



# ***JOURNALISM 132B***

## **SPRING SEMESTER, 2008**

### **Information Gathering on the Internet (Broadcasting Reporting)**

Professor Bob Rucker  
Radio & TV Journalism Coordinator  
Former CNN Correspondent  
Office: DBH 218  
Hours: M – Th 1:15 – 2 pm  
or by appointment in advance

Class Information Online: [www.profbob.com](http://www.profbob.com)  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
3 – 4:15pm  
DBH 213  
Office Phone: (408) 924-3272  
Class E-mail: [j132b@pacbell.net](mailto:j132b@pacbell.net)

## **Course Description**

**JOUR 132 INFORMATION GATHERING ON THE INTERNET (3 units):** Development of expertise and strategies for finding information for news stories from computerized databases, public records and reports. Advanced news writing for radio, television, and broadcast media related online information and audio/video streaming operations. Strategies and techniques for interviewing and covering press conferences, public meetings and online forums. The study of producing content for multi-media distribution in a converged media environment.

**Prerequisites:** J61A, ENGL 1A, ENGL 1B. Good spelling and grammar skills expected.

### **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.
4. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

**Jour 132B Texts – Available for purchase at Spartan Bookstores for this class after Feb. 1st**

**Craig, Richard (2005). *Online Journalism*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.**

Redmond, James, Shook, Fredrick, & Lattimore, Daniel (2006). *The broadcast news process* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing.

Hood, James R. & Kalbfeld, Brad (2001). *The Associated Press broadcast news handbook*.

A Webster's New World College Dictionary is also recommended.

**Reference Texts:** (Available at the library and available for student purchase.)

Mencher, Melvin (2005). *News reporting and writing* (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw Hill. (With Brush-Up CD-ROM and PowerWeb.)

Schlein, Alan M. (2004). *Find it online: The complete guide to online research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Facts on Demand Press.

**Class Web Site- [www.profbob.com](http://www.profbob.com)**

This syllabus and class assignments will be available on Professor Rucker's website.

Updates to the syllabus will be discussed in class and posted to the class site, so check regularly. Latest minute changes to accommodate breaking news or other unexpected developments will also be posted this website.

**Importance of Reporting**

Students should expect to master strategies for uncovering — and verifying — facts for deadline, trends and investigative stories. There will be a heavy emphasis in the class on first-person observations, interviewing techniques, press conferences, meetings and paper documents along with extensive Internet research efforts. Many important documents needed for broadcast documentary reporting, including hard-to-get paper public records, are not available online.

Internet research as a field of study is only about a decade old, and it is constantly changing. No one book or Web site can give you a comprehensive and completely up-to-date guide, so we will be relying on a variety of resources. Together as a class we will be discovering new resources throughout the semester and evaluating them for credibility and accuracy.

In a competitive field of increasingly tech-savvy journalists, those who are comfortable using the most powerful search tools will have an enormous advantage and will get the best jobs. Those with basic quantitative and database skills will quickly become heroes within the newsroom. These skills are also useful for non-journalism careers.

### Five Major Caveats

1. It's essential to realize that there is a world of online information beyond Google. The so-called "invisible Web" exists in library indexes, proprietary search tools and government databases.
2. Just like the wider world of documentary sources, the Internet is filled with inaccurate, misleading, incomplete and out-of-date information. A goal of this course is to develop a critical eye and know how to verify information found online.
3. Not everything there is to know is on the Web. The key is to know how far an Internet search can get you. When the digital trail ends, you know you have to go to the library, knock on doors and speak directly with experts and/or eyewitnesses who must tell you their information in person.
4. Once you have developed the factual information needed to support and balance a broadcast news reports, you must immediately identify opportunities for audio and video recordings. Most sources do not volunteer electronic support materials.
5. When you have completed the story research phase and accumulated appropriate audio and video elements, quick and careful consideration must be given to how to present the story for on-air and online use. Understanding and command of new technology to meet deadline assignments for each media platform is essential.

