I. General Information
   A. Course Number: JOUR 374
   B. Title: Written Communication for Public Relations
   C. Units: 3
   D. Prerequisites: JOUR 120 with a grade of "C" or better, JOUR 370
   E. Course Classification: 2 unit at C-4, 1 unit at C-12
   F. Responsible Faculty: Various
   G. Terms Offered: Fall and Spring
   H. Prepared by: Danny Paskin
   I. Date prepared/revised: Jan. 15, 2014

II. Catalog Description
Students learn to write a wide variety of internal public relations materials, including backgrounders, position papers, proposals, letters, memos, speeches and crisis communication plans. Students develop a crisis communication plan for a nonprofit organization as a service-learning project.

III. Justification
JOUR 485 provides the only opportunity available at CSULB to be part of a student-run public relations agency, developing and implementing a program for an actual client as part of Bateman Case Study Competition. This course provides students internship-like experience, enabling them to apply what they have learned in all of their classes and gain valuable practical skills for the working world.

The Bateman Competition is the nation’s most prestigious and challenging competition for public relations. It is sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), the student chapter of the Public Relations Society of America – the public relations industry’s leading professional organization. The competition is designed to allow PRSSA members an opportunity to exercise the analytical skills and mature judgment required for public relations problem-solving. Bateman case studies typically deal with cause-related issues and often involve service-learning components.

The course has been offered as JOUR 490 off and on for years. In that time, the CSULB team has consistently placed in the top three or received honorable mention in the Bateman Competition, providing exposure for the University at the national level. In semesters when the course was not offered (due to budget cuts), students were not able to enter the competition due to lack of the common meeting time the class affords them.

The course is offered and students enroll officially in it in the fall semester; however, due to the nature of the competition, students (and the professor) must make an academic-year commitment to the competition and still work on the campaign during the following spring, even though no official class meetings take place then. Students implement their public relations plan in the month of February. They then develop their entry submission, due at the end of March. If selected as a finalist, they then develop and practice their presentation and travel to present their plan to a panel of judges (location varies year to year).

IV. Course Objectives and Measurable Outcomes
• Homework – 15%
• Presentations – 20%
• Published Articles – 15%
• In-Class Assignments and Participation – 10%
• Proofreading Quiz – 5%
• AP Quiz – 5%
• Midterm/Final – 30%

The objectives of this class, ultimately, are to:

A. Understand the strategic function of and be able to produce the key written communications tools used in public relations
   Developed by: lectures, discussions, readings, research for presentations, in-class assignments
   Measured by: Homework, presentations, exams, proofreading quiz, published articles

B. Understand the use of social and online media as it relates to the practice of public relations
   Developed by: lectures, discussions, readings, in-class assignments
   Measured by: Homework, presentations, exams

C. Demonstrate writing proficiency, and understand and use media (Associated Press) style
   Developed by: lectures, discussions, readings, in-class assignments, published articles
   Measured by: Homework, presentations, AP quiz, proofreading quiz, exams

D. Understand relevant technology and social media platforms, including Cision; Factiva; Google Insights; Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; and Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest
   Developed by: lectures, discussions, readings, published articles, in-class assignments, research for presentations
   Measured by: Homework, presentations, AP quiz, proofreading quiz, exams

V. Standard Course Outline
This is only an indication of possible subjects to be worked on the course of the semester. Subject matter and sequence of topics may vary depending on the instructor and competition timing.

