

**JOURNALISM 110— Fall 2013**  
**Writing, Reporting and Ethics I**

Professor: Dr. Stephanie Bluestein  
California State University, Northridge  
Department of Journalism  
Office: Manzanita Hall 333  
Office hours: Mondays from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and Tuesdays from 5 to 6:30 p.m.  
Also available by appointment in person or via Skype or FaceTime  
Phone: (818) 677-3407  
Journalism Office (for messages): (818) 677-3135 (Manzanita Hall 210)  
E-mail: Stephanie.Bluestein@csun.edu

Class meets Mondays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in MZ 360 beginning Aug. 26, 2013

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Prerequisite: Grade of “C” or better in ENGL 115 or its equivalent; typing proficiency. Basic news gathering and writing. Includes interviewing, speech/meeting coverage, preparing news copy, and traditional- and electronic-information gathering as applied to news decision making. Introduces ethics as part of developing news judgment and learning the values practiced by professional journalists. 6 hours of classroom and lab activity.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS/TEXTS:**

- iPad 32 GB with the following applications: Pages, Nearpod, Prezi, Adobe Reader, Box and Goodreader. Your device may be an iPad Mini, iPad 2 (though not recommended) or iPad with Retina Display, or any subsequent iPad model. Please bring your iPad on the first day of class.
- Required app to be purchased: Goodreader (\$4.99); Required free apps are listed in weekly schedule. Additional free apps may be required during the semester, per your professor.  
✓ Optional apps to be purchased: Photon (\$4.99), AudioNote (\$4.99)
- *Associated Press Stylebook (2011, 2012 or 2013 version) or the AP Stylebook app*
- "Why Americans Hate the Media and How it Matters" by Jonathan M. Ladd © 2011  
ISBN: 9781400840359

Because this is an iPad class, we won't be using a traditional textbook (either printed or digital)

**RECOMMENDED READING, LISTENING AND VIEWING:**

1. Los Angeles Times (Limited free online access without a subscription; individual articles available for free through the Oviatt Library database)
2. New York Times (Limited free online access without a subscription; individual articles available for free through the Oviatt Library database)
3. KPCC-FM, 89.3 (<http://www.scpr.org/>)
4. "On The Media," 4 to 5 p.m. Sundays, KPCC-FM 89.3, and [www.onthemedial.org](http://www.onthemedial.org)
5. ProPublica—View daily at <http://www.propublica.org>

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

This is a dynamic course in which you will learn the principles of news writing and reporting using mobile technology. Personal ownership of an 32GB iPad (running iOS 6) is mandatory and it must be brought to every class session, fully charged and ready to go beginning on our Sept. 9 class session. Students are not allowed to share iPads during class or for class work. You may choose to

have a 16GB iPad but it will likely require you to transfer data more frequently from your iPad because you will have less storage space. No other type of tablet is acceptable due to the fact that we need to be using the same apps as a class. The CSUN Bookstore has iPads available for rental.

The iPad will be fully integrated into our coursework. Certain apps will be used for teaching, some for collaboration and others for news gathering and editing.

In this course, you will complete writing/news gathering assignments during class, reporting and writing original stories and completing other assignments that are due each week or by a particular deadline. The professor will also lecture each week on various topics related to journalism. Students will quickly learn that procrastinating will make this course more difficult. Students who complete the readings, listen and take notes during the lectures should do well in this course. Students will find that their newsgathering and writing skills will quickly improve.

### **News and feature story assignments:**

You will write four full-length stories out of class: a one-source profile, coverage of a campus speech, an Associated Students meeting or its equivalent and an issues-based interview story. A grading rubric will be provided for each of the full-length stories. Stories containing a GFE (gross factual error) will automatically be marked down to a “C,” and then additional errors will be deducted. Double-check the spelling of all names, facts and figures to avoid a GFE.

You will tweet about your original stories so if you don’t already have a “news only” Twitter account, go to Twitter.com to create an account that you will use exclusively for reporting purposes.

It is a conflict of interest to write about your friends, family members, neighbors or co-workers, so you will need to do some research in order to generate story ideas. Depending on the content and the quality, you are encouraged to submit your stories for possible publication in the print and/or online version of the Daily Sundial campus newspaper. The decision to print, or not print, your story is made by the student editors of the newspaper, not by your professor.

### **In-class writing assignments and homework:**

Each week, you will do in-class writing, so attendance is critical. In-class writing/mobile journalism assignments cannot be made up. Assignments are due at the end of the class session. A limited amount of traditional homework will be given so that you can focus on reporting and writing your four original news/feature stories, in addition to completing the weekly quizzes.

### **In-class mobile journalism/iPad assignments:**

Each week, you will use your iPad in class for mobile journalism assignments on campus and other assignments in the classroom. Students who forget their iPad or run out of battery will miss out on completing in-class assignment(s) for that class session.

### **“News Notes”:**

It is vital for everyone who lives in a democratic society—whether a journalist or not—to be aware of current events and the major players involved. Each week, a designated pair of students will make a Storify presentation of the top news stories that appeared in the media during the previous week, including photographs and a broadcast segment. The two students will then oversee a mock “budget meeting” in which classmates will brainstorm ideas for follow-up stories related to the major current events. You will be graded on your choice of stories and your ability to engage your classmates in discussion.

### **Podcast:**

You will produce a news podcast using a short audio interview that you and your classmates will conduct as a group during class. After your professor arranges for a newsmaker to visit our

class, we will brainstorm questions and take turns interviewing the source. You will be provided a copy of the entire audio interview that you will edit together with your own segues.

### **Moodle student discussions on media ethics:**

Four times during the semester, your professor will post discussion questions on Moodle pertaining to media ethics. Each student will post his/her response and will comment on at least two classmates' responses.

### **"Why Americans Hate the Media and How it Matters" book project:**

"Why Americans Hate the Media and How it Matters" by Jonathan M. Ladd, copyright 2011, has been chosen by the journalism faculty as the common reading book for CSUN journalism courses. A class presentation of the book will take place Dec. 9, our last regular class session. Students will be paired up and each group will present a portion of the book, as designated by your professor.

### **Quizzes:**

**AP Style quizzes:** Five AP Style quizzes will be given in class during the semester. There are no quiz make-ups, but the lowest score of the five scores will be dropped.

### **Interview a Professional Journalist:**

One of the best ways to learn about a profession is to talk to someone who's currently working in it. For this assignment, you'll conduct a minimum 15-minute interview a professional journalist or public relations practitioner, preferably at their workplace. A list of suggested questions will be provided. On Dec. 2, students will present a brief summary of their interview, share two quotes and one photo with the class.

## **GRADING**

Course grades will be assigned according to college structure, using the A-F scale. Assignments are graded according to a rubric, which will be given for the particular assignment. Late papers will be accepted for up to one week but will lose a full letter grade. All work for this course must have been written/produced during the Fall 2013 semester. No credit will be given for work produced before Aug. 26, 2013. The course grading structure is as follows, but may vary slightly during the course of the semester:

<b>Original news/feature stories</b>	(30%)
<b>In-class writing/mobile journalism</b>	(20%)
<b>News Notes</b>	(5%)
<b>Podcast</b>	(5%)
<b>Ethics discussions</b>	(10%)
<b>Ladd book project</b>	(10%)
<b>Journalist Interview</b>	(5%)
<b>AP Style quizzes</b>	(5%)
<b>Final exam</b>	(10%)

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The University uses a combination of the following grading options: A-F Letter-grading: 100-94%=A, 93-90%=A-, 89-87%=B+, 86-83%=B, 82-80%=B-, 79-77%=C+, 76-74%=C, 73-70%=C-, 69-67%=D+, 66-64%=D, 63-60%=D-, 59% and below=F. Grades A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- indicate passing grades; F indicates failure.

Please note that in order to be eligible to enroll in other CSUN journalism courses, you must pass Journ 110 with a C or better. A grade of C- is insufficient to enroll in subsequent journalism classes.

## **PLAGIARISM**

The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University for possible further disciplinary action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 647-648 of the 2012-2014 CSUN catalog.

Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

From the CSUN Catalog: “Disciplinary records of any action of academic dishonesty are retained in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. These records may be available to prospective employers and other educational institutions, in accordance with federal and state regulations. In short, a student committing any act of academic dishonesty will run a serious risk of harming his or her future educational or employment opportunities.”