### Equipment

- JMC School Policy since Fall, 2005: Students working towards a degree in journalism, with a specialty interest in broadcast news reporting, are required to have a dual digital audio/video recorder. The digital camera must produce a high quality, broadcast caliber picture. High definition cameras, however, are not required. The course instructor can provide a basic equipment specification and technology requirements list.
- The dual digital audio/video recorder must have a high caliber digital extension microphone and cable (recommended length no less than ten feet). A basic lighting kit for video recordings is also encouraged for indoor, low lighting video recordings.
- Digital audio & video editing software for either Apple or PC format laptop computers. SJSU offers students software packages and options, with a significant academic discount, at the Spartan Bookstore in the Student Union. ( Note: Electronic equipment required will be used in advanced broadcast reporting and online classes, and during the required media internship experience.) J132B student efforts may be posted on the new RTVJ website.
- A notebook should be brought to class sessions for extensive note-taking. Jour 132B students are expected to refer to class notes and instructor recommendations when researching stories and developing documentary or investigative reports.

## Participation in class exercises, discussions and breaking news coverage

This is a small, upper-division journalism class that relies heavily on student participation in class. You will be expected to discuss current events and the assigned readings every week.

Be prepared for in-class collaborations with classmates and story critiques by the instructor and other students. Broadcast stories must be read aloud to determine audience effectiveness. Concerns must be identified in advance and talked about. Collectively recommendations will be offered. Jour 132B students are advised not to take critical analysis personally. Understanding and incorporating suggested changes is how professionals improve their broadcast writing.

Periodically breaking news events on campus, near city hall or downtown will enable Jour 132B students to develop skills at covering the unexpected. Broadcast journalists must be flexible and react to timely news developments. Drawing on what you have learned in all your journalism classes to date will be expected.

We will have several guest speakers, and will be taking trips to a journalism conference and San Jose City Hall. You will be asked to do research ahead of time and apply your interviewing skills to ask probing questions of speakers.

## Current-events and reading quizzes

There is an old saying, "Before you shoot off your mouth, make sure your brains are loaded." This quote is attributed to Abraham Lincoln, but it clearly applies to all journalists.

Jour 132B students are expected to keep up with local, state, national and international news events at all times. This includes times when you have other class studies, jobs, spring break, summer and winter sessions. Knowing about and utilizing new developments in a story enhances a reporter's credibility. Falling behind in your news knowledge can be detrimental to your career.

Therefore, expect **unannounced written or oral current event quizzes** throughout the semester at the start of class. If you do badly on one quiz, do not despair; the grade on the lowest-scoring quiz may be dropped. But there will be no make-up quizzes, so it's imperative that you not be late to class. The quizzes will focus on facts and answers to the basic questions, Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Journalists must always provide that basic information.

A familiarity with current events will add meaning and provide better understanding of reporting methods and spark new story ideas that will lead to many out-of-class assignments. Students should always make a habit of keeping up with the following news sources:

- **Campus:** *Update News*, our advance TV news class production, the *Spartan Daily* newspaper and *Access* magazine produced twice a year by our magazine students.
- **Local/state:** Any Bay Area TV newscast, KCBS news radio 74 (and streamed online) in San Francisco, and KLIV news radio in San Jose. There is no better way to quickly pick up on how broadcast news writing works than to listen daily to the professionals on-air in the nation's fifth largest broadcast market. For more details, reading a Bay Area daily newspaper, such as the *San Jose Mercury News* or the *San Francisco Chronicle* is also strongly suggested for a better understanding of local news.
- **National/International:** Keep abreast of world and U.S. news from sources such as CNN, MSNBC, FOX News, National Public Radio, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The*

*Christian Science Monitor*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. (All these resources are also available online)

**Midterm and final exams**

The midterm exam will cover readings and class assignments up to that point; the final will cover material following the midterm.