Week 1 Course Overview, AP Style, Proofreading, E-mail Communication
Week 2 Getting Organized for Writing
Week 3 Becoming a Persuasive Writer, Finding & Making News
Week 4 Writing the News Release, Headlines, Leads, Quotes & Boilerplate, News Release Exercise
Week 5 Distributing News to the Media, Getting Along with Journalists
Week 6 Preparing Fact Sheets, Advisories, Media Kits, & Pitches
Week 7 Creating News Features & Op-Eds
Week 8 Selecting Publicity Photos & Graphics, Writing for Radio & Television
Week 9 Tapping the Web & New Media, Online Newsrooms
Week 10 Interviewing/Interview Exercise
Week 11 Producing Newsletters & Brochures, Writing E-Mail, Memos, & Proposals
Week 12 Giving Speeches & Presentations
Week 13 Planning Programs & Campaigns
Week 14 Measuring Success
Week 15 Avoiding Legal Hassles
Week 16 Final—Presentation of Press Kits

VI. Methods of Instruction
This course will follow an interactive style of teaching 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. Some classes will be lecture-heavy, although it’s highly recommended that
professor use current examples and/or draw from his/her own professional experience as often as possible. Still, much of the work during the semester will be hands-on, providing students with plenty of opportunities to apply theories and concepts and media tools discussed and practiced in class. The instructor will often use student-centered pedagogical techniques, such as small group discussions, group assignments and class presentations to convey and discuss course content. Students will consistently received feedback from professors, paying special attention to their writing skills, and being allowed, as much as permissible, to revise their assignments.

VII. Extent and Nature of Use of Technology
The use of technology will depend on individual instructors, but may include Beachboard for classroom lectures and communication. To help them prepare their public relations plan, basic instruction on key public relations technology will be provided, including but not limited to: Cision; Factiva; Google Insights; Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Publisher and Excel; and business uses for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest. Depending on the nature of the case study competition, students may implement programs using one or more these technologies, as well as use still and video cameras to document their campaign.

VIII. Textbooks
The following is a short list of textbooks that are most likely to be used in this course. Instructors may assign one of these and/or include other texts.

- “Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques” by Wilcox
- “Associated Press Stylebook”
- “When Words Collide” by Kessler and McDonald

IX. Methods of Assessment
Methods of assessment: these will vary depending on the instructor. They may include:

- Homework – 15%
- Presentations – 20%
- Published Articles – 15%
- In-Class Assignments and Participation – 10%
- Proofreading Quiz – 5%
- AP Quiz – 5%
- Midterm/Final – 30%

X. Instructional Requirements
Instructors may determine their own policies with regard to plagiarism, withdrawal, absences, and adding the course, so long as the policies are consistent with the University policies as laid out in the CSULB Catalog. Syllabi must refer to the appropriate sections in the Catalog, lay out the precise policies for the course on attendance and plagiarism, and ask students to inform instructors promptly of the need for accommodation of disabilities. It is recommended that instructors include some explanation of how they assess class participation.

XII. Additional Supplemental Materials
Please find on the following page a sample syllabus from a recent semester.
Course Syllabus
Journalism 374—Written Communication for Public Relations
Fall 2013, 12-1:50 p.m. Monday and Wednesday

Instructor
Joni Ramirez
Public Relations Consultant
Phone/Text: (323) 532-0746
E-mail: joni.ramirez@edelman.com
Office: SSPA-028

Office Hours
Mondays 2-3 p.m. and 9-10 p.m. or by appointment

Prerequisites
Journalism 311 (“C” or better) and Journalism 370

Texts and Supplies
- “Public Relations Writing and Media Techniques” (seventh edition) by Dennis L. Wilcox
- “The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law”
- “PR Daily News Feed” email subscription (free at www.prdaily.com)
- “When Words Collide” by Kessler and McDonald (optional, but strongly recommended as a resource for students who have problems with grammar, style, punctuation, etc.)

Course Description
This course will introduce you to the written communications tools used in public relations, as well as increase your writing proficiency. Students will learn the basics of writing news releases, pitch letters, fact sheets, media alerts, Op-Ed pieces and other public relations materials, as well as the development of media lists designed to reach diverse target audiences. Writing for social and online media also will be covered, as will using these platforms to help organizations achieve their objectives. A service-learning project will provide real-world PR experience and materials for student portfolios.

Course Objectives
At the completion of the course, students will:
- understand the strategic function of and be able to produce the key written communications tools used in public relations
- understand the use of social and online media as it relates to the practice of public relations
- demonstrate writing proficiency, and understand and use media (Associated Press) style
- understand relevant technology and social media platforms, including Cision; Factiva; Google Insights; Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel; and Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest

Method of Instruction
The text will be supplemented by lectures, class discussions, handouts, guest speakers, videos and in-class exercises. Materials and discussions will be designed to give you a basic understanding of the work that you may be required to perform in a public relations position. Class discussions will relate public relations concepts, strategies and tactics to current events, companies and organizations in the news, business issues, media topics, crisis situations, etc. In order to participate, students must maintain awareness about current events by reading newspapers, watching television newscasts, visiting Internet news sites, etc. The activity portion of the class will be devoted to writing, mini-presentations, quizzes and other hands-on activities. Bring the “Associated Press Stylebook” to class for writing exercises.
**Teaching Philosophy**

Journalism 374 is a demanding skills class and an advanced writing course that requires a significant time commitment. You will be expected to write well and understand the rules of good grammar, punctuation and style. My philosophy is to assign public relations tasks taken from professional situations, as if you were an entry-level member of my team. Assignments will be varied and numerous, often with a short deadline, because that’s what you’ll encounter as a public relations professional.

**Attendance & Punctuality**

Attendance is essential for success in this class. Students are responsible for all materials presented, assignments due, changes to the syllabus and announcements. There will be no make-ups for missed in-class assignments or quizzes. Students also are expected to arrive to class on time as a sign of courtesy and respect for your instructor and fellow students.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Students are expected to behave maturely, be polite in class, respect one another during class discussions and be courteous audiences during presentations. In addition, students are asked to refrain from distracting behavior such as walking in and out of class and chatting with classmates. Laptop and laboratory computers may not be used during lectures for note taking or any other activity; however, they are to be used for in-class assignments. Cell phones should be off or set on silent. Beverages and snacks are not permitted given the laboratory environment.

**BeachBoard**

A copy of the syllabus, handouts and other course materials will be posted on BeachBoard during the semester. Outlines for lectures may be posted. Grades also will be maintained on BeachBoard so that you can track your status in the class.

**Publishing Requirement**

The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication requires that students in upper-division courses place two articles in publications considered appropriate by the instructor. A story generated as a result of a news release or pitch letter is preferred (turn in a copy of the release or pitch letter and a tear sheet of the article). Articles in local daily and weekly newspapers are acceptable. Students can place articles in the student newspaper as well. One article from a campus publication such as the journalism alumni publication or PRSSA newsletter will be accepted. An early start is imperative – shoot for at least one article by mid-term. Articles must be published during the semester.

**Service-Learning Requirement**

Service learning is an important part of the public relations program at CSULB. Students in advanced public relations courses are required to fulfill a service-learning component that will provide hands-on experience, help them appreciate the meaning of service to the community and provide material for their portfolios. In Journalism 374, a press kit will be developed for a local nonprofit organization or business that is approved by the instructor. Begin to locate your nonprofit organization now.
Assignments
You will be expected to submit numerous written assignments, as well as a brief mini-presentation. Additionally, you are expected to have completed assigned reading, participate in class and complete assignments as assigned during class. Finally, there will be a total of four planned quizzes and tests throughout the semester – a proofreaders’ marks quiz, midterm, final exam and one comprehensive AP quiz. You must continue to take the proofreaders’ marks quiz until you score 100 percent; however, only your first score will be calculated into your grade. Unannounced quizzes may be given if students are not staying current on course reading.

The nature of and guidelines for assignments will be given to you in class, and in keeping with professional practices, you will receive many assignments verbally. It is important that you listen carefully, take notes and ask questions to ensure that you fully understand the assignments.

Written homework assignments are due at the beginning of the class and may not be submitted via e-mail; however, occasionally you may be instructed to submit assignments through BeachBoard. No late assignments will be accepted. If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, it should be left in the instructor's mailbox in the Journalism office before class begins or given to a classmate to submit. Whether completed in class or at home, assignments must be submitted in a professional and organized manner. All assignments must be typed on a computer unless otherwise specified. Copy must be clean and error free. Present your assignments in a form and manner you'd be proud to give to your future boss or client. No extra credit assignments will be given.