**Plagiarism is not tolerated in professional journalism and it won't be tolerated in this class. Any amount of content that is plagiarized or fabricated will result in referral to the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. All students will receive information on how to avoid plagiarism and how to properly rewrite a passage, and will be required to sign an anti-plagiarism pledge.**

## **CLASS POLICIES**

**Assignments/Quizzes:** Assignments and quizzes cannot be made up. Please give yourself enough time to allow for computer malfunctions or other unforeseen technical problems. Start contacting your sources ASAP. It will probably take longer to reach them than you expect. Out-of-class assignment due dates/times will be provided by your professor. In-class assignments are due by the end of the class session.

**Attendance:** Being here, on time, is vital to your success in this class.

From the CSUN Catalog: “Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who are absent from the first two meetings of a class that meets more than once a week, or from the first meeting of a class that meets once a week, lose the right to remain on the class roll and must formally withdraw from the class, following University procedures and deadlines. Failure to formally withdraw from a class will result in the instructor assigning to the student a grade of “WU” (Unauthorized Withdrawal) which, in computing a student’s grade point average, counts as a grade of “F.”

**Class etiquette:** Please turn off your phone upon entering the classroom and refrain from checking your email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. accounts during class. It is disruptive, annoying and disrespectful to your classmates and professor. We have an appointment every Monday morning and ringing phones, texting and using social media detracts from our valuable time together. Anyone doing any of these behaviors during class will receive a warning. On second offense, the student will be excused from class for the day and will not be allowed to make up any quizzes or assignments that day.

**Diversity:** Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the professor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and

religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

**E-mail:** Each student is required to check his/her CSUN e-mail on a daily basis.

**Respecting your classmates:** You are expected to treat your classmates with respect, both in class and in our online forums. Opposing viewpoints are welcomed during class discussions but snide comments and inappropriate language will not be tolerated.

**Students with disabilities:** Students who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Resources and Educational Services, which is located in Bayramian Hall, Room 110. Contact: (818) 677-2684

**Withdrawing from class:** It is *your* decision and responsibility to withdraw (drop) from class. If you are falling behind, please contact your professor so that we can discuss your progress.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Department of Journalism strives to prepare its students to become well-educated, principled citizens who are capable of initiating careers as skilled journalists, public relations practitioners and other related communication professionals. The Department will help students to achieve the following objectives by the completion of their degree:

1. Attain competency in writing basics such as grammar and punctuation, word usage and spelling, sentence and story structure and journalistic style;
2. Attain competency in the gathering and critical analysis of information using such techniques as interviewing, observation and researching primary and secondary sources.
3. Acquire expertise in thinking critically and creatively, while exercising news judgment, the organization and presentation of information in multiple journalistic forms (i.e., print, visual and electronic, and public relations).
4. Develop an ethical basis for making journalistic and public relations decisions;
5. Develop flexibility in working in evolving mass communication media and environments using a variety of technologies and techniques;
6. Understand the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts within which journalists and public relations practitioners work.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES for Journ 110

To ensure that our majors can perform in J210, the J110 students should complete at least four out-of-class reporting and writing assignments, including a one-source profile or obituary, an issues-based interview, coverage of a campus speech and an Associated Students meeting or its equivalent.

To successfully complete this course, students will be able to:

- begin to master the skills of good journalists: Be smart, quick, courteous, curious, pleasant, honest and courageous;
- start to foster curiosity and observation skills;
- develop deadline writing and information-gathering techniques;
- master the concept of writing leads;
- explore how to organize information in a reader-friendly format and to write stories for a mass audience;
- learn the essential elements of how to cover a speech, conduct a news interview and cover a public agency meeting;

- begin to develop discipline in writing/reporting with accuracy, clarity, style, objectivity and sensitivity;
- be introduced to critical thinking skills with an emphasis on reading and understanding the news;
- explore the importance of a free press as well as the various ethics codes and canons that guide the profession;
- pay attention to current events.

### Weekly Timeline: Writing, Reporting and Ethics I (Jour 110)

#### Week 1—8/26

Discussion about changing concepts of news, accuracy, plagiarism, profiles and obituaries; introduction to AP Style  
Review of course requirements/syllabus/iPad

#### Week 2—9/2 No class—Labor Day

*Profile story pitch due 10 p.m. Thursday, 9/5*

#### Week 3—9/9

Apps needed: Brainscape, Prezi, YouTube and Socrative

iPad assignment: AP Style flashcards

Discussion on leads and nut graphs, active and passive voice, story organization

AP Style Quiz #1, to be given in class

*AP Style flashcards using Brainscape app due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 9/12*

Ethics Discussion #1 due 8 p.m. Friday, 9/13

#### Week 4—9/16

Apps needed: WavePad, AudioNote Lite and Storify

iPad assignment: audio capture

Discussion on podcasting

“News Notes” presentations start

*Profile story (lead to nut graph only) due 10 p.m. Thursday, 9/19*

#### Week 5—9/23

App needed: Flipboard

iPad assignment: creating RSS feed

Discussion on sources and online research, media ethics and law

In-class audio interview of source

AP Style Quiz #2, to be given in class

*Speech story pitch due 10 p.m. Thursday, 9/26 (Lead to nut graph due 10/10)*

*Meeting story pitch due 10 p.m. Thursday, 9/26 (Lead to nut graph due 10/17)*

#### Week 6—9/30

App needed: Twitter

iPad assignment: tweeting speeches

Discussion on Speeches; in-class writing of speech story

*Profile story (full story) due 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/3*

Ethics Discussion #2 due 8 p.m. Friday, 10/4

Week 7—10/7

Apps needed: Snapseed and Instagram

iPad assignment: street photography; posting/tagging online photos

Discussion on news conferences and meetings, getting to know the agenda, writing an “advance” story

AP Style Quiz #3, to be given in class

*Speech story (lead to nut graph only) due by 10 p.m. 10/10*

*Issues-based interview story pitch due by 10 p.m. 10/10*

Week 8—10/14

App needed: Twitter

iPad assignment: Twitter scavenger hunt

Discussion on story organization, story forms and storytelling and feature techniques

*Meeting story (lead to nut graph only) due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/17*

*2<sup>nd</sup> write thru of full profile story due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/17*

Week 9—10/21

App needed: Police Scanner+

iPad assignment: monitoring police/fire scanners

Discussion on covering cops and courts

In-class writing: police leads

AP Style Quiz #4, to be given in class

*1<sup>st</sup> draft of full speech story due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/24*

*Issues-based interview story (lead to nut graph) due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/24*

Ethics Discussion #3 due 8 p.m. Friday, 10/25

Week 10—10/28

(No News Notes this week)

Field Trip to LAFD Station 70 at Reseda and Lassen

Bring your iPads to take notes and photos

*1st draft of meeting story (full story) due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 10/31*

Week 11—11/4

App needed: Twitter

iPad assignment: Twitter scavenger hunt

Discussion about online journalism, social media

*2<sup>nd</sup> draft of full speech story due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 11/7*

*1st draft of issues-based interview story (full story) due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 11/7*

Week 12—11/11 no class—Veterans DayWeek 13—11/18

App needed: Twitter

iPad assignment: Twitter scavenger hunt

AP Style Quiz #5, to be given in class

*2nd draft of meeting story due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 11/21*

*2nd draft of full issues-based interview story due by 10 p.m. Thursday, 11/21*

Week 14—11/25

App needed: Prezi

Last News Notes presentation

Presentation of RSS feeds

Distribute “Inventing L.A.” quiz (due 12/2)

Week 15—12/2

App needed: Prezi

Presentation of Journalist Interviews

Screening of “Inventing L.A.” documentary

“Inventing L.A.” take-home quiz due at beginning of class

Ethics Discussion #4 due 8 p.m. Friday, 12/5

Week 16—12/9 (Last regular class session)

App needed: Prezi

Presentation of “Why Americans Hate the Media and How it Matters” book

Review of class material, prep for final exam

**Final Exam: 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Monday, Dec. 16** (in-class writing assignment)

For withdrawal deadlines, go to <http://www.csun.edu/a&r/bulletin/fallsemester.html>

Note: This syllabus is subject to updates and changes at the professor’s discretion.