

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MSCM 1

INTRODUCTION TO REPORTING AND NEWSWRITING

Effective: Spring 2014

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MSCM 1 — INTRODUCTION TO REPORTING AND NEWSWRITING — 3.00 units

An introduction to gathering, synthesizing/ organizing, and writing news in journalistic style across multiple platforms. Includes role of the journalist, analysis of exemplary journalistic models, and related legal and ethical issues. Students will report and write based on their original interviews and research to produce news content. Experiences may include covering speeches, meetings, and other events, writing under deadline and use of AP Style.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

- Eligibility for ENG 1A -

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

| | MIN |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Lecture Hours: | 54.00 |
| Total Hours: | 54.00 |

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

A. -Eligibility for ENG 1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Write simple and complex news stories using appropriate journalistic format and style for different platforms
- B. Define and execute newsgathering strategies, including interviewing live sources, reporting on a meeting, and using online and investigative techniques.
- C. Write different types of news stories, including covering speeches, meeting, and events
- D. Write articles under deadline
- E. Apply Associated Press style to articles and edit own and others' articles for proper spelling, grammar, AP Style, and journalistic style
- F. Write an extended news feature of at least 1,200 words
- G. Define and avoid libelous writing, invasion of privacy, and unethical reporting.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Information and news gathering, including live interviews
 1. Preparing for interviews
 2. Interviewing live sources
 3. Using different methods and strategies for research, including online research
- B. Writing news stories
 1. Journalistic writing forms, including the inverted pyramid
 2. Writing for multiple platforms, including print, online, broadcast and social media
 3. Writing simple and complex/long form articles
 4. Editing and improving news stories
 - a. Practice at writing/rewriting leads, nutgraphs, and kickers
 - b. Practice reducing wordiness
 - c. Practice rewriting for greater clarity
- C. News gathering practice, including preparing for and covering speeches, meetings and other events
- D. Writing under deadline
- E. Introduction to Associated Press Style and practice using AP Style Guide and other editing techniques
- F. Introduction to the news feature and practice preparing for, executing, and writing a news feature
- G. Legal and ethical issues in reporting, including invasion of privacy, plagiarism, and libel

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Small group and whole-class discussion
- C. Films, video tapes, and recordings
- D. Guest presentations by practicing journalists
- E. Possible field trips to different media companies
- F. Reporting simulations
- G. "Live" interview and note-taking situations
- H. Individual/group evaluation of student and professional prose
 - I. Deadline writing situations
 - J. Instructor conferences
- K. Written work, including summaries, papers, and exams

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading and Writing: Read Chapter 2 of The Associated Press Reporting Handbook, "What Is News?" and write a one-page paper describing your relationship to the media. Where do you get your news? What do you consider newsworthy?
- B. Writing: Attend a student government meeting and complete a 600-word story about at least one topic covered at the meeting under a three-hour deadline, using appropriate style.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

- 1. Exams/Tests
- 2. Quizzes
- 3. Research Projects
- 4. Portfolios
- 5. Papers
- 6. Oral Presentation
- 7. Projects
- 8. Group Projects
- 9. Class Participation

B. **Frequency**

- 1. Weekly quizzes, writing assignments (papers), oral presentation, projects, group projects, and class participation
- 2. Monthly tests and research and writing projects
- 3. Semester-long creation of portfolio

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Brooks, Brian S., James L. Pinson, and Jean Gaddy Wilson (2012). *Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors* (8th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- 2. Knight, Robert M (2010). *The Craft of Clarity: A Journalistic Approach to Good Writing* (3rd ed.). Ames, Iowa: Marion Street-Acorn Guild.
- 3. The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly) (2011). *News Reporting and Writing* (10th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- 4. The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly) (2013). *Telling the Story: Writing for Print, Broadcast and Online Media* (5th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- 5. Harrower, Tim (2012). *Inside Reporting* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: