Issues and Practices of Journalism
Comm 206
Spring Quarter 2010
Independent Study

Instructor:          John Emig

Office Hours:       Monday, Wednesday – 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
                    Tuesday – 9 a.m.-noon
                    All office hours in The Runner office, Modular East I, Room 103
                    Or by appointment

E-Mail:             jemig@csub.edu

Required Materials:
                    Reporting and Writing: Basics for the 21st Century, Christopher Scanlan,

Recommended Materials:
                    A good dictionary.
                    Associated Press Stylebook, Basic Books (Perseus Books Group), New

COURSE OVERVIEW

Goals and objectives:
                    This course is designed to give the student an understanding of both historical
                    perspectives and current status of journalism as practiced in print
                    (newspapers/magazines), broadcast (radio and TV) and online. In addition,
                    the student will be exposed to the various journalistic forms of writing and
                    will gain an understanding of the process of reporting the news. The student
                    will write a news lead and a news story using information provided by the
                    instructor and two other news stories using information gathered by the
                    student. Additionally, the student will write and present a news story written
                    in the broadcast style. These exercises are designed to give the student an
                    understanding of both the issues of journalism and the process of gathering
                    and writing news stories.
Expectations:
The student is expected to attend each meeting with the instructor and show up on time. Textbook readings are not optional. All writing assignments will be completed on computer and printed, double-spaced, for submission to the instructor.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is not tolerated at CSUB and will not be tolerated in any form in this class. Plagiarism is defined as “… the misuse of published works of another by claiming them as one’s own.” Then student must make appropriate acknowledgments of the original source where material written or compiled by another is used. See instructor’s website for a more thorough examination of this topic.

Grading Requirements:
A series of assignments through the quarter will build the student’s writing and reporting skills and offer an opportunity to explore pertinent issues of journalism. Each assignment will expand on previous assignments; therefore, it is important that assignments be completed in a timely fashion. Work turned in late will suffer a loss of points at the discretion of the instructor. The student will be graded on her writing (including reporting), grammar, punctuation, accuracy, fairness, balance, thoroughness, organization and style. Assignments, and points possible, include:

14 chapter reports @ 10 pts. each..............140
Lead Writing.........................................10
First Story ...........................................40
Campus Story.................................60
Broadcast Story.............................20
Rewrite..............................................50
Final Story...........................................80
Total points possible ..................400

Grading:
A .........................400-371          C .......................305-292
A – .....................370-360          C – ....................291-280
B + ....................359-346          D + ....................279-266
B ....................345-332          D .......................265-252
B – ....................331-320          D – ....................251-240
C + ....................319-306          F .......................239 or less

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1 CSUB 2003-2005 Catalog, Page 57.
ASSIGNMENTS

Chapter Reports:
The student will produce a 2-3 page written summary of each of 14 chapters of the text as assigned. Each summary will demonstrate the student’s understanding of the chapter.

Lead Writing:
This exercise is designed to teach and demonstrate the writing of the opening paragraph(s) of an article. It should contain as many of the five W’s and an H as appropriate. It will be written from information provided by the instructor. There is no minimum length. It may be one or two paragraphs, as needed for the material covered and the story form selected.

First Story:
With the lead already written in the Lead Writing assignment, this project is to write the rest of the story. Minimum length is 500 words.

Campus Story:
The student will report and write a story on a topic of her own choosing on a campus subject. The article may be a news story, a feature or an opinion piece. It must be researched through any combination of personal interviews, library research, Internet research or media research. However, at least one source must be a personal interview. Minimum length is 500 words. An informal list of research sources must accompany the submitted article.

Broadcast Story:
Write a news story designed for delivery via television or radio. This will be a story on a topic selected by the student and may be researched using any of the sources identified for the Campus Story. The story will be between 1:30 and 2:30 (minutes:seconds) and will be delivered without benefit of sound bites or video clips. This story will be presented orally during a meeting with the instructor and also turned in on paper. A list of research sources must accompany the submitted article. Research completed for the Campus Story may be used for this assignment but the story must be completely rewritten.

Rewrite:
Using the final version of the First Story, the student will perform a rewrite. The assignment is to craft a new version of the original 500-word story. The new version will be a maximum of 250 words, without leaving out any of the facts or information in the original story. The student will turn in the final version of the First Story along with the Rewrite.
**Final Story:**
This is the capstone event of this course, offering an opportunity for the student to show what has been learned in the class. It is essentially the “final exam” for this course. On a topic of her own choosing, the student will research and write an 800-word article, which may be news, feature or opinion. If the student’s Campus Story was an opinion piece, the Final Story may not also be an opinion piece. As with the Campus Story, it must be researched through any combination of personal interviews, library research, Internet research or media research. However, for this assignment at least two sources must be personal interviews. A list of research sources must accompany the submitted article.

**Extra Credit:**
There is no extra credit built into this syllabus. However, the student will have several opportunities to improve grades on particular assignments. The student may revise the Lead, First Story and the Campus Story for a possible improved grade. Here’s how it works: After the completed assignment has been returned to the student graded and marked with suggestions for improvement, the student may elect to revise the assignment. To earn a better grade, the revision must demonstrate the student’s understanding of the suggestions for improvement. In other words, the story must be markedly improved. It is possible for the revision to earn a lower grade. Should the student elect to revise a story, the grade for the revision is the one that will be posted, regardless of whether it is higher or lower than the original grade. The original graded story must be returned with the revision. **To be eligible for revision credit, the original Lead, First Story or Campus Story must be turned in on time.**

**Class Schedule:**
The student will turn in all work for the week at least two days before meeting with the instructor.

**Class Activities**

**Week 1:**
Syllabus, assignments.
Assignment for Week 3: Lead Assignment.

**Week 2:**
Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.
Assignment for Week 4: First Story.

**Week 3:**
Chapter 6 and Chapter 5.
Assignment for Week 4: Topic for Campus Story
Due: Lead Assignment.
Week 4:
Chapter 3 and Chapter 12.
Assignment for Week 6: Campus Story
Due: First Story, Topic for Campus Story.

Week 5:
Chapter 10 and Chapter 8.

Week 6:
Chapter 7.
Assignment for Week 7: Broadcast Story.
Due: Campus Story.

Week 7:
Chapter 11.
Assignment for Week 8: Rewrite Story.
Due: Broadcast Story.

Week 8:
Chapter 13.
Assignment for Week 10: Final Story
Due: Rewrite Story.

Week 9:
Chapter 1.

Week 10:
Chapter 14.
Due: Final Story.

Week 11 (finals week):
Chapter 15.
Review Final Story.