

JOURNALISM 120
WRITING ACROSS THE MEDIA
SPRING 2016

9 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. Fridays in LA4 102

PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Todd Henneman
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Office hours: 1:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment

OVERVIEW

This hands-on course will introduce the fundamentals of reporting and will hone your writing skills. It will challenge you to improve weekly. And it will emphasize the fundamentals of clear writing.

Journalists learn best through practice. Be prepared to write during lab. Reporting skills need to be developed in tandem with writing skills, so later exercises involve gathering information outside of class.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To complete this course successfully, you will learn to:

1. Identify what makes something newsworthiness.
2. Demonstrate the basic skills of newsgathering and writing.
3. Organize information and write stories that appeal to your audience.
4. Use AP style.
5. Critically evaluate differences between print, broadcast and online news media.
6. Work well under deadline pressure and demonstrate professional writing attitudes.
7. Include multiple viewpoints in every story, whenever possible.
8. Recognize the rights and responsibilities of a reporter.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- ◆ Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism by Tim Harrower (third edition)
- ◆ The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (2013 edition or later)

RECOMMENDED NEWS RESOURCES

At least three times a week, you should refer to one of these mainstream news sources:

- ◇ Los Angeles Times, www.latimes.com (Limited free online access without a subscription)
- ◇ 89.3 KPCC, www.scpr.org (In particular, I recommend "All Things Considered")
- ◇ New York Times, www.nytimes.com (Limited free online access without a subscription)

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Todd Henneman has degrees from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and the University of California, Los Angeles. He began his career working for regional newspapers own by the Tribune Co. and eventually became a staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle. He also has written freelance pieces for clients ranging from the Los Angeles Times to Bark magazine. He has taught at the University of Southern California; Los Angeles City College; Pierce College; California State University, Northridge; and California State University, Long Beach. He continues to write for magazines and websites.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Reading and homework assignments must be completed before class. In-class assignments are due by the end of the class session, unless told otherwise. Homework assignments are due on the date given when assigned. Each assignment will be returned with comments or explanations. Accuracy is paramount. Your copy (writing) should be free of errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Never make up or fabricate information used in your stories. Errors in fact will result in a zero on the assignment. Single source stories are unacceptable. You will be expected to follow AP style.

Work will be graded on clarity, accuracy, fairness, AP style, grammar, punctuation organization and the ability to identify newsworthiness and to meet deadlines.

- “A” stories are accurate, clear and well-written and require only minor editing.
- “B” stories require more than minor editing or omit significant information.
- “C” stories need considerable rewriting or have many spelling and style errors.
- “D” stories have so many errors and problems that they should not have been submitted.
- “F” stories have failed to meet the criteria of the assignment or are filled with errors.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance and late assignments: Attendance is essential. Regularly attending class creates a better experience for all of us by making discussions more interesting and fun. You can miss one class with impunity. Missing more than three consecutive sessions will result in your final grade being lowered by one letter grade, unless the absence is for an extraordinary documented medical reason (for example, you're hospitalized). If I see you browsing online (including texting), I will count you as absent. If you miss a class when an assignment is due,

- Leave it in my mailbox, and ask for the time of submission to be noted on it.
- Or attach the assignment to an email and send it by the time that day's class begins.

Otherwise, your assignment will not be accepted except in exceptional circumstances that qualify under CSULB policies. Your absence still will hurt your participation score. You cannot make up quizzes or exams. You also remain responsible for knowing material presented in class and announcements you missed. I suggest that you exchange phone numbers with two classmates so you can contact them in case you miss a class session.

Assignment format: Place the following information in the upper left-hand corner of each page:

Your name
Name of assignment (Homework 5, for example)

Double space assignments, and use 12-point standard font. Indent the first line of each paragraph, using the Tab key. Type -30- or ### at the bottom of the last page. Not following this format will hurt your grade. You also will lose one point automatically if your name is not on your Word document.

Extra credit: The goal of this course is to prepare you to flourish as a journalist. In the real world, journalists succeed or fail based on their performance. Extra credit undermines this goal. Therefore, I do not offer any in this course.

Email: Check your CSULB email at least daily because it is our primary form of communication.

Class etiquette: Please turn off your phone and refrain from checking social media during class.

Diversity: You are encouraged to broaden your journalistic experiences by incorporating sources or subjects as appropriate from historically underrepresented populations. Examples include ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly; people with disabilities; and gay men, lesbians and transgender individuals.

Seat in class: An enrolled student may lose his/her seat in class by missing the first class meeting without notifying the instructor. A student who attends the first class but not subsequent ones may also be dropped.

Cheating and plagiarism: CSULB takes academic dishonesty seriously. I encourage you to review the policy, http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/academic_information/cheating_plagiarism.html.

Students with disabilities: It is the student's responsibility to inform me within the first two weeks of the semester of the need for a reasonable accommodation because of a disability. Disabled Student Services (5-5061 or <https://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/dss/>) provides resources.

LEARNING ASSESSMENT

AP STYLE LESSON (5%)

From a list, you will pick two topics that you think are important for you and your classmates to know. You then will explain the rule to the rest of the class. Details will be given when we reach this portion of the semester.

NEWS QUIZZES (10%)

Reading news helps you improve your own writing and is a key practice of journalists. We will have five news quizzes across the semester. Questions will come from events in the news within 36 hours of class.

PARTICIPATION (10%)

Points are awarded for the number of sessions attended over the semester and (separately) for contributing to discussions. Your regular involvement affects your grade. An "A" reflects both near-perfect attendance and regularly participating in discussions, making thoughtful comments that show you have read the material. Merely being present — but not participating in discussions — will not earn an "A" for the participation portion.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (34%)

In-class labs will simulate the experience of a professional newsroom. The first lab will not count toward your grade. All other labs do count. They will be complemented by homework assignments.

EXAMS (41%)

The course has one AP quiz, a midterm and a final. Exams must be taken on the scheduled date.

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Advising: If you are a journalism major or minor, the department recommends that you see one of our advisers at least once a year. We have two experienced advisers, Professor Jennifer Fleming (Jennifer.Fleming@csulb.edu) and Professor Danny Paskin (Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu), to assist you with your course selection, answer questions about requirements, help you stay focused on your chosen path to graduation, and offer other relevant advice. Their information and advising hours are posted around the department and available in the department office (LA4-106).

Internships: The department recommends that you pursue internships, service-learning experiences, and extra-curricular activities to enhance your career preparedness and marketability when you graduate. Employers will expect to see examples of your work; they prefer applicants with experience. Therefore, you will find all internships and job opportunities that come to the department posted on the department's BeachBoard site. A binder with hard copies of all internships is also kept in the department office for your review. In addition, internship postings are available online through the CSULB Career Development Center. Students pursuing opportunities through our BeachBoard or CDC sites should be aware that the department and CDC do not screen these opportunities for JOUR 498 credit. If you are seeking JOUR 498 credit, you must attend one of the mandatory orientations conducted the semester prior to your enrollment in JOUR 498. Students enrolled in a section of JOUR 498 will also receive advance notice of the orientations from their instructor.

Student Media: The department is home to the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* and closely tied to *KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*. Getting involved in student media will help you hone your skills and give you real-life experiences. Stop by the *Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine* offices in LA4-201 and talk to the staff. Introduce yourself to the faculty advisers – Professor Barbara Kingsley-Wilson (*Daily 49er*, Barbara.Kingsley-Wilson@csulb.edu), Professor Gary Metzker (*Daily 49er* and *Dig Magazine*, Gary.Metzker@csulb.edu), Robin Jones (*Dig Magazine*, Robin.Jones@csulb.edu) and Professor John Shrader (*KBeach Radio* and *College Beat TV*, John.Shrader@csulb.edu) – who can answer any questions you may have.

Bateman Case Study Competition: Consider joining the *Bateman Case Study Competition Team*. The *Bateman Competition* (http://prssa.prsa.org/scholarships_competitions/bateman/) is a prestigious inter-collegiate contest, often called the Super Bowl of collegiate public relations competitions. It is one of the most intense and rewarding experiences for our students. Participants on the *Bateman Team* receive JOUR 485 credit. See Professor Joni Ramirez (Joni.Ramirez@csulb.edu), our *Bateman* coach, for more information.

Student Organizations: The department is home to three active student organizations – the *National Association of Hispanic Journalists*, *Public Relations Student Society of America*, and *Society of Professional Journalists*. Each group has its own leaders and sponsors a variety of activities, including esteemed professionals as guest speakers. These three groups also work closely with the department to co-sponsor special events, such as Journalism and Public Relations Day. Get involved and have a blast with your classmates! Contact the respective faculty advisers for more information: Professor Danny Paskin (Danny.Paskin@csulb.edu) for NAHJ, Professor Holly Ferris (Holly@Ferriscomm.com) for PRSSA, and Professor Chris Karadjov (Chris.Karadjov@csulb.edu) for SPJ.

Social Media: Be sure to get connected to the department's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CSULBJournalism>) and website (<http://www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/journalism/>) for photos and information about department happenings.

Office Hours: Each faculty member holds office hours to help you perform well in your classes, answer any of your questions, and offer advice. Take advantage of office hours and get to know your faculty.

Accreditation: The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at California State University, Long Beach is accredited by the *Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications* (ACEJMC, <https://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/>). Accreditation by ACEJMC is an assurance of quality in professional education in journalism and mass communication. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, good facilities, and a competent faculty.