Mini-presentations must be given on the days/times assigned; no make-ups will be allowed. If you are scheduled to present, be prepared to start on time by arriving to class early and ensuring your presentation is working. It is expected that you will have practiced your presentation ahead of time and that you use the full allotted time; presentations not using the allotted time (either too short or too long) will result in a reduction in your grade.

Evaluation & Grading Criteria
Grades will be based on points earned from assignments, quizzes and exams covering lecture materials and reading; 600 points are available:

- Homework Assignments/Presentations/Published Articles 400 points
- In-Class Assignments/Participation 50 points
- Proofreading Quiz/AP Quiz/Midterm/Final 150 points

Since this class is an advanced writing and communications course, you will be expected to write well. Proper grammar, punctuation and spelling are expected on all assignments. If you don't know grammar and punctuation rules and/or continue to violate the rules of good writing, you will have difficulty with this course. Assignments will be evaluated on your ability to take direction, your adherence to the fundamentals and mechanics of writing, content, organization, creativity and relevancy to the selected topic.
Each assignment will be evaluated in terms of content and grammar/style, with each worth 50 percent. **One point is typically subtracted for each error.** The grading criteria are as follows:

**Content**
- follows directions
- attention-getting lead
- well-structured paragraphs, organized properly
- smooth transitions
- easy-to-read writing
- depth of thought
- adequate research
- proper development of content

**Grammar/Style**
- grammar (parallelism, agreement, active voice, etc.)
- punctuation (proper use of comma, colon, possessives, etc.)
- elimination of typos
- proper language usage
- conciseness of writing
- clarity of message
- proper word choice
- flair and style (interesting writing, holds reader's attention)
- accomplishes objective
- talks directly to target audience/public

Students may be given the opportunity to rewrite certain assignments. If rewrites are offered, they will be due the following class session. No late rewrites will be accepted. In most cases, students will receive the average of the two assignments as their grade.

**Though not required, it is strongly recommended that students meet with me after the eighth week of school to review your work.** Come to the meeting with your graded assignments, having reviewed corrections and indicated on paper the rule or concept that would correct the error. Be sure to bring your AP Stylebook to the meeting and a grammar book if you have one. If you are interested, please see me early in the semester to schedule a half-hour meeting.

To help students track their progress in the class, grades will be posted on BeachBoard. A curve may be used when determining final grades, but grade expectations are as follows:

**A Outstanding Work (540 – 600 points):** Superior writing that is well-organized and effective, with complete facts and correct grammar and style. Additionally, writing that is concise, easy to read, adheres to media style and follows proper format.

**B Good Work (480 – 539 points):** Writing that is well-organized with complete facts and only minor grammatical and stylistic corrections. This work also follows proper format for the particular assignment.

**C Average Work (420 – 479 points):** Writing meets minimum requirements of complete and correct facts but requires editing to correct organization, grammar and style. Some minor problems in format may need correction, and additional work may be needed to heighten the impact of the piece.

**D Below-Average Work (360 – 419 points):** Writing contains incomplete information, numerous style and grammatical errors, and is poorly organized.

**F Unacceptable Work (359 points and less):** Writing is poorly organized and contains style and grammatical errors, factual mistakes and misspelled proper nouns.

