it pertains to journalism. Topics to be addressed include determining news, gathering/interviewing, newswriting, and editing and revision. The student also will study the First Amendment, media law and ethics.

This course serves as a prerequisite for participation on newspaper and/or yearbook staff. Successful completion of this course is required to move on to the publications production courses. Students wishing to become members of a publication must demonstrate proficiency in this course.

Student Learning Objectives

At the completion of the course, students will be able to understand and apply: (1) the role of the media in a democracy; (2) the legal restrictions of media law; (3) ethical decision-making skills; (4) news; (5) gathering; and (6) basic news writing. Time permitting, students will also be exposed to (7) basic design, including photojournalism, graphics and cartooning; (8) advertising; and (9) an exploration of journalism-related careers.

Book and Materials

Most books and materials will be provided in class. Students must bring a binder with loose leaf paper or a notebook and pencil/pen to every class.

Movies

Absence of Malice. Columbia Pictures, ©1981. Rating: PG
All the President's Men. Warner Brothers, Inc., ©1976. Rating: PG
Shattered Glass. Lions Gate Home Entertainment, ©2003. Rating: PG-13.
The Truman Show. Paramount Pictures. ©1998. Rating: PG.

These movies may be shown in either Journalism I, Yearbook I, or Journalism II, and their content is appropriate according to school guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to know more about these movies, please contact me.

Standards for Assessment

Students will be assessed according to weekly writing assignments, quizzes, projects, class discussions, presentations and other activities. Students who satisfactorily meet established course objectives and standards will be deemed proficient. While I have designed the course so that there are many opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency, the success of each student's learning experience will be determined by the student's own actions. I will provide the guidance, support, resources and an essential learning community in which students can thrive; students must provide hard work, accountability and a willingness to think critically about complex topics.

Students will be assessed with a variety of methods in the following areas:

(1) ACTIVITIES — Throughout each unit of learning, activities (for example: projects, presentations, assignments and worksheets) will be selected by students and/or assigned by me and turned in for evaluation. These may be in-class or homework. The majority of students' grades will be from this area.

(2) WRITING — Students will write, revise and edit several types of stories. Rubrics will be used to assess writing.

(3) TESTS/QUIZZES

(4) DISCUSSION/SOCRATIC SEMINARS — Because journalism is such an interesting aspect of our daily lives and learning about journalism requires more thinking than memorization, discussion and seminars are very important parts of this class. The more students think out loud in class and the more they voice their opinion in informal class discussions and formal Socratic Seminars, the better they will perform in the class.

(6) CRITICAL THINKING — This is an important part of the overall assessment of students' public speaking and listening skills. Because the nature of communication in the world is demanding, this class, therefore, is demanding. Thinking and reacting critically is a must. Those who consistently demonstrate outstanding critical thinking and a mastery of the skills being taught will be rewarded with knowledge — nothing else is as important in life. Those failing to achieve these expectations will be supported until they do.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity, and indeed professional integrity, are of utmost importance in the journalism profession. Academic dishonesty *of any kind* will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, receiving unauthorized help on personal assignments, etc Please review the student handbook for further guidance regarding the academic integrity policy.

Course Calendar

Unit 1: Why journalism and news matters (Week 1)

Students learn why news is important for a democratic society. They also learn what their role is as news literacy consumers and how the news industry has changed over time.

Day	JEA lesson
1	Why News Matters Using historical documents and news coverage, this lesson explores the role of news in a democracy, and the role journalists play in helping citizens to be active, informed, and engaged. By understanding the societal obligations that underpin journalism, students will have a greater appreciation for why news literacy is important.
2	Understanding News Literacy In this lesson, students are introduced to the fundamental conventions of news literacy and are asked to reflect upon their own expectations for today's news media.
3	Evaluating Your Media Savvy Students will evaluate their own personal news media habits based on the media log assigned in the previous lesson (Understanding News Lit) and by answering self-reflective questions. Students will consider how their perspectives on news media have developed over time, and what influences their family, community and education have had on their expectations for journalism.
4	The Changing American Newsroom This lesson explores the changing culture of the newsroom, especially in light of new media technologies. As news gathering and reporting changes, so does our concept of what news is, and our expectations for traditional journalism. Students will discuss perceptions of news coverage and will reflect on their own role as news consumers.
5	Discussion and transition (no formal lesson) Spend this day reviewing the concepts of the week and introducing the next unit, Law and Ethics. Explain that students must first learn about the rights and responsibilities of journalists before they can practice being one. I like to show "Shattered Glass" if time allows.

Unit 2: Law (Weeks 2-4)

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
1	Overview of the First Amendment A lesson on determining the five freedoms in the First Amendment
2	Press Freedom An overview of the importance of a free student press and what it means
3	Building Vocabulary This lesson helps students define these words that can easily be misconstrued in ethical conversations
4	Libel Law An overview of libel law and how it pertains to the student press
5	Copyright Law An overview of copyright law and how it pertains to the student press
6	Invasion of Privacy An overview of laws addressing invasion of privacy and their relation to journalism
7-10	Intro to Student Press Law Cases Students will evaluate and analyze a court case for presentation to the class. The presentation will include: background, main points, decision and its implication. This lesson will take four days of class time; two for research and two for presentations.
11-12	State Free Expression Status This lesson exposes students to the presence or absence of state student freedom of expression laws. Students then research a current instance and use the information to participate in a Socratic seminar in which they look at the case and examine the need for the legislation.
13	Freedom of Information Laws Students will learn about obtaining access to public records and meetings. Students will be taken through the types of Freedom of Information (FOI) as well exemptions. Students will also learn how to request access to open records and meetings.
14	Reporter's Privilege Students will be exposed to Reporter's Privilege, its history and its application to scholastic journalists. The SPLC slideshow addresses source confidentiality as well as what to do if journalists are asked to relinquish notes, photos, etc. by someone in an official capacity. Additionally, source terminology is discussed
15	Law Review These scenarios serve as review for some of the information in the slideshows: Press Freedoms, Libel, Copyright, Invasion of Privacy, Freedom of Information Act and Reporter's Privilege.

Unit 3: Ethics (Weeks 5-6)

Students will understand the ethical standards that guide the journalism industry.

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
1	Just Because You Can, Doesn't Mean You Should Students will evaluate the differences between journalism law and ethics using other professions as a starting point. Students will define ethics and examine Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics.
2	Red Light, Green Light Ethics Students will learn about the Red Light, Green Light approach, which is a positive way to examine ethics. Students will take notes on the slideshow. Students will apply this approach to two scenarios while in groups during the slideshow.
3-4	Using the TUFF Formula to Make Ethical Decisions For students to explore ethical situations using the TUFF formula as described in the lesson. Students work in groups on six scenarios. This unit focuses possible discussion points for inclusion in editorial policies.
5-6	Navigating Ethical Situations Students will work through one sample scenario and then role play several others. After each scenario is role played, students will analyze the situation and decision using the handout provided.
7-9	With Freedom of the Press Comes Great Responsibility Students should have a basic understanding of their responsibility to provide fair, balanced and accurate content that is complete and coherent. From studying examples of content and role-playing on situations that they may have to address, this lesson prepares students for the kinds of decisions they will make with their own publication.
10	Unit Review and Exam Students will create questions covering the topics discussed during the law and ethics unit. Upon question completion, students will play a review game as review for the test.

Unit 4: News judgment (Week 7)

Students will learn how journalists decide to pursue stories, and they will start to examine the way journalistic research works.

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
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1-3	News Judgment This lesson defines news judgment and eight news values used for determining whether something is newsworthy. Following a presentation on the news judgment, students will analyze current news stories based on the eight news values and/or apply the news values to their previously published story and to one idea for a future story. The lesson concludes with a test that requires students to appropriately identify the news value and potential sources for which they will write questions pertaining to the news value chosen.
4-5	Journalistic Research After viewing a slideshow that identifies various types of research journalists use, students will practice locating information based on one of five story scenarios using internet research. Students also will prepare a short summary of their research in which their sources are cited as they are in journalistic writing and they will defend why their sources are valid and reliable.

Unit 5: Interviewing and Fact-finding (Weeks 8-9)

Students are introduced to how interviews are conducted and will practice interviewing each other.

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
1-5	Interviewing Basics This lesson begins with an introduction to interviewing including how to plan, conduct and conclude an interview, suitable for beginners who have no interviewing experience. In part two of the lesson, students will play an ice-breaker game that will help make them comfortable with asking questions, and they will critique each other's performances. In part three, the culminating lesson, students will use the 5W's and H as well as other question types to conduct their first interviews for profile stories about each other. After preliminary interviewing and research, or using a guided set of questions provided, students will develop their own questions and interview each other in depth. They will transcribe their interviews, conduct additional interviews for the same story and write a simple profile story to share with the class.
6-8	Fact Finding and Observation This is the culminating lesson for the Basic Reporting unit. In this lesson, students will practice essential skills of a reporter: finding and researching facts, interviewing and observation. The lesson includes a school-wide scavenger hunt that requires students to use their reporting skills to uncover information while familiarizing them with the sources of information in their school. The scavenger hunt is meant to be conducted in small groups over two or three days. While some groups are out scavenging, other groups will participate in the Note-Taking Practice lesson .
9-10	Interview Practice

	<p>This lesson reinforces the basic interviewing process. It may be used as a routine assignment for advanced or honors students on any interviewing assignment. It can also be used for students who need additional practice after the Basic Interviewing lesson. Students will conduct basic research and develop questions for a one-on-one interview. Students will take notes and transcribe their interview in preparation for publication. This lesson may be extended into a feature-writing assignment or for an alternative format such as a profile box or used as part of a video feature.</p>
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Unit 6: Writing (Weeks 10-12)

Students are introduced to the fundamentals of journalistic writing and start creating their own articles.

