

California State University, Long Beach

**JOUR 311 -
REPORTING AND INFORMATION GATHERING
SPRING 2016**

Monday/Wednesday
2 p.m. - 3:50 a.m.
LA4-207

Class taught by:

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Office: LA4-101B

Face-to-face office hours: Monday/Wednesday 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. or by appointment;

Online (virtual) office hours as needed

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Phone: (562) 985-2104 (e-mail is much preferred)

In emergencies, text me or call me @ my cell (562) 291-8013

Catalog Description

This class teaches students how to gather, process, and transform information into meaningful messages. Students learn how to search for answers, critically analyze results, interpret what they find, and communicate their conclusions to an audience in a meaningful form. They are introduced to the analytical process of organizing a search strategy and the hands-on search itself, which involves seeking sources in libraries, public records, books, magazines, journals, corporate reports, computer databases, and personal interviews. The course includes instruction on media writing and editing skills.

Prerequisites

This is a reporting class – which means that you must be already able to write news stories at a satisfactory level, have a good sense of what is news, and know the basic rules of AP style, grammar and organization. Your writing will be part of the grade on all assignments, yet I will not be able to spend too much time on remedial work. Students who enroll in this class must have taken JOUR120 or an equivalent news writing class satisfactorily. **No exceptions will be allowed!**

Course Overview

This advanced skills course in the CSULB journalism program will give you the opportunity to:

- Improve your news writing/presentation, including using multimedia tools;
- Exercise your critical thinking and evaluation skills;
- Solidify your knowledge of grammar and AP style;
- Develop your news sense and ability to evaluate sources for credibility;
- Learn how to gather information for interviews and news stories;
- Learn how to conduct effective interviews;
- Learn how to manage the logistics of reporting;
- Learn other essential techniques of news reporting, such as incorporating video and audio;
- Develop a better sense of your community and its diversity;
- Build and improve your numerical interpretation skills.

Goals

By the end of the semester, you should be able to find appropriate and credible sources and use them to report and write accurate, clear, newsworthy stories. To reach these goals you will:

- Conduct background research to understand issues, locate sources and prepare for interviews;
- Interview and evaluate sources;
- Evaluate basic information coming from your research and various databases;
- Present stories incorporating the information you have gathered.

Diversity Objectives

During this class, you will enhance your understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in your local community. Through your reporting and other numerous course-related activities you will appreciate better the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society. You will be treating a variety of people with respect and dignity, while accomplishing information-gathering tasks.

As a graded assignment, students must profile someone whose race, ethnicity, language, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or socio-economic circumstances are markedly different from the student reporter's cultural identity and experiences. This assignment requires in-person reporting and research. The profile must include comments from persons other than the subject.

Class Participation

Class participation is crucial, not only to your grade, but to your success as a reporter. The livelier the in-class “newsroom” is and the more ideas and problems we try to solve, the more interesting the class will be. Students who take the initiative will thrive here. So ask questions if something does not make sense. Students who expect only to sit passively and avoid participation probably will not like this class; such students may be well advised to reconsider having media careers, for that matter. Any tendencies toward shyness will be exorcised – in a supportive and collegial environment, though.

Accuracy, Integrity & Fairness

As in any other journalism course or in a media organization, you are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of accuracy, integrity and fairness in your information gathering and presentation. All sources are to be attributed, unless they specifically request anonymity when quoted in the story. Even so, the instructor must know the source’s real name and contact information. If you cannot abide by this rule, you should not use the source. Good journalistic practice also requires that, when possible, reporters include in their stories people who traditionally have been overlooked. These include ethnic, racial and religious minorities, the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other under-reported groups.

***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.*

I will fail you for this class outright, if I discover that you have plagiarized others’ work or used any dishonest methods to complete an assignment or take an exam. I will not accept lack of knowledge as to what constitutes plagiarism as an excuse.

Required Readings/Materials

- Rich, Carol (2015). **Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method, 8th Edition.** (You should have this from JOUR120 or you are advised to rent it from any outlet);
- **AP Stylebook 2015** (Buy the spiral-bound edition or sign up for the online version at <https://www.apstylebook.com> – or do both, ideally); Do not use earlier editions! You must sign up for the AP Style test bank online, too!
- Major news sources (print, broadcast and online) as needed (you will be following the news); Additional handouts/materials as assigned;
- A smartphone with video/audio recording capabilities; Additional equipment is encouraged but not required.