**Note on written work**

Although the focus of this class is research and reporting for broadcast news and online, you will also be graded on your ability to turn in broadcast style, professional-quality writing. You should be familiar with the basics of RTVJ news writing from Jour 061. All story submissions must be typewritten and fully comply with the designated broadcast news writing format. You may not turn in work previously submitted to any other class unless you get permission from the instructor ahead of time. Proofread all assignments carefully for spelling and grammar. Broadcasters are never relieved of this professional responsibility. For style questions refer to the Associated Press Broadcast Stylebook and the Webster’s New World College Dictionary. **Errors of fact and misspelled names will lower grades. Serious concerns could result in a failing course grade.**

**Electronic Reporting Projects**

Your midterm and final broadcast projects for the semester must utilize skills you’ve learned in Jour 61 and acquired during the semester — observation, interviewing and documentary research online and offline. Collaboration is encouraged in the planning stage if there is more than one angle on a large story, and students will have the opportunity to discuss sources and edit drafts of stories in class. But please note: Each student will be responsible for his or her own writing, editing and final production work.

**Deadlines**

You must meet all assignment deadlines. Report assignments are due at the start of class on the date assigned unless otherwise noted. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from meeting a deadline notify the class instructor immediately. Ask for an excused absence and explain your circumstances. An excused absence is never guaranteed. **A written medical excuse or documentation of a family emergency or death in the family may be requested.** The instructor’s decision regarding your request for an excused absence is final.

No credit will be given for a late or missing assignment. Students involved in university athletics, the arts, or any other campus related endeavor should inform the JOUR 132B instructor of any anticipated class absences. These requests, however, are not covered by the SJSU policy for excused absences. Student requests may be denied by the instructor. **Expect no make-up exam or opportunity for a late assignment or missed deadline.**

**Grades**

Grades from A+ to F will be based on the number of points earned as follows:

<b><u>Grading</u></b>	<b><u>% of Grade</u></b>
Current events & readings quizzes.....	10%
In-class Assignments/ Class Participation.....	30%
Writing assignments with audio or video formats.....	10%
Mid-term exam/project.....	20%
Final exam/project .....	<u>30%</u>
	<b>Total 100%</b>

**Jour 132B Grades will be computed as follows:**

97-100% (97-100 Points) = A+	93-96% (93-96 Points) = A	90-92% (90-92 Points) = A-
87-89% (87-89 Points) = B+	83-86% (83-86 Points) = B	80-82% (80-82 Points) = B-
77-79% (77-79 Points) = C+	73-76% (73-76 Points) = C	70-72% (70-72 Points) = C-
67-69% (67-69 Points) = D+	63-66% (63-66 Points) = D	60-62% (60-62 Points) = D-
<60% (Less Than 60 Points) = F		

**Library resources**

Reference/Instruction Librarian Paul Kauppila, with whom we're going to meet twice this semester, says he's available for individual student consultation on an appointment basis. You can reach him at 408-808-2042 or [pkauppil@email.sjsu.edu](mailto:pkauppil@email.sjsu.edu). (Yes, leave off the final "a" in his last name in his e-mail.)

**About the instructor**

Bob Rucker is an award-winning television news correspondent and journalist. His complete biography is on his website: <http://profbob.com>.

**University 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](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](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](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.

## Professor Rucker's 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. You may be asked to leave the classroom and receive an unexcused absence.

NO e-mailing "I'm Sick" / NO homework may be sent to Prof. Rucker's office e-mail address above.

The 10 Minute 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.

Each class is assigned a separate e-mail address. Prof. Rucker must give permission, in advance, before any correspondence or homework may be sent to the class assigned e-mail.

Deadlines are always absolute. Expect NO extensions.

Call in sick to Prof. Rucker's office phone above before missing class.

Never e-mail-in sick or send word by someone else. Excused absences must meet SJSU policies.

Never expect late assignments to be accepted.

Extra credit may be offered, but never expect it. Prioritize doing your best on all class assignments.

False reporting of information, unacceptable conduct or persistent unexcused absenteeism may result in a course failing grade.

Students are responsible for dropping courses by the SJSU deadline date.