**JOURNALISM 311: REPORTING AND INFORMATION GATHERING**

**Fall Semester 2015: Mon/Wed 8:00am-9:50am/LA 4-102**

**Instructor: Nick Roman** Nicholas.Roman@csulb.edu

**Office Hours: after class or by appointment - Fridays 10:00am/Journalism Office**

**COURSE OVERVIEW/GOALS:**

J311 is the second skills course in CSULB’s journalism program. You’ll learn how to gather information for print, online and on-air news stories; how to find and evaluate sources; how to choose relevant information – and discard misleading, biased or rhetorical garbage; and how to prepare for and conduct an interview.

We’ll work on accurate, clear, concise, active and bright writing, with our class textbook and the AP Stylebook as our guides. We’ll work on speed and deadlines. We’ll work with numbers: how to interpret them and how to report them so readers, viewers and listeners will understand them. We’ll work with new ways to deliver information – and that will require you to use Twitter and Instagram.

**Required Texts:**

***Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method – 7th Edition***

*Carole Rich (2013), Wadsworth, Cengage Learning*

*ISBN 978-1111344443*

***Associated Press Stylebook***

**Suggested Texts:**

***Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism – Third Edition*** *Tim Harrower (2013), McGraw-Hill*

***Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production***

*Jonathan Kern, University of Chicago Press (2008)*

***Broadcast Newswriting: The RTNDA Reference Guide***

*Mervin Block*

***The Yahoo! Style Guide***

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Asking questions, sharing ideas and connecting the dots: that’s what we do in journalism – so do it in class. If you do, it’ll make for a better and more rewarding class. If you don’t, it’ll lower your grade. Come to class prepared and ready to go with your assignments finished. **Smart phone? Turn it off when we’re in class.**

**CLASS SCHEDULE/ATTENDANCE:**

We'll meet 28 times this semester in LA 4-102. Class begins at 8:00am and ends at 9:50am. Class will include lectures and lab sessions. The Final Exam date is Monday, December 14 at 8:00am in LA 4-102.

**We do not meet on Monday/September 7th (Labor Day), Wednesday/November 11th (Veterans Day), or Monday/November 23rd and Wednesday/November 25th (Fall Break).**

I take attendance. Each class you miss costs 1 grade point. I make exceptions for illness or family emergency if you inform me you’ll be out BEFORE you're out.

**GRADING:**

We have a 500-point grade scale – and it goes like this:

**Quizzes** – 90 points (scheduled throughout the semester)

**Class Assignment 1/Finley** – 50 points

**Class Assignment 2/Breaking News** – 50 points

**Midterm** – 50 points

**Story 1** – 50 points

**Class Assignment 3/Twitter** – 50 Points

**Class Assignment 4/Instagram** – 30 points

**Final** – 50 points

**Story 2** – 50 points

**Attendance** – 30 points (applied at the end of the semester)

**Here's the grading scale:**

**A – 500-451 B – 450-401 C – 400-351 D – 350 or below**

**Extra Credit:** You can earn extra credit if you produce a story that is published by/posted in a respected local news outlet: Daily 49er and other campus publications, LBPost.com, LBReport.com, KPCC.org and the major local newspapers. I'll give you five points (maybe more if it's really good) for each story, up to a maximum of 50 points (one grade level).

**ACCURACY, INTEGRITY AND FAIRNESS:**

As in any journalism courses or real world story assignment, you are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of accuracy, integrity and fairness in your information gathering and writing. Sources are to be attributed. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course. There are no exceptions to this policy.

**ADDENDUM: CSULB Academic Policies**

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accommodations:**

Faculty will provide reasonable accommodation to any student with a disability who is registered with the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) and requires needed accommodation. The faculty may wish to contact the OSD to verify the presence of a disability and confirm that the accommodation is necessary. The OSD will arrange and provide for the accommodation. Reasonable accommodations may be needed during class sessions and for administration of examinations. The intent of the ADA in requiring consideration of reasonable accommodations is not to give a particular student an unfair advantage over other students, but simply to allow a student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to be successful.

**Seat in Class:** An enrolled student may lose his/her seat in class if he/she misses the first class meeting without notifying the instructor. At the instructor's discretion, a student who attends the first class but not subsequent classes may also be dropped from the course.

**Withdrawal from Class:** Students may withdraw from a class from the third to the 12th week for “serious and compelling reasons.” Normally these are defined as anything of importance that is beyond the control of the student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, death or serious illness in a student's immediate family or a documented change in a student's work schedule. Poor performance, tardiness and unexcused absences are not considered compelling reasons beyond the student's control for purposes of withdrawing.

**Absences from Class:** Grades in a course may be adversely affected by absences, and students should seek clarification from the instructor regarding the course absence policy. Makeups usually are granted in strict accordance with CSULB policy, which defines excused absences as (1) illness or injury to the student; (2) death, injury or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like; 93) religious reasons; (4) jury duty or government obligation; (5) CSULB-sanctioned or approved activities [2002-03 Catalog, p.75]. These and any other requests for an excused absence must be documented.

**Grading:** The grading policies and practices in this class are explained elsewhere in the syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to read them and to seek clarification if necessary. The student should be fully aware of what is required for success in the course, such as group participation, writing speaking, completing assigned readings, etc.

**CSULB Cheating/Plagiarism/Fabrication Policy:** CSULB takes issues of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you use any deceptive or dishonest method to complete an assignment, take an exam, or gain credit in a course in any other way, or if you help someone else do so, you are guilty of cheating. If you use someone else's ideas or work and represent it as your own without giving credit to the source, you are guilty of plagiarism. This does not apply if the ideas are recognized as common knowledge, or if you can show that you honestly developed the ideas through your own work. Any instructor can show you the correct ways of citing your sources, and you should use quotation marks, footnotes or endnotes and bibliographic references to give credit to your courses according to the format recommended by your instructor.

**Responses, Penalties and Student Rights:** Students should consult the appropriate sections of the catalog for examples of cheating, fabrication and plagiarism, and instructor and/or CSULB response options in such circumstances. The catalog also outlines student rights. Any instance of academic dishonesty may result in your immediate expulsion from class with a grade of “F” and/or other sanctions, as the instructor deems appropriate.

**Additional Student Learning Assessment:** The national accrediting agency for journalism education has established a requirement that all accredited journalism schools assess student mastery of 11 core values and competencies that any graduate of a journalism and mass communication program should possess. According to the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, all graduates, irrespective of their particular specialization, should be able to:

1. Understand and apply First Amendment principles and law appropriate to professional practice.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in global society in relationship to communications.
4. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
5. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
6. Think critically creatively and independently.
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.