Incompletes are granted only for serious circumstances totally beyond a student’s control. Poor class performance isn’t an adequate reason for an incomplete. Students must have completed two-thirds of the work with a “C” average.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Reading / Assignment(s) Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Course Overview &amp; Syllabus Write Exercise—Bio</td>
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<td>AP Style &amp; Proofreading, Grammar, Style &amp; Punctuation</td>
<td>AP Book – Proofreader’s Marks</td>
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<td>Sept. 2</td>
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<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>Preparation for Writing / Research</td>
<td>Ch. 1 / Ch. 14</td>
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<td>E-mail Communication Public Relations</td>
<td>Ch. 2 / Pg. 57: #1-3 (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Writing / Persuasion</td>
<td>Editing Assignment (20 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Proofreaders’ Marks Quiz (25 pts)</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Finding and Making News</td>
<td>Ch. 3 / Pg. 85: #1-5, 7 (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
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<td><strong>AP Quiz on BeachBoard (25 pts)</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Working with Journalists / Bloggers</td>
<td>Ch. 4 / Pg. 115-116: #1, 5 (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Ch. 6 (154-162)</td>
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<td>Service Learning Press Kit Proposal (5 pts)</td>
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<td>PR News Prreso:</td>
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<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>News Releases</td>
<td>Ch. 5 / Pg. 140: #3, 4, 5 (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Pitch Email (20 pts)</td>
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<td>PR News Prreso:</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>Fact Sheets</td>
<td>Ch. 6 (142-147)</td>
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<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Release #1 (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>Media Advisories</td>
<td>Ch. 6 (146-153)</td>
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<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Midterm Review</td>
<td>Fact Sheet (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Biography (20 pts)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct. 14</td>
<td>Avoiding Legal Hassles</td>
<td>Ch. 11</td>
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<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td><strong>Midterm (50 pts)</strong></td>
<td>Service Learning Press Kit Proposal (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Feature Stories</td>
<td>Ch. 7 (165-182)</td>
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<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Media Advisory (20 pts)</td>
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<td>PR News Preso:</td>
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<td>OpEds/Letters to the Editor</td>
<td>Ch. 7 (183-188)</td>
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<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Feature Release (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Nov. 4</td>
<td>Photos &amp; Graphics</td>
<td>Ch. 8 Release #2 (20 pts)</td>
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<td>OpEd (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Writing for Radio, Television and Online</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Photo Captions (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Nov. 18</td>
<td>Distributing Media Materials</td>
<td>Ch. 10 &amp; 19 Release #3 (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>PSAs (20 pts)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>Writing for the Web, Social Media</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td>Backgrounders, Position Papers, Reports, Proposals,</td>
<td>Ch. 13, 14, 15</td>
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<td>Newsletters and Other Written Materials</td>
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<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Writing Lab</td>
<td>Social Media Content Calendar (20 pts)</td>
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<td>Work on Press Kits</td>
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<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Press Kit Presentations</td>
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<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>No Class – Student Study Day</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>Final Exam (50 pts) – 12:30-2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Published Articles (10 pts each)</td>
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*Reference BeachBoard for the most current class schedule and course documents.*
Addendum to Course Syllabus: Department of Journalism
Policies on Grading, Conduct of Classes, Drops, Absences and Cheating

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.

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 import 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 a serious or compelling reason beyond the student’s control for purposes of withdrawal.

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. Make-ups 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; (3) 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.

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 to 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 sources 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 the class with a grade of “F” and/or other sanctions, as the instructor deems appropriate.

Accommodation of Students With Disabilities in Journalism Courses

Students with disabilities who need assistant or accommodation to participate in or benefit from university programs, services, and/or activities should inform the instructor and then contact Disabled Student Services. Students needing support services or accommodations should contact the instructor of the course within the first week of class. In addition, students should establish their eligibility for assistance by contacting the Disabled Student Services Office (Brotman Hall 270) at 562-985-5401.

Students are to provide to the instructor verification of their disability from Disabled Student Services. Typical accommodations available from Disabled Student Services, working with the journalism instructor, includes
extended time for tests, test proctoring, private test rooms, note taking, Braille transcriptions, and referral for tutoring.

If the service offered is insufficient or inadequate, the student should confer with the instructor and the director of Disabled Student Services. If these efforts are unsuccessful, students have the option of directing their concerns to the Office of Equity and Diversity (University Student Union 301) at 562-985-8256. Responsibility for oversight and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act has been delegated to the campus director for disability support and accommodation.