LYONS TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL 2026-2027

Course Title: **Journalism**
Course Code: **LA5736/LA5737**
Annual or Semester: **Semester**
Teacher Name: **Jason Scales**

I. Course Description:

Students will conduct interviews and gather research to write a variety of journalistic articles. Students will solve the problems reporters and editors typically face. Designed to offer students background and practice in basic journalism concepts and skills, course units include news gathering/interviewing, profile writing, news writing, feature writing, sports writing, review writing, headline writing, copy editing, press law/ethics and page design. Oral and written communication skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills, will be exercised. Students may have the opportunity to submit work for publication consideration in the LION. Journalistic Writing students may apply for membership on next year's LION staff during their sophomore year.

II. Course Standards:

Overarching Essential Question: What is the style, purpose, and ethics of written journalism?
Overarching Goal: Students can ethically report and write a variety of journalistic articles.

1. Enduring Understanding #1: Students will understand that journalists must be fair, accurate and objective in reporting, and must follow well established ethics.
Essential Outcomes:
- Students can identify and articulate the main tenets of journalism ethics, based on the Society of Professional Journalists
- Students can make reporting decisions, including what topics to cover and whom to interview, based on these ethics
- Students can identify ethical violations and articulate those violations

2. Enduring Understanding #2: Students will understand that journalists are the gatekeepers of information in a free and open society / democracy
Essential Outcomes:
- Students can identify topics worthy of news coverage and articulate each topic's news value
- Students can analyze and articulate the news value of topics covered in the media
- Students can choose their own newsworthy topics and pursue original reporting related to those topics.

3. Enduring Understanding #3: Students will interview sources and gather information, both fact and opinion, to be used in writing a variety of articles.
Essential Outcomes:
- Students can conduct an interview with a source in person
- Students know the limited value of email interviewing; that in-person or on phone is always better: interviewing is a conversation
- Students can gather and categorize information (fact and opinion)
- Students can write articles based on this information and create infographics to communicate some information in a visual way

4. Enduring Understanding #4: Students will follow basic journalistic writing styles and organizational structures for a variety of written purposes
Essential Outcomes:
- Students can follow quote/attribution style and numeral style, based on the Associated Press Stylebook
- Students can employ various lead writing strategies (anecdotal, angle, descriptive, news summary) and choose them depending on the article's purpose
- Student can write a news brief, using the Inverted Pyramid structure, and a longer news article, using a more sophisticated lead and more sources
- Students can write a sports article (pre-game, post-game, profile, etc.)

- Students can write an editorial, following the classic persuasive written format
- Students can write an entertainment review, a mix of information and opinion

5. Enduring Understanding #3: Students will use visuals/images/infographics to enhance their reporting.
Essential Outcomes:
- Students can create and/or choose an appropriate image to enhance their writing
- Students can write a caption/cutline for the image/visual
- Students can research and create their own infographic/sidebar to enhance their written reporting

III. Required Text(s):

The Radical Write by Bobby Hawthorn

IV. Required Instructional Resources:

Note-taking materials every day: notebook, pen/pencil. Charged Chromebook.

V. Supplemental Resources & Learning Experiences:

Timely newspaper articles, videos, photos, podcasts, films, documentaries, guest speakers, etc.

VI. Supplies:

Charged Chromebook
Notebook/folder for this class
Pens, pencils, highlighters

VII. Course Expectations:

Students need to come to class prepared to engage in classroom activities and tasks daily. Because most writing will occur during class (Please see the LAD Philosophy on Writing and AI), homework will emphasize reading. Students should expect to read **every night** for their English classes.

VIII. Cell Phone Policy: Work must be submitted as Google doc files or attachments to Canvas assignments.

The use of cell phones and earbuds will not be allowed during class time unless explicitly approved by the teacher for instructional purposes. **During academic time, students are expected to keep earbuds and phones silenced and out of sight.**

Classroom Cell Phone Policy: ***Students will place their cellphones into the assigned classroom space (pouch), or into a bag/backpack (at the teacher's discretion) at the beginning of the period and not take them out until the end of the period****, or earlier with teacher discretion*

IX. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Teachers will communicate expectations for AI use on assignments using the stoplight guidance below.

Red Light

- Teachers will communicate why AI is not allowed for the assignment.
- Students are not permitted to use AI tools.

Yellow Light

- Teachers determine and communicate the limitations of the use of AI in the assignment.
- Students can request permission to use specific AI resources and communicate with their teacher about their plan. AI must be cited if it is used.

Green Light

- Teachers will have conversations with students about the acceptable use of AI in the assignment and may require the use of AI.
- Students are encouraged or required to use AI tools. Use of AI must be cited.

When using AI tools, consider: Privacy, Safety, and Ethics
When engaging with AI, students must adhere to the following safety protocols:

- Protect Your Privacy: Never input Personally Identifiable Information (PII), such as full names, home addresses, or private student/staff data, into an AI prompt.

