



SPRING, 2010

Section for Radio/TV Journalism students

Professor Bob Rucker
Radio & TV Journalism Coordinator
Former CNN Correspondent
Office: DBH 218
Hours: M – Th 4:30 – 5pm
or by appointment in advance

Class Information Online: www.profbob.com
Tuesdays & Thursdays
3 – 4:15 pm
DBH 226
Office Phone: (408) 924-3272
Assignment E-mail: j132b@pacbell.net

Course Description

JOUR 132B: REPORTING FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA (3 units)

Emphasis on reporting-gathering/verifying facts and audio or video actualities through interviewing, attending press conferences/meetings, and using public records, electronic databases and the Internet/library. Producing news and features for electronic media and websites. *Prerequisites including major restrictions: JOUR 61 or instructor consent.*

Student Learning Objectives in J132b:

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of professional ethical principles and the ability to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
3. Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively and independently. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
4. Demonstrate that they have the ability to write and/or produce quality content for broadcast news or convergent media under time pressure or deadline restrictions.
5. Demonstrate the ability to develop and effectively use appropriate interview quotes and comments, paraphrase sources accurately and fairly, and attribute clearly and accurately all information used.

J132B Overview:

We are living the “Information Age Explosion” predicted for the 21st Century. Millions of people worldwide are finding out what they want to know almost instantaneously on the internet. A wide variety of reputable websites, developed or supported by traditional media outlets with a rich history in radio, television, newspaper and magazine journalism, are working to meet an ever growing demand by the global community for more!

Mixed in on the internet are also a growing number of blogs and citizen journalism websites providing news and information but without a focus or priority on accurate or balanced information. Opinion and spin drive many of these sites and they are attracting a huge following, and many are incorporating digital audio and video support material which draw public attention.

J132B is a course rooted in a nationally recognized SJSU program known for excellence in journalism education. Students who study in this class prioritize integrity by producing top quality reports which always emphasize accuracy and truth. We must be able to stand by what we report because the public needs to have trained professionals who provide important information in a fair and balanced way. Bias and spin to help boost ratings, or splashy images and gossip designed to draw an audience more interested in fluff is NOT our mission.

Someday after graduation, you may choose which a field of endeavor excites your career interest. At that time you want viable options with credentials which help you stand out among hundreds of applicants. SJSU and J132B wants to make sure you do just that.

To have a quality media reputation and a valued journalism background, each student must always prioritize:

1. **Knowing what's going on!** Current Events knowledge is the key to earning a powerful and respected reputation. Who trusts people known for shooting off their mouth and knowing very little? To develop your ‘CREDibility,’ as President Abraham Lincoln once said, quote, **“Before you shoot off your mouth, make sure your brains are loaded.”** Facebook, Twitter and other social networking info may be suspect. **Check it out before reporting.**
2. **Making time NOW - No Excuses!** The typical college student attitude about keep up with the news will be disastrous for you. **Putting off what you need now to be impressive later is dumb!** Would you go to a dinner where someone had not thought about what to serve until you sat at the table? **Don't embarrass yourself. Prioritize DAILY checks on news developments.** Use Professor Rucker's website as a resource and launching point, then be curious and find more.
3. **Critical Thinking.** After you pay attention to the news, **Always ask yourself “How did this happen, and what's likely to come next?”** Be curious and interested in a wide range of topics and issues. Broaden your knowledge base and store that in your mind for life long use. Stand out later by learning now!
4. **Logic & Follow Ups.** When humans want answers, we are usually not afraid to snoop and find out what we want to know. This profession celebrates this basic human ability. Journalists identify who's in charge of this issue or topic? Where do they study that? Are there research studies that offer more insights? **Be tenacious and dig up information...Show enterprise on your part. Shine!**
5. **Communicating.** Journalists love to talk through issues together. **Don't be shy! Showcase your thinking!** Engage your classmates and help each other build current events and world knowledge. Forget about sounding dumb at this point or staying shy. We are professional extroverts! Your final product may be weak otherwise.
6. **Utilize Quality Broadcast Techniques.** Many of the “techno toys” people love to use or see can come across as shallow if they are not used effectively with meaningful content and research. **Learn in this class RTVJ Style Rules and how to use technology more effectively.** If you don't, it will show and once you've damaged your own reputation, it is VERY difficult to change impressions about you.

NEW

OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE YOUR JOURNALISTIC TALENT!

There may be timely issues or topics focused on in our J132 research and reports where students could be asked to record on video their comments and include their research information and/or interviews in creative video reports. My J163 class has a new working relationship with CNN **i-reports** online where we offer unique perspectives from out west. At times both my MCOM 105 and J132B students may get permission from Prof. Rucker to share their creative efforts in class with the network. No report or research produced for J132B class assignments should ever be uploaded to any website without prior authorization. CNN **i-reports** sometimes uses Prof. Rucker student efforts on CNN domestic and international television channels. Any media product, represented as an SJSU student effort, must be approved and reviewed to insure the required level of substantive and reliable content combined with professional style quality. **Not every assignment or student effort will qualify for this special project. Only the best thinking and work has a chance.**

Jour 132B GRADING:

WARNING *** J132B students may NOT leave early for holidays, spring break, sporting events, or be absent for non-emergency personal or family matters. Remember higher education is a great privilege which should never be devalued or wasted. Re-adjust your priorities. In J132B a grade penalty will be imposed for unexcused absences.***

30% - Research Assignments. Students must conduct online and in-person research for stories assigned in class. Topics should focus on how the news or information is affecting the lives of people locally. Factual research must be conducted with reliable sources and no information should ever be used which cannot be verified or confirmed by multiple sources. Developing interviewing skills for broadcast news use and participating in appropriate live news conferences to observe and learn what is expected of professionals. You may also be assigned to cover unexpected breaking news.

