I. General Information
   A. Course Number: 120
   B. Title: Writing Across the Media
   C. Units: 3
   D. Prerequisites: A “C” or Better in English 100
   E. Course Classification: Laboratory
   F. Responsible Faculty: Chris Burnett
   G. Terms Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer
   H. Prepared by: Chris Burnett
   I. Date of Submission: October 15, 2003

II. Catalog Description:
This hands-on course will teach students the basic skills needed to write for the mass media and for public relations clients. The media industry is changing, and with these changes media professionals must be able to communicate using writing techniques and styles appropriate for different media. This course will provide an introductory overview on news gathering and writing techniques used in the print media, in broadcast media, in online media and in preparation of materials for media professionals by public relations practitioners. The focus will be on developing the ability to write news stories and to meet deadlines. The course includes a study of news sources, reporting and interviewing methods, law, ethics and responsibilities of the reporter.

III. Expected Outcomes:
   a. Students are expected to emerge from this course with the basic news gathering and newswriting skills to write hard news and features stories for the print, broadcast and online media; **Corresponding assignments**: in-class assignments, examinations.
   b. Students will learn about the relationship between media and public relations professionals, and be able to write a press release that meets media industry standards; **Corresponding assignments**: in-class assignments, writing assignments.
   c. Students will learn about the role played by journalism in democratic societies and the importance of ethical and legal standards in newswriting and reporting; **Corresponding assignments**: in-class assignments, writing assignments.
   d. Students will learn interviewing techniques and basic data gathering methods using computer databases; **Corresponding assignments**: examinations, in-class assignments, writing assignments.

IV. Suggested Textbooks:
• Associated Press Stylebook, Most Recent Edition
• Additional readings as appropriate to the course.

V. Course Outline:
A. Introduction: Discussion of Changing Nature of News Gathering and Reporting
B. The Basic News Story: How Print, Online and Broadcast Media Approaches Differ
C. Curiosity and Story Ideas
D. Sources and Online Research
E. Interviewing Techniques
F. Leads and Nut Graps for Print Media
G. Story Structure for Print Media
H. Basics on covering Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings
I. Storytelling and Feature Techniques
J. Techniques in Writing for the Online Media
K. Techniques in Writing for the Broadcast Media
L. Accuracy and Libel, and Media Ethics: An Overview of Key Principles
M. Role of Public Relations Practitioners in News Gathering and Basics of Press Release Writing
N. Overview: Future Trends in the Media Industry

VI. Methods of Presentation
This course will follow an interactive style of teaching and learning. Students and instructor will share the responsibility for a productive learning experience. Students should be prepared to engage in lively discussion and sharing of ideas. Most of the work will be hands-on, providing the students with plenty of opportunities to practice the techniques learned in class.

Most work is designed for completion in the classroom to give practice in deadline writing. Guest speakers will be brought in from the professional world to give students a real world focus on professional opportunities. Outside class work will focus on newsgathering techniques and developing the ability to write news stories.

VII. Methods of Evaluation
• In-class Assignments
Most work will be in class and will involve role playing exercises and writing workbook exercises.

• Writing Assignments
Students will produce at least one publishable story, using either print, broadcast or online writing style, by the end of the semester.

• Examinations
Instructors will give a midterm and final exam to assess student progress in learning newsgathering and writing techniques. Weekly quizzes will focus on learning of Associated Press style and keeping up with current events.
VIII. Justification

Newsgathering and writing in the 21st century is demanding more and more of news and public relations professionals. In addition to traditional print news techniques, students entering the job market will be expected to understand how to write basic stories for broadcast and online outlets. They also must know the key role played by public relations practitioners in news dissemination, and be prepared to write and evaluate public relations news releases. JOUR120 provides a solid background for upper level journalism classes. Completion of the class will ensure that every Cal State Long Beach journalism graduate has at least one class that exposes them to different techniques of news gathering and reporting. The class also will help students learn what area – print, online, broadcast or public relations – or what combination of areas they want to specialize in as media professionals.