- Age Compliance: Many GenAI tools have a minimum age requirement. Students must only use platforms that are age-appropriate and explicitly approved for classroom use.

- Accuracy Warning: AI can "hallucinate" or provide incorrect information. It is the student's responsibility to fact-check any data or claims generated by these tools.

- Academic Honesty: Using AI on a Red Light assignment, or failing to cite AI use on Yellow/Green Light assignments, will be treated as a violation of the school's academic integrity policy as noted in the Student Handbook.

X. Work Submission Requirements: *Work must be submitted as Google doc files or attachments to Canvas assignments.*

XI. Academic Dishonesty (Cheating & Plagiarism):

- Please refer to the student handbook under Academic Dishonesty for definitions of and consequences for cheating and plagiarism.
- *In this class, here are important things to note:* Journalists DO NOT plagiarize (or use Ai-generated content). Journalists are the original content creators–all work done for this class must be original and gathered using ethical journalism standards and practices that we will discuss at length in class.

XII. Grading & Assessment:

- Grading Scale:
  - The overall grade in this course will be determined using a 0-100% scale.
  - The categories you will see in the Infinite Campus gradebook will be:
    - Coursework (10%)
    - Assessments (90%)
  - The academic grade will not include:
    - Extra credit
    - Attendance
    - Group Grades
    - Curved grades
    - Penalties for late work for summative assignments

- Coursework:

  The purpose of coursework is to provide students with an opportunity to practice and continuously gauge where they are in the learning process. Evidence from coursework provides teachers the ability to adjust instruction to better meet students' needs.

  - Coursework includes homework, feedback, checks for understanding, and any other small, graded or ungraded assignments.
  - If assignments that serve as intentional practice are not turned in when due, this will be communicated with an "M" in the gradebook. An "M" is calculated as a zero. When the assignment is submitted, it will be replaced with a grade or other feedback. If the assignment is not submitted, the "M" will remain in the gradebook.

- Assessments:

  At LTHS, summative assessment grades will be determined using work that is done as an individual.

  - All summative assessments, regardless of type, must be preceded by formative practice and feedback.

- In this course, summative assessments (Assessment Category) will consist of the following:

Semester	Name of Summative Assessment	Type of Assessment	Point Value of Assessment
1	Profile article	Written	60 pts
	News Brief	Written	80
	News Article	Written	100
	Sports Writing	Short answer	80
1	Opinion Writing	Written	60
1	Other smaller assessments include: -Quote Style -Numeral Style -Ethics	MC, short answer	10-40 (varies)

- Summative assessments that are not completed by the due date will be marked with an "M" and counted as a 0. When the student completes the summative assessment, the teacher will replace the "M" with a grade. If the assignment is not submitted, the "M" will remain in the gradebook and calculate as a zero.

- **Retakes/Revision - New Policy**

  - Students will be able to retake 50% of the summative assessments each semester. Please note that presentations, performances, essays, projects, and lab performance tasks may be exempt from a retake or revision opportunity as long as feedback is provided along the way.
  - A minimum of **two retakes per semester** must be provided.
  - Students are required to submit at least 75% of formative/coursework **on time and prior to** the initial summative to be eligible for a retake/revision.
  - Students must complete the re-learning plan assigned by the teacher prior to the retake to ensure they have learned the material.

- All retakes must be taken within **five school days** of the assessment being returned.
- A retake or revision will not result in a recorded lower grade.

Support for Failing Students - If a student is earning an "F" **in the course**, the student will be eligible to retake additional summatives beyond the 50% retake limit **only** if the student has submitted at least 75% of the coursework **on time and prior to** the initial summative assessments.

- Absences and Due Dates (LT Student Handbook):

"It is the student's responsibility to request information from their teachers about make-up work upon returning to class when they have missed part or all of a class period(s). Students who are absent for any reason are allowed to make up work and tests and receive credit. Assignments given before the days of absence will be due upon the student's return to class. Students will have 2 days for every one day of absence to make up missed work. Students should arrange with teachers the times to make up missed tests. If a test date was announced before the day of the student's absence, the student should be prepared to take the test upon their return to school. Students assigned to the Restorative Intervention Room (RIR), In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension have the right to make up tests and assignments. Every attempt will be made for students to complete tests and assignments during their time in the RIR/ISS. Teachers have the right to modify their make-up policies to meet individual needs and circumstances."

- Final Exam:
  - All students in this course must attend the final exam period. This course will have the following final exam structure:
    - Last Summative Assessment
      - This exam will not count any more than the weight of other summative assessments.

XII. Teacher Contact Information & Availability:
Jason Scales jscales@lths.net
Office hours: Before school in B105 by appointment or drop-in (7-7:40 a.m.)

XIII. Division Chair/Assistant Division Chair Contact Information:
Karen Raino, Language Arts Division Chair
kraino@lths.net - 708.579.6402
Toby Casella, Assistant Language Arts Division Chair
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