

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for MSCM 1

JOURNALISM: NEWS WRITING

Effective: Fall 2003

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

MSCM 1 — JOURNALISM: NEWS WRITING — 3.00 units

Fundamentals of reporting and newswriting to develop ability to investigate, organize, write, and rewrite according to professional standards of print journalism. Analysis of exemplary journalistic models. Conceive, research, and write stories, using traditional news values. Requires source interviews or original research.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition
or

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Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

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. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

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

- A. analyze news stories and news features for content and execution;
- B. develop original story ideas using traditional news values;
- C. demonstrate several appropriate methods of starting a news story, with concise, active-voice prose;
- D. interview for pertinent information and use professional note-taking standards;
- E. incorporate direct, accurate quotes into straight news copy;
- F. demonstrate story organization and topic transition techniques;
- G. write an extended news feature of at least 1,200 words;
- H. develop content and style appropriate to different print readerships;
 - I. identify and avoid libelous writing, invasion of privacy, and unethical reporting.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Detailed analysis of news stories
 1. What is news?
 2. Daily news stories
 3. Longer news features
 4. Specialized coverage and beat coverage
 - a. Government coverage
 - b. Police and fire coverage
 - c. Science and medical coverage
 - d. Television and entertainment coverage
 - e. Political coverage
 - f. Technology coverage
 - g. Lifestyle features
 - h. Profiles
 - i. Press conferences
 - j. Investigations
 - k. Reporting overseas

- I. Narrative reconstructions
 - 5. The role of the newspaper and other media in society
 - 6. Changing media
- B. Writing the news
 - 1. Practice at writing/rewriting leads
 - 2. Practice reducing wordiness
 - 3. Practice rewriting for greater clarity
 - 4. Practice interviewing live sources
 - 5. Practice investigating a story
 - 6. Practice reporting on a meeting
 - 7. Practice using different methods of research
 - 8. Complete at least eight major writing assignments, totaling 6,000 words
- C. Critiquing the media
 - 1. Critiquing student writing (with revisions)
 - 2. Critiquing the daily press
 - 3. Analysis of critiques: the role of media revisited
- D. Careers in the media

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

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

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading and Writing: 1. 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 to be newsworthy? B. Writing 1. Attend a student government meeting and complete an 800-word story about the meeting under a three-hour deadline.

VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
- B. **Frequency**
 - 1. Weekly quizzes and writing assignments
 - 2. Semester long creation of portfolio
 - 3. Monthly tests

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. Brooks, Brian S., James L. Pinson, and Jean Gaddy Wilson *Working with Words: A Handbook for Media writers and Editors*. 5th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.
- 2. Knight, Robert M. *The Craft of Clarity: A Journalistic Approach to Good Writing*., Iowa University Press, 1998.
- 3. Schwartz, Jerry *Associated Press Reporting Handbook*., McGraw-Hill Trade, 2002.
- 4. The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly) *News Reporting and Writing*. 7th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
- 5. The Missouri Group (Brian S. Brooks, George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen, and Don Ranly) *Telling the Story: Writing for Print, Broadcast and Online Media*., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: