



Course Description:

Examining how online, broadcast and print media use their front row seat to history this fall to educate and influence American voters and the world community.

Professor Bob Rucker

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Online: www.profbob.com

Office Hours:

Hours: M & W 1:15 – 2:30 pm

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Student Learning Objectives in MCOM 139: Specialize Writing / Media & Election 2008

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

- Demonstrate they can critically think through and thoroughly do research into timely and important community news, political issues and concerns prioritizing balance in approach and perspectives.
- Demonstrate they have the ability to write quality content for a news and information blog which analyzes print, broadcast and online traditional and convergent media reporting and advertising.
- Demonstrate they incorporate the ability to develop and effectively use, in detailed blog entries, facts and figures, appropriate interview quotes and comments, accurately and fairly paraphrased sources, and direct attribution which clearly and accurately identifies the source of cited information.
- Demonstrate they recognize media efforts to engage in consist ethical conduct and identify bias and opinion in media behavior through their portrayals of political advertising, public relations and journalism.
- Demonstrate they understand the importance of the ability to verify all assertions of fact in reporting, and stand firm in supporting all principles and practices of the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of the press.

Online [HOME PAGE](#) for MCOM 139

Remember **ALWAYS** – You are documenting history in the making!

MCOM 139: What is expected of you.

All students in this interactive class **MUST** keep up with current events and political developments in the race for the White House. All must regularly check mainstream and alternative media sources for latest information, strong reactions and unique perspectives.

Each week in class, in the large group discussion students should freely and exchange points of view candidly but respectfully. No personal attacks are ever allowed.

Weekly students must also do online research and monitor print and broadcast media for new political ads, campaign exchanges and responses, and breaking news reports.

In the required **WEEKLY BLOG**, students must offer, by deadline, their findings that week for posting online. They **MUST** include documentation and content support information in every written report. This includes names, website URLs, quotes, facts, figures, polls, etc.

Each week student blog entries will be chosen at random for full class review and discussion.

Class participation requires much more than just showing up. Being an active participant in the learning process requires critical thinking, multiple source searches and analysis of media efforts that week.



Online for **ALL** to See!

Professor Rucker will discuss in class the online blog, how to sign up and participate. All MCOM 139 must secure a blog space and provide a detailed blog entry every week by the designated day and time. **NO EXCEPTIONS**, or you receive not credit for that week's assignment.

Weak content efforts with limited or not support are **NOT** acceptable ever. No Credit.
Poor grammar, spelling errors and profanity are **NEVER** acceptable. Take pride in your writing.
Put forward your best effort each week.

Remember these blogs are in open to public view online and subject to media and public scrutiny!

Always keep a record of your online sources and media sources for information. Don't limit yourself to a few sources. Each week choose new online sites or different traditional media outlets to write about. Remember you are documenting history! Variety is always needed for a total perspective.

When citing sources, be specific about website names/locations, references, expert names/titles, individual precise quotes, etc. **Evaluate what you found and offer your opinion after citing specifics.**

Report on the mood of the election season each week.

Include your feelings about how the campaign is going, and what the public might be thinking or feeling any given week about the election or the candidates.

Students may also follow-up on comments made by guest speakers and challenge their points of view in their weekly blog.

MCOM 139: GRADING

50% Outside class - WEEKLY HISTORICAL BLOG. This is a specialized writing class.

This weekly effort is crucial. Each week you must post a viable blog entry by deadline assigned. If you are late, miss posting a blog any week by the deadline, or offer weak content or analysis, your grade in this section drops one full letter grade each time.

Remember – A historical document is worthless if it has so many wholes or weaknesses it lacks depth & continuity. Edit your final draft before final posting and improve the substance and grammar.

30% In-Class INTERACTION/PARTICIPATION.

Attending class regularly is never enough.

You must know what's going on in current events, speak up and volunteer latest information, facts, media examples, etc. Be assertive, not passive. Interact with classmates. Never expect others to always agree with you. Always be respectful.

Listen and learn. No personal attacks or criticisms.

Class participation also means staying curious and always looking for unique media offerings to discuss.

Periodically individual class blog postings online will be shown for class review and comments. Make sure your blog entries each week don't potentially embarrass you. Blogs for class review will be chosen by Prof. Rucker.

20% Quizzes & Guest Questions.

You will be formally questioned about current events and political news. **Know what's going on. No excuses!**

There are many NEWS links on www.profbob.com and the [MCOM 139 HOME](#) page to help you stay informed.

Always be informed and prepared to interact with guests in class and offer pertinent and interesting questions.

Sometimes you may be asked to submit type written questions for guests to help evaluate your critical thinking efforts.



Specific Classroom REQUIREMENTS: Based on Professional Standards

All SJSU students are always asked to be respectful, open-minded, willing listeners and learners when it comes to experiencing people from different cultures and/or those with different perspectives. Candor is always encouraged in Rucker class discussions. It's OK to ask for clarifications from other students and to respectfully challenge viewpoints. Personal attacks and inappropriate language are NOT allowed. Students who do not comply fully may be asked to leave Professor Rucker's classroom.

RUCKER STRICT ENFORCEMENT

Each of you are preparing for some career position in the future. Professionals know basic workplace rules and regulations, established by the company or administrators, are not usually negotiable. Professionals working at all levels are expected to understand, accept and fully comply with all basic workplace directives. Penalties for violations can range from mild reprimands to docking of pay, suspensions or job termination depending on the severity of infractions. Identifying the DOs & DON'Ts is something you must learn to do while in college.

In Professor Rucker's Classes....These rules are based on this concept and will be enforced:

10 Minute Classroom Arrival Rule: Don't ever be a disruption or distraction. BE ON TIME FOR CLASS!

No student may enter Prof. Rucker's classroom 10 minutes after class starts. Such disruptions may result in the tardy student being asked to leave. If a tardy student fails to comply with the directive to leave the room, that student's class participation grade can be automatically forfeited, with no make-up opportunity. Be on time.

Laptops used in class must stay focused on authorized class related materials and discussions.

Random surfing, e-mailing and all other online activities are never permitted during class time. Expect no additional advisories or warnings. Those identified in violation of this rule will be identified in class and told to meet with Professor Rucker during office hours to learn of the penalty which could range from a grade reduction, an overall class participation grade forfeiture, or suspension from class.

NO e-mailing "I'm out Sick" messages. NO homework sent by e-mail or submitted outside of class time to Prof. Rucker without his prior consent. No credit will be given or noted. **Call Professor Rucker's office** to explain you are sick, and ask for an excused absence. **(408-924-3272)** Not all requests for an excused absence will be granted. SJSU policies regarding illness and family emergencies are accepted.

Documentation confirmation may be requested by Prof. Rucker. Repeated problems and excuses could result in an incomplete or failing course grade for the student. Never ask others to inform Prof. Rucker of your illness or absence.

NO grades should be sent by e-mail or posted online for students. SJSU Privacy concerns.

If a Rucker class is assigned a separate e-mail address. Prof. Rucker must FIRST give permission, in advance, before any interaction, correspondence or homework may be sent to the class assigned e-mail account. Unauthorized e-mailed materials are not acceptable and are given no credit.

Deadlines for all project, written or production, are always absolute. No excuses. Do what is asked and expected of all students. Expect NO extensions. Ask for no special privileges.

Never expect late assignments to be accepted. "I worked hard on this" is no excuse if you have missed the required time and way to turn in an assignment. If you want it to be counted, present it as requested.

Extra credit may be offered, but never ever expect it. Prioritize doing your best on all required class assignments, and meet designated deadlines always. "Extra Credit" is not a professional world concept.

ETHICAL VIOLATIONS WHICH SPEAK TO INDIVIDUAL INTEGRITY:

False reporting of information, unacceptable conduct or persistent unexcused absenteeism are not acceptable and will result in a grade penalty. Students may receive a failing grade for part, or all of the overall course grade.

False representation of any project or production work required (audio, video or editing done by someone other than the student in the class) is a serious ethical violation. Without prior permission by Professor Rucker granting special assistance, a student could forfeit anywhere from a project/assignment grade to an overall course grade.

Students are responsible for dropping courses by the SJSU semester deadline date. Never expect Professor Rucker to do this for you.

September 12th is the last day to add a class in the JMC School.