Assignments & Tests

Your major assignments/tests are outlined below. All assignments require you to present some written product – a story, paper/report, blog. Assignments 1-5 will be related to various aspects of information gathering. In addition, there will be a ‘beat story’ project incorporating most skills you have gained in the class, which substitutes for the final exam. There also will be a mid-term exam to test your ability to gather information and write on a deadline. You will receive a diagnostic writing assignment (a basic news story) early in the class, results of which will be discussed with each student individually. The ‘blog assignment’ will ask you to follow a news topic in your community. I will explain all these in detail when time comes.

Use Microsoft Word for all assignments, or at least save your files in a **Word-compatible format (no .odt, .txt, .pdf, or the likes, sorry)**. Single-space your copy. Put the class number, my name, your name, date and story slug in caps in the top left-hand corner of the first page. For instance, in the Michael Jordan story (the diagnostic writing assignment), it should look like this:

JOUR311 Karadjov
YOUR NAME
Jan. 21, 2016
JORDAN RETIRES

Number your pages. You may or may not use ADD to indicate continuing copy, but always end your stories with -30-. You need to know how to insert accents, tildes and other symbols in Word, or include a note at the bottom of your story describing where the marks belong.

All completed assignments (including video uploads) will be submitted via BeachBoard with the exception of the supplementary materials to the Library Assignment (Basic Assignment #2). Please include ‘311’ in the subject line of all e-mails to me (chris.karadjov@csulb.edu) regarding this class – this is very important!

You will need reliable high-speed Internet access outside of the classroom, too. If you do not have that at home, please plan accordingly to spend time at the library or in a lab.

Attendance & Class Etiquette

Just as it’s incredibly bad form not to show up for work without calling your boss, it is vitally important that you call or e-mail me if you will be forced to miss a class by an emergency. If you make more than two unexcused absences, however, I will deduct points, effectively lowering your grade. In addition, excessive absences will disqualify you from receiving extra credit. Valid reasons to miss a class are listed in the attached addendum that specifies Journalism Department’s policies. It is important for you to remember, however, that the onus is on you – I will not be chasing students and asking them why they were absent. Please contact me and talk to me about any issues you may have – and do it IN ADVANCE! The only proof that your absence is excused is my written consent (through an e-mail or text message). If you miss a class and I excused you, you are still responsible for getting the class notes from other students in the class. I will offer make-ups only to those whose absences I have agreed to excuse.

Student Assistant

My student assistant, Juliana Toloza-Gomez (julianatoloza123@hotmail.com), will be helping me throughout classes and will keep track of certain activities, assignments, attendance and anything else I need done in order to have a smoothly running class. I will be asking you to copy her on some work you will be completing or check

with her for finished assignments; **she will not be assessing or grading you in any way, only keeping tabs on completion, timeliness, attendance, etc.** If I am not present in the classroom or at a class-related event, she will be there to take roll, distribute materials, start video, proctor activities, give tasks at my behest or do anything else that must be completed for an efficient use of instructional time. Please be courteous and professional to her as much as you will be to me. I am the ultimate authority with respect to any matters concerning this class, but my assistant has the role of making the instruction run effectively, efficiently and without undue distractions.

Cell Phone/Laptop/Tablet Policy

1. Please silence your cell phones during the class period, and keep them stashed away. Texting or using your smartphone in any manner during class is grounds for my asking you to leave, with an absence marked against your record. I will not tolerate any disruptive behavior of this nature in my classroom, period. It is disrespectful to your peers and to me. If you have to make or accept an urgent call (rarely needed!), you are free to leave the classroom for a while, just as you are at liberty to go visit the bathroom.

2. I will only approve the use of computer stations or personal laptops/tablets during classes if you have been specifically directed to do so. **You are effectively required to take notes by hand.** If needed, I will provide you with a legal pad for writing. This has been proven to be a more effective approach for material retention and also eliminates possible distractions that are otherwise present in online environments. Not to mention that it is highly disruptive to the instructor when students are not paying attention, browsing or otherwise zoning out during lecture. I have prepared to be in front of the class and want your full attention for lectures, discussions, exercises, guest speakers or multimedia viewing.