30% - Broadcast Writing /Stories/Approved Video Assignments. Students must know and use proper RTVJ style rules when writing broadcast news format stories...“copy, voice over and package” reports. Must demonstrate how to ‘script’ for these formats, incorporate electronic fonts, and match news writing with appropriate news video.

40% - Class Participation – Active & Consistent. Students speak up in every class session and actively discuss timely news and current events. Having a command of the facts and understanding what the news means to campus and local residents is also required. J132B students may be asked to participate with other advanced RTVJ students in videotaped roundtable discussions of news and information for posting online. Showcase your best effort or run the risk of embarrassing yourself. Broadcasting is a public endeavor. Your comments, writing, and efforts are for public use.

“NUCLEAR ERRORS” - Ways you risk forfeiting your overall J132B class grade.

NEVER let sources dictate your story or your journalistic decisions. **NEVER** give your sources your questions in advance. **NEVER** give sources final editorial approval, or post anything about the class or instructor online without prior permission. **NEVER** walk in late to J132B. You have ten minutes to be in the room and in your seat or it's an unexcused absence. **NEVER** miss your deadlines. Never expect extensions or make-ups. Do what is expected thoroughly and on time.

Professor Rucker your class news director and has the final say on stories. Once given, the discussion ends. Follow directions Avoid using the same sources over and over. Being predictable showcases limited thinking or laziness. Last minute efforts are usually not very good. Don't kid yourself. Take full advantage of all time allotted or be grade penalized. Conduct yourself professionally always. Stay away from dangerous situations. Never risk anyone's safety for your class story.

False reporting or made up journalism or current event information automatically results in a failing J132B course grade. Unethical behavior is abhorrent. Be accurate and admit when you don't have the facts. Avoid the ultimate penalty.

J132B "NUCLEAR ERRORS" continue:

Follow all directions to the letter. No credit may be earned if journalism students fail to pay attention to all details stressed in writing and reporting assignments. **NEVER assume...ASK in class** when uncertain about what is expected. You've chosen a professional study that has little patience for timid individuals. You ARE expected to speak up in J132B.

Emergency Absences. SJSU academic policy enables students to submit a written medical excuse or documentation in the event of a serious illness, family emergency or death in the family. Students are always excused, without penalty from J132B class meetings, under these unique circumstances. Other personal issues or concerns are NOT covered by this policy.

Non-Emergency Absences. All students may call in sick when it is necessary. No student should ever come to class meetings or office advising when they are sick and/or could possibly be contagious. That would be irresponsible and could result in a participation grade penalty. Any instructor may ask a student to leave the classroom if a potential health risk or threat is identified by the instructor. Taking care of your health is always a major priority, not classes or grades.

CALL IN SICK BEFORE CLASS MEETINGS. In J132B this literally means you telephone Professor Rucker's office BEFORE your next class and ask for an excused absence. **A participation grade penalty will be imposed if students do not call in before the missed class meeting.** If absenteeism becomes persistent, excessive or goes unexplained and unapproved by your instructor, you may be given an INCOMPLETE grade, and be required to retake the class later. SJSU policy says incomplete grades must be resolved in one calendar year or the original incomplete grade automatically converts to a failing grade without any action by the student or faculty member.

Students should never expect extra credit assignments in journalism. Credit and pride comes with doing what was assigned on time and in the way assigned. Procrastination and/or a lack of thoroughness, or basic laziness will earn major grade reductions in all areas of grading. Overt or persistent problems can result in forfeiture of the overall J132B class grade.



Prof. Rucker's Additional Classroom Policies: **Based on Professional Standards**

All students are asked always to be open-minded, listen and learn about other cultures represented in the classroom. Candor is encouraged in class discussions. It's OK to ask for clarifications and to respectfully challenge viewpoints.

Personal attacks and inappropriate language are NOT allowed.

Laptops must stay focused on class related materials and discussions. Surfing is not allowed during class time and can result in a class participation grade penalty. You may also be asked to leave the classroom which will be considered as an unexcused absence.

NO e-mailing "I'm Sick" ... Call in sick to Prof. Rucker's office phone above before missing class. Pick up the phone, dial 408-924-3272, and call in sick like professionals or receive a grade penalty.

The 10 Minute Class Arrival Rule:

No student may enter the classroom 10 minutes after class starts. Such disruptions will result in the late student being asked to leave. Late students should get notes from other classmates after class.

NO E-mailing Homework without prior authorization. Each class is assigned a separate e-mail address. Prof. Rucker must give permission, in advance, before any class correspondence or homework may be sent to the class assigned e-mail. Otherwise such submissions receive no credit.

Deadlines are always absolute. Expect NO extensions.

False reporting of information is unprofessional and unacceptable conduct. So is persistent unexcused absenteeism. All of these infractions may result in an overall course failing grade. Students are responsible for dropping courses they no longer wish to take. Do not expect faculty to do this.

J132b Students should take full advantage of office hours or ask for appointments for academic advising. There is no excuse for falling behind in a Rucker class. Come in to ask for guidance or help before it gets too late and no grade change is possible.



Policies

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](#).



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 classroom policies.

- 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.