

Course Title

Media Arts English

Course Instructor

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Course Description

This course is part of the CTE Media Arts Pathway. A graduate from the Media Arts Pathway will possess skills necessary to find a job and succeed in communications, journalism, graphic design and more.

This is intended for the following:

- Students who are Interested in media, communication or art studies.
- Both AS and College Prep students will be served through differentiated assignments.

Students should expect **several writing assignments to be completed each year** while in the pathway. Classes will require students to manage their own projects and be able to work in a cooperative team environment.

The objectives of this standards-based course include the study of written communication, language and the development of literary and rhetorical analysis. The curriculum covers the skills necessary to succeed not only in college, but also on the 12th grade AP exams.

Additionally, the class will focus on media studies with a comprehensive approach to learning the fundamentals of news writing, ethics, law and media studies. This course emphasizes writing, gathering of information, design and interview techniques.

Student Learning Objectives

This class is aligned to the Common Core Standards. For a description of each standard, please visit the following website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccssstandards.pdf>.

In addition, we will be working toward the following objectives:

- Understanding what makes news and develop the ability to make ethically sound decisions when writing for the newspaper.
- Creating effective news stories, feature stories and other types of stories while demonstrating the ability to follow AP style.
- Becoming a dynamic communicator with an enhanced ability to interview, analyze and share news with others.
- Working cooperatively with other members of the news staff to create quality, professional news.
- Being aware constantly of what is going on in the world, both locally and globally.
- Becoming knowledgeable of all aspects of news production.

Course Calendar

Week 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Using historical documents and news coverage, this lesson explores the role of news in a democracy, and the role journalists play in helping citizens to be active, informed, and engaged.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.

[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.

[Truth and Social Media](#)

Students will look at infamous social media mistakes, inaccuracies and hoaxes in order to better identify which posts are correct or inaccurate. Students will become familiar with social media conventions that often hint at how authentic a post really is. Finally, students will develop their own step-by-step guide for assessing the accuracy of a social media post.

Week 2

[Basics of 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.

[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 icebreaker 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.

Week 3

[Overview of the First Amendment](#)

Students will learn the Five Freedoms as guaranteed by the First Amendment. Students will collaborate on what they know about the First Amendment and its relevance to their lives. Students also will examine how this document has remained relevant. This is the first lesson in the law and ethics unit.

[Researching about Court Cases Important to Student Journalists](#)

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.

Week 4

[SPLC Media Law Presentation: Libel Law](#)

Students will learn about the definition of libel law. Included are “red flag words” as well as emphasis on the importance of taking complete notes and acting reasonably.

[SPLC Media Law Presentation: Copyright](#)

Students will be exposed to several aspects of copyright law including basic definitions of fair use and public domain.

[SPLC Media Law Presentation: Invasion of Privacy](#)

Students will learn about the basic four types of Invasion of Privacy: Public Disclosure of Private and Embarrassing Facts; Intrusion; False Light; and Misappropriation. Students also will begin to apply these concepts to examples found in the slideshow.

[Just Because You Can, Doesn't Always Mean You Should](#)

[Another Way to Examine Ethics: Red Light, Green Light](#)

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.

Week 5 and 6:

[The Basic News Lead: 5 W's and H](#)

This will include a multi-part lesson introducing students to the basic information required for news with a four-step process for writing basic news leads.

[News Writing Structure](#)

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.

[Revising and Editing](#)

Students will practice writing and editing their work in addition to editing other students' work.

Week 7-10:

Argumentative essay writing (English style vs. journalism style) Introduce claims, evidence, counterclaims, and rebuttals;
Comparing Opinion Writing to Argument Writing

[Types of Opinion Stories](#)

Students will read an example of a review, a column and an editorial with emphasis on similarities and differences. Then the teacher will use direct instruction to present the differences between these three types of opinion stories.

[Using Evidence in Editorials](#)

Students will gather evidence to help form their opinions for writing their own editorials.

[Organizing an Editorial](#)

Students will look at examples of editorials and examine how they are organized. Then they will use graphic organizers to plan their own editorials.

[Counterarguments](#)

A debate activity using students' topics to get an idea of what the other side thinks as a way to strengthen their argument

[Using Evidence to Support Opinions](#)

Students will learn about different types of evidence to support their opinions. Then they will outline their columns and begin writing.

[Parts of a Review](#)

After the teacher presents vocabulary and characteristics related to reviews, students will read reviews in groups and diagram the parts. Then the class will discuss how those features can affect how readers respond to reviews.

Week 11-15:

READ - Nate Silver - The Signal and the Noise

Focus – evaluating data and making judgments of validity

[Evaluating Your Media Savvy](#)

Students will evaluate their own personal news media habits based on the media log assigned in Lesson 1 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.

[Fact Checking in the Digital Age](#)

In this lesson, students will learn about the importance of fact checking in the journalism profession. This lesson explores the practice of fact checking and requires students to identify and accept information with a critical eye for accuracy. Students will learn to use online resources to verify information. This is the third lesson in a week-long unit on news literacy. A great segue into this lesson is to show the movie "Shattered Glass" first and discuss the breach of trust that happens when news media get things wrong. If you'd like to show the movie, add two-to-three extra class periods to this unit to show the film and discuss.

[Understanding Source Credibility](#)

Students will learn the basic characteristics of trustworthy news sources. They will be exposed to the journalistic process of source selection and will identify the most credible sources based on qualifying information presented. After reading recent news stories, they will appraise the credibility of sources in major ongoing news stories.

[Evaluating Website Credibility](#)

Students will learn the key questions they should ask in order to determine the credibility of online news websites.

Week 16 – 18 (finals):

Final Feature Project

[News Reports vs. Feature Stories](#)

Students will discuss the concept that everyone has a story. Then, students will learn the differences between news and features. This is the first of two lessons introducing feature writing.

[Building Background: Starting the Reporting Process](#)

Students will review origins of features (from the previous lesson), then they will learn about source types and how to gather information to move a story from a concept to an actual thesis that sets direction and starts writing. They will choose their topics for an extended feature and develop a list of possible sources. This is the second of several lessons on extended feature writing.

[Finding the Theme](#)

Students will review the differences between news and feature stories. Then, they will learn how to construct a theme/thread/spine of a story to connect separate elements into a cohesive feature. This is the third of several lessons on extended feature writing.

[Feature Writing Workshop](#)

Students will write their first drafts, share them aloud and solicit constructive criticism from peers to aid with their revisions.