I will enforce this policy **strictly across my classroom** for pedagogical and etiquette reasons. There will be no exceptions, sorry.

Grading Rules & Structure

1-5. Basic Assignments (1. Ad-hoc assignment; 2. Library; 3. Interviews; 5. Profile; 5. FOIA/Statistics) @ 100 points each	500 points
6. AP Style Tests	Pass/Fail
7. News Blog & News Presentation	200 points
8. Midterm (fact-finding task)	100 points
9. Final Beat Story (including video interview, notes)	200 points
10. Portfolio	Pass/Fail
TOTAL	1,000 POINTS

The AP Style Tests will be completed by you online and you must show me proof of completion; you will incur a 100-point deduction from the final grade if you have not completed the tests by the deadline. You can retake these tests several times until you reach a 100-percent success rate.

Portfolio Requirement: You are required to start an online portofolio during this class. I will give you the minimum requirements and discuss them with you in individual meetings. Failure to start a portfolio during JOUR311 will result in a 100-point grade deduction at the end of this class!

Note on absences: After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will bring a 50-point deduction from your total. That is, you can only make two unexcused absences, no questions asked, before starting to lose points. Please refer to the addendum for definition of an 'excused' absence. If extra credit is offered, you will not

receive that if you have more than two unexcused absences as well.

Accumulation of 900 to 1,000 points at the end will mean an A for this class, 800 to 899 will get you a B, 700 to 799 - C, 600 to 699 means a D, and anything below 600 points is an F. All majors in the journalism department need a grade of C or better for this class. You may treat points on individual assignments that are between 90 and 100 as As, between 80 and 89 as Bs, and so on, but remember that all that counts in the end is the final tally.

Assignments will be graded on accuracy, clarity, organization, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, AP style, grammar, punctuation, spelling and the ability to meet deadlines. **Any story with a serious factual error merits an F.**

Writing is an iterative process. Expect to write more than one draft. Read the story aloud to see if it makes sense to the ear. Print out the story and review it on paper for typos. The spelling and grammar check in Microsoft Word misses many errors. **I will not allow rewrites on graded assignments, but I will give you plenty of feedback so you can improve assignment to assignment.** You will also have enough practice work during this class.

Deadlines matter. **All assignments have a cut-off time of 11:59 p.m. on the day they are due for uploading to BeachBoard.** Please plan accordingly - technical difficulties will not be my concern. An assignment turned in the day after it was due will be marked down 10 per cent (or 10 pts. on a 100-point assignment); on the second day it will be marked down 20 percent. An assignment that is more than two days overdue will receive zero points. Still, this is much better than not turning in the assignment at all - at least you will preserve the right to do the extra-credit work.

Also, don't forget that grades are not an end in and of themselves. They are only the best means instructors can come up with to help you learn. Comments from me and comments from your classmates are a reflection of your work, not you as a person. Now would be a good time to get used to "feedback." Editors dissect reporters' stories in meetings. Reporters must listen to readers scream at them on the phone when they don't like a story. Sometimes they see alternative papers make fun of them in print, not to mention the numerous comments on blogs and online discussion forums. While there will be no such theatrics here, expect lots of constructive criticism and take it in stride. I will do my best to give you ample feedback.

Don't be too surprised to see relatively lower grades in the beginning. Remember that improvement matters a lot. Journalism - or any media-related occupation - is more of a long slog than a sprint. Those who work hard and stick with it will see the best grades and the most success on the job.

Conclusion

During this class you will be exposed to a variety of viewpoints, some of which most certainly will counter your own position on issues. Even so, you are compelled to give them a fair hearing and adjudicate based on facts, not emotions. Learn to look for answers based on analysis of facts to the best of your ability and don't allow your emotions to take over, one way or another. Remember that while skepticism is a virtue, cynicism is a malaise. Be patient and courteous with your peers. Do not distract or interrupt anyone, and do not allow disruptions into the classroom, such as not-class-related use of computers, eating, talking. Make full use of your time - after all, you are paying for your own education.

Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, problems or concerns. You will be surprised to find out how many brewing crises can be solved first by timely communication with your professor.

If you are struggling in any way - ask for help. That's why I am here!

Addendum 1: 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), 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.

Addendum 2: 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. *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.

Addendum 3: Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need assistance 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.