



School of Journalism & Mass Communications

Journalism 132B: Electronic Media Information Gathering on the Internet

Fall Semester, 2007

Professor: Bob Rucker, Broadcast Sequence Coordinator
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Office hours: M/W 4:30-5pm, Tu/Th 11:30-Noon, or by prior appointment.
Class days/time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3pm – 4:15pm
Classroom: DBH 225
Prerequisites: J61A or J61B, Laptop computer required.
Course website: www.profbob.com

JOUR 132B. Electronic Media Information Gathering on the Internet * (3 units)

*This section meets requirement for all broadcast journalism majors and minors.

Formerly 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.

Special Focus: Fall, 2007, The 50th Anniversary and Reunion of the Radio & TV Journalism

During the week of October 8th through 12th, hundreds of former SJSU students now working as professional media executives, anchors, reporters, producers, photographers and editors return for a week-long celebration. All students studying electronic news reporting will be given assignments to conduct research and interviews (some recorded by digital cameras), and produce stories related to news and information about the reunion for posting on the RTVJ website (www.rtvjsju.edu) or for use in J132b class.

Student Learning Objectives in J132b:

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

- Demonstrate that they can critically think through and thoroughly do research into timely and important community news, issues and concerns prioritizing balance in approach and perspectives.
- 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.
- 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.
- Demonstrate consistent ethical conduct and behavior when writing or producing electronic content for dissemination to the public.
- Demonstrate 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.

Required J132 B Text, Books and Materials..

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

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

Notebook or laptop for note-taking every class period. Laptop is required for other classwork.

Additional Support Readings (Purchase not required but recommended.)

Redmond, James, Shook, Fredrick , Lattimore, Daniel (2006). *The Broadcast News Process* (7th edition). Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing.

James R. Hood, James R., Kalbfeld, Brad (2001). *The Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook*. (Reference book for broadcast news writing style.)

Reference Texts: (On reserve at the library and available for student purchase.)

Mencher, Melvin (2005). *News reporting and writing* (10th 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* (4th ed.). New York: Facts on Demand Press.

Class Announcements/Updates Web Site:

This syllabus and class assignments will be available on Professor Rucker's website. The link is in the left column listed as J132b: www.profbob.com

Updates to the syllabus will be discussed in class and posted to this class site, so check regularly. Students will also submit e-mail addresses for the development of a class information and JMC School mailing list.

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 on the class discussing 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.

Three 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're 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 – General Policies.

- **All students in J132B must bring to class a laptop computer.** This is a journalism school requirement for all upper division classes. J132B will be given in-class assignments to conduct online research on breaking news and other timely news and information.
- **JMC School Policy since Fall, 2005: Upper division 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 should 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.** Basic movie making software comes with most Apple and PC computers. SJSU offers more specialized 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 may be required during your media internship experience.)

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. J132B 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 J132B 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. J132B students may also be assigned to attend and report on the SJSU president's monthly press conference for campus media.

We will also 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.

The key thing always is take thorough notes. Make sure you have classmate contacts to verify information provided in class. Do whatever it takes to get the information and get it accurately.

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.

J132 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 career detrimental.

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, *Access* magazine produced twice yearly by our magazine students, and the new "*Update Online*" web-based news and information broadcast journalism website, www.rtvjsjsu.com, produced by advance broadcast news students in Prof. Rucker's J163: Audio and Video Streaming class.
- **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* are also strongly suggested for a better understanding of local news.
- **National/International:** Keeping 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 *Los Angeles Times*. (All these resources are also available online)

GRADING.

Midterm Project: 25%

Final Project: 25%

Readings & Current Events: 25%

Class Participation: 25%

Midterm and Final: 2 Major Projects Required. (50% of the overall grade.)

Fall semester, 2007, students will have a major project to develop for both their midterm and final. For their midterm assessment and to help support the 50th Anniversary & Reunion of the Radio and Television Journalism (RTVJ) degree program, students in J132B will be given research assignments and written reports for posting on the RTVJ sequence website. Students must produce a profile for posting online which identifies them, their major, career goals and plans for the future. These profiles will enable returning SJSU alums and former students working in media to connect with current students, enable mentor relationships, and hopefully foster internship and job opportunities.

