

Las Positas College  
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## Course Outline for AJ 54

### INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Effective: Fall 2004

#### I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

AJ 54 — INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING — 3.00 units

Investigative reports with emphasis upon accuracy and details necessary. Includes arrest reports, incident reports and miscellaneous field reports. Techniques and methods used to cover information; how to analyze and present information in a clear and concise report

3.00 Units Lecture

#### Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

#### Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

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

#### III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

#### IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

1. record and use investigation notes;
2. recite the advantages and disadvantages of Form and Narrative types of reporting;
3. describe the physical content of arrest, incident, and other reports and the rationale for different reporting styles;
4. explain the requirements for effective communication and how to find and assemble information;
5. record information accurately and legibly enough in a police report to present to others in the legal community for purposes of follow-up investigation and the issuance of complaints;
6. demonstrate how to provide effective testimony in court as a witness;
7. demonstrate the ability to write clear, concise and detailed investigative reports with a high level of grammatical accuracy.

#### V. CONTENT:

- A. Introduction to investigative reporting
  1. Characteristics of good reports
  2. Characteristics of poor reports
- B. Form and content of basic reports
  1. Field interview report
  2. Citations
  3. Arrest report – primary headings
  4. Arrest report – secondary headings
  5. Incidents against persons, including domestic violence, rape, and assault with a deadly weapon
  6. Incidents against property, including petty theft and burglary
  7. Self-initiated car stop report
  8. Drug possession/transportation report
  9. Legal intervention/use of force memo
- C. Accuracy of reports for police and court use and for use by other Agencies
- D. Effective oral and written communication
  1. Preliminary steps to information gathering
  2. Three-phase interview process
- E. Methods used to discover information
- F. Organizational tools and mechanics
  1. Correct use of grammar and spelling
  2. Aspects of correct reporting style, including first person, active voice, past tense (FAP)
  3. Syntax and organization

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Discussion** -
- B. Interview role playing
- C. **Lecture** -
- D. Video tapes of incidents to provoke discussion and writing

E. Student group editing sessions

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Homework assignments answering study questions B. Approximately 15 written reports of varying lengths, including vehicle impound report, domestic violence offense report, rape victim interview, and use of force memo C. Outside interview assignment

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Quizzes
2. Class Participation

B. **Frequency**

1. Attendance and participation are evaluated daily
2. Written reports are due most weeks
3. Quizzes on conceptual and grammatical topics will be given periodically throughout the term
4. The midterm and final occur at the mid point and end of the term

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Hess, Karen M., Ph.D *For The Record: Report Writing In Law Enforcement.*, Innovative Systems Publishers, 0.
2. Biggs, Michael. *Just the Facts: Investigative Report Writing.* 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, 2004.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: