

JOURNALISM 315: REPORTING FOR BROADCAST
SPRING 2014 MARKS
WEDNESDAY 12:30 p.m.–3:15 p.m.

OFFICE AND HOURS:

Monday 12:30–2:20 p.m. MZ 328
Tuesday 1:30–2:30 p.m. MZ 328

TELEPHONE:

(818)701–9337 (home)
(818)677–2016 (office)

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

Introduce students to the fundamentals of broadcast journalism through lecture, text and hands-on experience in class, in the field and in the KCSN newsroom.

This course will emphasize writing, reporting, producing, news judgment and ethics.

OUR GOAL:

To write, report, and produce a five-minute radio newscast covering local, regional, national and international news, all within a three hour period.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be assigned a specific schedule contributing to the news product of KCSN.* They are also expected to perform other duties in the field for class.

In addition, students are required to listen to radio news, watch TV news, and read newspapers, magazines and texts. There will be class discussions and quizzes on current events. Students will keep weekly journals.

Students will need an audio recording device, for use both inside and outside of class.

No electronic devices are permitted in the class. Cellphones and other personal electronic devices are prohibited. Violation of this prohibition will result in the lowering

*KCSN lab requirement constitutes 20 percent of the semester grade and is an important part of the J315 experience. Students in the broadcast sequence will work at least 32 hours during the semester writing for KCSN, the campus radio station. KCSN News Director Keith Goldstein will assign schedules, with student input, during the first week of classes, and will determine the lab requirement grade at the end of the semester.

Page 2 – JOURNALISM 315

of your semester grade by half a point for each offense. Keep those devices out of sight. Also, computers are for classroom projects, not for personal use.

TEXTBOOKS:

Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*

GRADES:

The ability to write, report, and produce news for radio will be the major factor. The critical elements in evaluating your writing are clarity, accuracy, objectivity, conversational style, speed, judgment, and neatness. Students' work will be evaluated at several points during the semester and individual counseling will be available.

This class is evolutionary by nature, and some of you will evolve more quickly than others. Your ability to improve will be a critical aspect of your final grade.

This course will simulate a newsroom environment. Therefore it is essential to meet deadlines. Consider the start of class to be the same as the start of a newscast. Class will start on time and you must be there. Your grade also will be based on class participation, particularly in reviewing the work of other students.

Writing, as well as other projects, will be graded on the following scale:

10	=	Your work is professional, outstanding.	A
9	=	Your work is professional.	A–
8	=	With minor changes could be professional.	B
7	=	With several minor changes, could be professional.	B–
6	=	With major changes, could be professional.	C
5	=	With several major changes, could be professional.	C–
4	=	Your work has fundamental problems.	D
3	=	Your work has many fundamental problems.	D–
2	=	Your work is not fit for broadcast.	F
1	=	Work not turned in as required.	F

Your final grade will be calculated as follows: 20 percent on your work at KCSN and 80 percent on class assignments. Of that 80 percent, 10 percent will be based on quizzes and your journal, 15 percent on the final project, and 75 percent on in-class and out-of-class assignments. Because of the importance of those assignments, attendance is required. Assignments cannot be made up unless cleared by the instructor,

Page 3 – JOURNALISM 315

and then only under the most extreme circumstances. IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A PASSING GRADE IN THIS COURSE, STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE, ON TIME, AT LEAST 90 PERCENT OF ASSIGNMENTS IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS: READERS, WRAPS, AND JOURNALS. THIS IS REGARDLESS OF GRADES RECEIVED ON ASSIGNMENTS. IN ADDITION, ATTENDANCE MUST BE AT LEAST 90 PERCENT AT THE KCSN LAB.

CHEATING:

The Journalism Department at California State University, Northridge 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 be reported to the administration and will receive a failing grade. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, please 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.

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor'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.

SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1:

Introduction. Overview of course. Briefing by KCSN News Director. Shift coordination. Writing followed by critiques. Explain Style Guide.

ASSIGNMENT: Study KCSN Style Guide. Read Block Handout.

WEEK 2:

Lecture on broadcast writing. In-class writing exercises, critiques.

ASSIGNMENT: Study KCSN Style Guide. Read Block Handout.

WEEK 3:

Review broadcast writing style. Writing exercises, critiques.

Page 4 – JOURNALISM 315

ASSIGNMENT: Read Block Handout.

WEEK 4:

Explain philosophy and techniques of five minute newscast. Explain audio tape interviews for broadcast. Outline five minute newscast utilizing wire copy and L.A. Times.

ASSIGNMENT: Audio tape interview #1. Read Block Handout.

WEEK 5:

Critique audio tape #1. Explain wraparounds and choosing sound bites. Wraparound exercises.

ASSIGNMENT: Write wraparound using audio tape #1. Due week 6.

WEEK 6:

In-class assignment: Critique wraparounds. Review preparation of 5-minute newscast.

ASSIGNMENT: Audio tape #2 with wraparound. Due Week 7.

WEEK 7:

Critique audio tape #2 with wraparound. In-class assignment: write newscast.

WEEK 8:

One on one meetings and assessments. Writing exercises.

WEEK 9:

In-class assignment: writing exercises.

WEEK 10:

Review writing.

ASSIGNMENT: Audio tape #3 with wraparound. Due Week 11.

WEEK 11:

Critique audio tape #3 with wraparound. In-class assignment: write newscast.

WEEK 12:

Critique newscast. Review production, writing and reporting techniques.

ASSIGNMENT: Audio tape #4. Due Week 13.

Page 5 – JOURNALISM 315

WEEK 13:

Critique audio tape #4 with wraparound. In-class assignment: write newscast.

WEEK 14:

Critique newscast. Review and practice day.

ASSIGNMENT: Audio tape #5. Due Week 15.

WEEK 15:

Final project. Five-minute newscast with wraparound #5.

Student Learning Outcomes of the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs: 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 end of their program of study:

- **Attain competency in writing basics such as grammar and punctuation, word usage and spelling, sentence and story structure and journalistic style.**
- **Attain competency in the gathering and critical analysis of information using such techniques as interviewing, observation and researching primary and secondary sources.**
- **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).**
- **Develop an ethical basis for making journalistic and public relations decisions.**
- **Develop flexibility in working in evolving mass communication media and environments using a variety of technologies and techniques.**
- **Understand the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts within which journalists and public relations practitioners work.**