

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MSCM 2

JOURNALISM: INVESTIGATIVE NEWS

Effective: Spring 2018

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MSCM 2 — JOURNALISM: INVESTIGATIVE NEWS — 3.00 units

News and feature writing, emphasizing investigative reporting, research techniques, and story presentation.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

	<u>MIN</u>
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. ENG1A

1. Critically read texts and materials from a variety of academic and cultural contexts, demonstrating in writing and discussion the ability to:
 - a. Summarize a thesis and main points;
 - b. Analyze main ideas;
 - c. Create a coherent position or argument based on reading;
2. Write multiple-paragraph papers that:
 - a. Develop a relevant, focused thesis;
 - b. Are well-organized and coherently move from coordinating to subordinating points;
 - c. Are well-developed with sufficient and relevant evidence;
 - d. Synthesize facts and ideas originating outside his/her direct experience to develop and support a thesis;
 - e. Use standard American English correctly;
3. Research a specific topic using the Internet, databases, journals, and books demonstrating an ability to:
 - a. Review sources for relevant evidence and arguments;

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

- A. develop appropriate investigative topics and research strategies;
- B. analyze investigative news stories for content and execution;
- C. demonstrate standard journalistic style, including lead writing, story organization, and effective use of quotes and transitional devices;
- D. interview for pertinent information with professional note-taking standards and effective questioning techniques;
- E. write an in-depth investigative news feature of 1,200 words;
- F. identify and avoid libelous writing, invasion of privacy, and unethical writing.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Investigative reporting
 1. Overview
 2. The investigative reporter
 3. Developing as a reporter
 4. Finding stories
 5. How to pursue an inquiry
 6. Interviews
 7. Research and documents
 8. How to write the story
- B. Analysis of the media
 1. Investigative articles

2. News features
3. Standard topics of investigative journalism
 - a. Government coverage
 - b. Consumer affairs
 - c. American capitalism
 - d. Companies
 - e. Crime
 - f. Security and intelligence
 - g. Human rights issues
 - h. Coverage abroad
- C. Practice writing
 1. Writing and rewriting leads
 2. Interviewing live sources
 3. Eliminating wordiness
 4. Rewriting for clarity
 5. Completing at least eight major writing assignments, totaling 6,000 words
- D. Critiquing the media
 1. Critiquing student writing (with revisions)
 2. Critiquing the daily press
 3. Analysis of critiques: the role of media revisited
- E. Completion of three special investigative projects, organized for final presentation, individually and in groups

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Simulations** - Deadline writing situations
- B. **Guest Lecturers** - Guest presentations by investigative reporters or those impacted by investigative reporters
- C. **Written exercises and case studies** - Written work, including summaries, papers, and exams
- D. **Simulations** - "Live" interview and note-taking situation.
- E. Instructor conferences
- F. **Audio-visual Activity** - Films, video tapes, and recordings
- G. **Critique** - Individual/group evaluation of student and professional prose
- H. **Lecture** -
 - I. **Simulations** - Reporting simulations
- J. **Field Trips** - Possible field trips to different media companies
- K. **Discussion** - Small group and whole class discussion

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading and Writing:
 1. Read Chapter 4 in *Investigative Reporting: A Study in Technique*, "Finding the Stories: and write a one-page paper identifying some possible sources for stories.
- B. Writing:
 1. Complete a 1,000-word investigative piece on a campus-based issue under deadline.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Quizzes
3. Research Projects
4. Portfolios
5. Papers
6. Oral Presentation
7. Projects
8. Field Trips
9. Group Projects
10. Class Participation
11. Class Work
12. Home Work
13. Lab Activities

B. **Frequency**

1. Exams/Tests: At instructor's discretion
2. Quizzes: At instructor's discretion
3. Research Projects: At least one per semester
4. Portfolios: Semester-long preparation of portfolio of work
5. Papers: Weekly
6. Oral Presentation: At least one per semester
7. Projects: At least one per semester
8. Field Trips: At the instructor's discretion
9. Group Projects: At least one per semester
10. Class Participation: Weekly
11. Class Work: Weekly
12. Home Work: Weekly
13. Lab Activities: At the instructor's discretion

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Brooks, Brian , James Pinson, and Jean Wilson. *Working with Words: A Handbook for Media Writers and Editors*. 9th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016.
2. Houston, Brant , and Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc.. *The Investigative Reporter's Handbook*. 5th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.
3. Pilger, John. *Tell Me No Lies: Investigative Journalism and Its Triumphs*. New Ed ed., Vintage Digital, 2011.
4. Hamilton, James. *Democracy's Detectives: The Economics of Investigative Journalism* . 1 ed., Harvard University Press, 2016.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. A phone that records or a recorder