ACEJMC lists 12 professional values and competencies that must be part of the education of all journalism, public relations, and mass communication students. Each one of your required courses in the journalism major addresses at least one of the 12 professional competencies. Therefore, graduates who majored in journalism and public relations should be able to do the following:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press in the United States, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(subject to change)

Week 1

Jan. 20

Course overview: We'll do introductions, review syllabus, discuss expectations.

Nature of news: We'll explore these questions: What is news? What's "soft news"?

Week 2

Jan. 29

In-class exercise: news value (ungraded; for discussion purposes)

News writing basics: We'll discuss the role of facts and opinions in journalism and what a *lead* is. We also will talk about the details of the AP Style Lesson assignment.

Practice Lab (ungraded): You'll be given two short exercises to practice writing leads.

Reading: Chapter 2 and pages 35 through 43 and 56 through 59 in Chapter 3

Week 3

Feb. 5

First news quiz

Moving past the point: We'll explore the Inverted Pyramid.

Reading: Complete the exercises on page 64 of Chapter 3; the answers are on page 307.

First AP Style Lesson

Lab 1: We'll work on identifying a focus for a story and applying the Inverted Pyramid.

Week 4

Feb. 12

Second AP Style Lesson

Nut graphs and beyond: We'll look at other types of leads and look at the "nut graph."

Lab 2: We'll use delayed leads and nut graphs in our writing

Reading: Pages 44 through 49 (Harrower) and "Bloomberg News reporter had 18 ledes ready for Supreme Court rulings" (posted online)

Week 5

Feb. 19

Nut graphs and beyond: We'll look at more examples of delayed leads and practice more.

Third AP Style Lesson

Lab 3: We'll transform delayed lead stories into inverted pyramid stories and vice versa.

Week 6

Feb. 26

Second news quiz

Story organization and story structure

We'll talk about breaking news, determining what information you need and organizing it.

Fourth AP Style Lesson

Lab 4: You'll write a story using the "Kabob" structure.

Homework 1 Due: Interview at least two students who are demographically different than you. Ask them about their concerns and the kinds of stories they think the news media isn't overlooking. Nudge them to talk about specific ideas for stories, not vague terms like "happy stories" or "sports stories." Bring two ideas to class. Each story idea should be described in two to four sentences.

Reading: Pages 50 through 55 and 58 through 61 (Harrower)

Week 7

March 4

AP Style Quiz

Let's talk: We'll learn how to interview with confidence.

Fifth AP Style Lesson

Lab 5: We'll practice interviewing and then write a short story based on the interview.

Reading: Pages 76 to 89 in Chapter 4 and pages 68 through 71 in Chapter 4 (Harrower)

Midterm study guide distributed

Week 8

March 11

Finish Lab 5

Midterm

Week 9March 18 **Third news quiz**

Covering speeches, news conferences and meetings: We'll talk about what city governments do, forms of local government and the public interest as well as strategies for covering speeches.

Reading: Pages 106–114 in Chapter 5 and pages 248–249 (Harrower)

Lab 6: We'll cover a mock school board meeting.

Week 9March 25 **Sixth AP Style Lesson**

Tragedies: We'll talk about covering crime and tragedies accurately and tastefully.

Lab 7: Writing about an accident, disaster, fire or crime.

Homework 2A Due: Bring one-paragraph proposal of a story you'd like to write.

Reading: Pages 98–105 and any two stories on pages 230–247 (Harrower) and pages 102 through 107 of Chapter 5 and pages 236, 242 and 243 (Harrower)

Week 10 Spring break**Week 11**

April 8

Fourth news quiz

In-class brainstorming: story ideas for the next homework assignment

Obituaries and profiles

Reading: Pages 96–97, pages 124 and 125 and pages 224 and 225

Seventh AP Style Lesson

Lab 8: Writing obituaries and profiles

Week 12

April 13

Eighth AP Style Lesson**Feature stories**

Lab 9: Descriptive writing

Reading: Chapter 6 and any two stories that appear on pages 250 through 271 {

Reminder: Journalism and Public Relations Day 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday, April 18**Week 13**

April 22

Ninth AP Style Lesson

Online: Trends and tips

Reading: Chapter 8 (Harrower)

Lab 10: Social me and media

Hint: Be sure to look at the weekend's top stories before coming to class.

Week 14

April 29

Fifth news quiz

Homework 2B Due: Turn in your completed story.

Media law and ethics

Reading: Chapter 7 and page 200-201 in Chapter 10 (Harrower)

Reminder: Journalism and Public Relations Day 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Final study guide distributed

Week 15

May 6

Tenth AP Style Lesson**Screening related to law and ethics****Review** (last class)**Week 16**

May 13

Final exam 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.