Classroom Policies of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

To avoid disruptions in the classroom and to foster an atmosphere for learning, the School has established the following general classroom policies for all mass communications, advertising, public relations and journalism classes:

- All cell phones must be turned off (or set to "vibrate") in the classroom. Please be forewarned that, if a cell phone goes off in class, you will be asked to leave the classroom for that particular class period.
- Latecomers may be denied entrance to the classroom. Similarly, do not disrupt the class by leaving early. Do not schedule work, personal appointments (doctor's visits), etc. so that there will be a conflict with the time the class meets.
- When in the classroom, laptops must be used for classroom-related activities only.
- Remove your personal belongings and trash from the classroom after each class.
- No food or drinks allowed in classrooms or labs.

A. Academic Integrity Statement

"Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's Integrity Policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs." The policy on academic integrity can be found at:

http://sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html

To plagiarize is to "steal and use (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 1975). You are committing plagiarism if you:

Copy phrases, sentences, or passages from electronic or print sources (journal articles, the web, etc.) into your own papers and reports without giving credit by citing the original source

Quote someone else's exact words without giving credit to the original author

Use someone else's specific ideas even if you restate them in your own words.

Citing your sources properly helps to avoid plagiarism. (See http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct)

SJSU regards plagiarism as academic dishonesty. Consequences include academic and other sanctions such as "grade modification."

Make clear which ideas are yours and which are someone else's...don't use words or images in a way that violates the creator's rights to them.

(Plagiarism and fabrication are violations of the ethical standards of the journalism profession. In addition to plagiarizing sources, outright fabrication is equally dangerous territory for

journalists. This includes making up sources and attributing information to non-existent people or printed matter.)

B. Campus policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the DRC to establish a record of their disability."

C. You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawals, incompletes, classroom behavior, and other policies found at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct. Also, please read the SJSU catalog thoroughly.

University Policy S01-13, San José State University's *Policy of Commitment to a Campus Climate That Values Diversity and Equal Opportunity*, replaces University Policy S91-1 and affirms that San José State University (SJSU) is committed to maintaining an environment free from discrimination and harassment in compliance with all laws on non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Furthermore, the university community has a responsibility to advocate inclusion, respect, and understanding at a level above that which is minimally required by law. For a full description, view [SJSU Campus Climate Policy](#).

Executive Order 883, *Systemwide Guidelines for Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Programs in Employment*, supersedes Executive Order 774. The California State University is committed to maintaining and implementing employment policies and procedures that comply with applicable state and federal nondiscrimination and affirmative action laws and regulations. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, medical condition, and covered veteran status is prohibited. Additionally, Executive Order 883 prohibits retaliation for filing a discrimination complaint, opposing a discriminatory act, or participating in a discrimination investigation or proceeding.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 883](#).

[NCAA Gender Equity Report](#) details information concerning SJSU's intercollegiate athletics programs under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of 1994.

Presidential Directive 97-03 describes the University's policies and guidelines for securing accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as the procedures for resolving disputes. It is the purpose of this directive to assure that SJSU continues to comply with federal and state legislation and California State University policies regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities.

For a full description, view [Presidential Directive 97-03](#).

Executive Order 926, The California State University Policy on Disability Support and Accommodations, presents policies, procedures, and monitoring for making all CSU programs, services, and activities accessible to students, faculty, staff, and the general public with disabilities.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 926](#).

In order to **observe days of religious significance**, students may occasionally be absent from class. Therefore, to address this issue, the San José State University Academic Council voted to adopt University Policy F68-8. This university policy, in conjunction with [California Education Code 89320](#), addresses campus policy on religious holidays.

For a full description, view [Policy F68-8](#).

Presidential Directive 91-08, *Sexual Harassment and Special Responsibilities of Supervisory and Management Personnel Having Knowledge of Potential Sexual Harassment Situation*, asserts San José State University's commitment to providing all its students and employees with a comfortable and safe environment for learning and working. The President of San José State University issued this memo to clarify for all SJSU supervisory personnel the kind of conduct that is defined as sexual harassment and the responsibilities of all supervisory personnel when they have any knowledge that sexual harassment may be taking place within the campus community.

For a full description, view [Presidential Directive 91-08](#).