Additionally, J132B students will conduct research on SJSU broadcast alums, former faculty and timely industry and general news. This research will be used in the development and writing of "Background Briefs" for use by JMC School faculty who invite alums to speak in their classes during RTVJ Reunion Week, October 8th through 12th. J132B students will also support efforts which enable the JMC School Open House on Oct. 12th, and are expected to be available for that event. **This RTVJ Reunion assignment is worth 25% of the overall grade.**

In the second half of the semester, J132B students must conduct extensive research and prepare multiple reports for posting on the redesigned RTVJ website. By semester's end the new look on the website must include detailed research, digital videotaped interviews and pertinent and timely stories assigned by the instructor. Expect discussions to begin about the final project the week after the RTVJ reunion. Throughout the semester, keep in your notes ideas for a final project approach you'd like to recommend. "Pitch" the idea when asked in class. Speak-up and follow-up always. **This second major online effort is worth 25% of your overall grade.**

Expect in-class tests on the assigned chapters in the course textbook and any assigned readings posted on Professor Rucker's website (www.profbob.com) for J132B. Also expect impromptu current events discussions and quizzes in class. Always be prepared. Keep up with the news. **Readings tests and current event quizzes will be worth 25% of your overall grade.**

Class participation is crucial in this class, especially this semester. With hundreds of distinguished alums returning to SJSU for the reunion, and with a worldwide audience expected to review the revised RTVJ website effort at semester's end, J132B student efforts must always be accurate, thorough, well-written and meet specified deadlines. Students must actively participate in class discussions prior to assignments, listen carefully, take thorough notes, and follow-up as assigned and expected. Expect no make-ups or extensions on deadlines. Meet all obligations by acting in an honorable manner which demonstrates good judgments and ethical conduct. Active class participation, including consistent interaction and sharing of ideas, contacts and information, is key to having interesting and successful projects which invited public attention. Being quiet most of the time, promising a lot but not producing much, limited critical thinking on assignments, slow or limited reactions to unexpected circumstances are all excuses and are not welcome. "Be on your toes," as the saying goes, all the time! **J132B Class participation is worth 25% of the overall course grade.**

It must be noted that all information developed by J132B is expected to be factually accurate at all times. Shortcuts may not be taken when researching information for any major project or class assignments. Thoroughness means gathering balanced information through research online, telephone calls and interviews with reliable and appropriate sources, press conference opportunities and library study assignments. All class assignments will be read and watched by the public and our peers. Professional standards of conduct always apply. No student is exempt from receiving a failing grade on any

assignment if any information presented is found to be incomplete, inaccurate, false or contrived. Major violations may also result immediately in receiving an overall failing grade for the J132B class.

Professor Rucker's prime directive... "When in doubt, check it out. Never commit to reporting information which appears suspect or sounds potentially inaccurate or misleading. Do additional fact checking always, without being told. Think and adapt quickly to the unexpected. Don't freeze or act inappropriately. Meet your assignment deadlines always, no exceptions. Expect no make-ups or extensions. Get it right the first time. Be responsible and reliable, especially when participating in group efforts. Always be able to stand by your work once it is submitted. Establish a good reputation, then always act to keep it!"

Priority Warning

Although the focus of this class is research and reporting for broadcast news and online, you will also be graded periodically 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 RTV stories and research assignments must be typewritten and fully comply with assignment expectations. 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 fact, spelling and grammar errors. Broadcasters always have this professional responsibility, even if you can't see their scripts on-air or online. For style questions refer to the Associated Press Broadcast Stylebook and the Webster's New World College Dictionary. **Errors of fact and misspelled names may be considered errors in fact and result in lower grades and/or failing grades on assignments.**

Electronic Format Reporting Projects:

Your midterm and final broadcast projects for the semester must utilize skills you've learned in J61, in other classes and in J132B. Develop your observation skills by paying close attention to details. Ask questions in class when uncertain about class assignments. Never expect interviewees to always be totally cooperative and forthcoming. Practice and use techniques with sharpen your questioning, inspire interview trust, and demonstrate your personality, charm and knowledge. This class is about how you present yourself always. Expect that and always show proper respect, patience, thoroughness and determination no matter what you encounter. "Get the story!" Do the assignment and submit it on time.