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
1-4	<p>The Basic News Lead</p> <p>In the first lesson, students will learn how to identify the elements of a basic news lead (the 5W's and H) and learn a basic structure for the news lead. They will use news tweets from Twitter to identify the elements. In the second lesson, they will learn types of news leads based on the 5W's and H and a four-step process for writing an effective news lead. They will create a concept map from the assigned reading to define and explain how to write the summary lead.</p> <p>Note: Advanced writers can use this lesson: Tips and Tricks</p>
5	<p>Analyzing the Pros</p> <p>Students will evaluate examples of news stories from disasters to see how the facts are presented in order of importance (using inverted pyramid style). (Optional second day to this lesson)</p>
6-9	<p>Newswriting Structure</p> <p>A multi-part lesson teaches a basic, effective structure for news writing, a modified inverted pyramid form of Lead-Quote-Transition-Quote (LQTQ). After learning about news writing structure and format from a presentation, handouts and examples, students will write a basic news story based on a mock press conference conducted in class.</p>
10	<p>Choosing the Right Source</p> <p>After choosing a topic and an angle in a previous lesson, students will prepare to write by choosing the right sources, writing appropriate questions and conducting background research with appropriate sources as needed.</p>
11-15	<p>Writing different types of stories</p> <p>Depending on the nature of the class and the publication needs, we spend the third week of this unit looking at how to write different stories. I might break my</p>

	<p>class into beats/groups to cover different areas more quickly. Use these lessons:</p> <p>Writing Briefs Writing a Preview Story Writing Sports News Alternative Formats</p>
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Unit 7: Editing and Style (Weeks 13-14)

Students learn about AP style and editing for revision. Note: If I have student editors in my class with experience I ask them to lead or co-teach this unit.

Day(s)	JEA Lesson
1-2	<p>Why AP Style Matters Students have been provided a newspaper story that they will edit for AP style, accuracy, attribution, correct paragraphing, grammar, spelling and redundancy. Students will be asked to locate and correct all errors. Students can use a current AP Stylebook for this quiz.</p>
3-4	<p>Copy Editing Tools This straight-forward lesson exposes students to copy editing symbols, allows them to put the symbols to use and then assesses their understanding of those symbols.</p>
5-6	<p>Editing For AP Style Students will search common AP style usage examples in everyday media sources and discuss how they are used appropriately ... or not! (Students can work alone or in teams. Teams provide an opportunity for collaboration, creativity and leadership that may be best suited to the task.) The teacher will direct students to the AP Stylebook – either online or print version. Students will then use news sources to verify their knowledge. The final piece will be a reflection/evaluation about how well the pros (and others) utilize AP style. (A variation/addition might be to create a style guide for the students' publication that contains the most commonly used topics.)</p>
7	<p>Collaborating and Coaching Writers In this lesson, students will learn how to act as coaches during the writing process. Copy editors must learn to tactfully and expertly work within a team environment to build staff writers' confidence as they revise and proofread. It is most beneficial if the entire staff understands this process. It is important that before using this activity, the adviser has reviewed each of the individual skills to be used in the editing process. Copy editing takes practice. Then, the staff will feel confident to address these copy editing skills in each other's writing.</p>
8-9	<p>Line Editing</p>

	In this lesson, students bring first drafts to class for feedback from peers. The teacher or student leader gives two mini-lessons, one on sentence structure and one on reducing use of unnecessary words. The teacher or student leader asks students to apply these strategies to writing.
10-11	Deep Revision Students will bring first drafts (they can bring articles from the prior unit) to class for feedback. The teacher or student leader uses “compliments, questions, and suggestions” to control the amount and quality of feedback student reporters give other student reporters. “Deep revision” is when authors expand or collapse paragraphs; narrow or change the focus, angle, or approach a piece; cut, move or add paragraphs; or systematically revise one aspect throughout a piece of writing.
12	Active/Passive Voice A lesson explaining the difference between active and passive voice and how to change from one to the other.
13-14	Editing for Word Choice In this lesson, students bring second drafts to class. The teacher or student leader gives two mini-lessons, one on identifying and reducing use of auxiliary or “helping” verbs and one on selecting original verbs in simple present tense and simple past tense. The teacher asks students to apply these strategies to writing.
15	Self review For the last day, I ask students to go back to their articles written in the writing unit and revise their own work for resubmission.

Unit 8: Week 15 — student directed final learning project

During this week, I ask students to decide and implement a final project. They can brainstorm a news story idea, execute news gathering and write the story. They can do peer-edits of others’ work if they want to learn how to coach writers. They can start to explore other forms of journalistic writing and create a how-to that would guide them in feature writing, for example. I use the JEA curriculum as an open guide to help students once they decide on a topic.