Creative flair and style are definitely appreciated and welcome in J132B. Showcasing your personal skills and abilities is expected. Never over do it, however. Too much flash and not enough substance (research info and content) always suggests a weak performer and journalist. Play to your strengths, try new approaches and avoid being repetitious. Sometimes an approach will work for one story or interview, but not work in another. Don't become predictable. "Go with the moment." Adapt and adjust immediately. Don't resist that...embrace it. Being flexible is key in all journalist endeavors.

The San Jose State University's grade point system:

grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
grade point	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0	0.7	0

1. **Academic integrity:** 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 Student Conduct and Ethical development. The policy on academic integrity can be found at http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.
2. **Students with disabilities:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make 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 requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.
The Disability Resource Center can be reached at (408) 924-5990.



School of Journalism & Mass Communications Policies

1. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices must be turned off in the classroom.
2. Do not schedule personal appointments that conflict with the time the class meets. Do not disrupt the class by leaving early. Latecomers may be denied entrance to the classroom.
3. In the classroom, laptops must be used for classroom related activities only, or turned off.
4. Remove your personal belongings and trash from the classroom after each class.
5. No food allowed in classrooms or labs.



Professor Bob Rucker Class Policies

1. No late assignments are ever accepted. No excuses. No make-ups. Meet your obligations the first time. Meet all deadlines always. Act professionally.
2. Treat fellow students, faculty, class guests and outside sources with respect, and never assume anything based on rumors or stereotypes. Be open to learning even if it challenges your comfort zone.
3. Avoid using perfumes and colognes in Rucker classes. He is allergic to them.
4. Learn more about Prof. Rucker. Profile link (left column Home page): www.profbob.com

School Statement on Plagiarism

To plagiarize is to "steal and use (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own." (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. 2007). 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. The School and the University regard plagiarism as academic dishonesty. Consequences include academic and other sanctions.

Make clear which ideas are yours and which is 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 considered to be a violation of the academic dishonesty policy by the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. This includes making up sources and attributing information to non-existent people or printed matter.

Student Responsibility for Adds, Drops, Etc.

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.

Advising : All Students Should Know:

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication invites all students on campus to consider careers in advertising, public relations and journalism, including newspaper, radio, television, online, photo and magazine journalism. We encourage students to explore these majors by speaking with faculty and students in the department. Students should always take advantage on any on campus event or opportunity to learn more about media careers. You are always welcome to visit JMC School faculty during their office hours to discuss career opportunities in media. Our professional faculty would be happy to offer you career information and suggestions.

To change your major, go to the main Journalism Office in DBH 105 and declare your intention. The office secretaries can help you and provide the necessary forms and direction for establishing an official major in one of our media fields..

Graduation Advising: Available every semester.

All students are expected to monitor their progress toward graduation closely and have the needed materials when it comes time to apply for graduation at SJSU.

ALWAYS KEEP A PRINTED COPY OF ALL YOUR TRANSCRIPTS & IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS.

Computers have been known to crash. Information can be lost over time. Help yourself by always having a print out of your grades from every college or university you have attended.

One JMC School faculty member is designated each semester to review the applications for all majors in advertising, PR and journalism. That faculty member uses the graduation form outline, provided to all students in each major, at the Journalism Office, DBH 105.

Fall semester, 2007, see Dr. Kathleen Martinelli to check your progress towards graduation. She will explain procedures and go over all our classes. Keep a copy of our major requirements worksheet.

Final Steps: Applying for SJSU Graduation in the Future

If you plan to graduate in May, get your graduation forms (major and minor) approved, signed and submitted in October the semester before. See the designated JMC School faculty advisor at that time. You can always find out who that is in the main office, DBH 105.

If you plan to graduate in December, get your graduation forms (major and minor) approved, signed and submitted in March the semester before. See the designated JMC School faculty advisor at that time. You can always find out who that is in the main office, DBH 105.

Have a great semester at San Jose State University!