



Writing for Print, Electronic and Online Media

School of Journalism & Mass Communications
San José State University Spring, 2008

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JOUR 061. Writing for Print, Electronic and Online Media

Introduction to writing for media—newspapers, magazines, electronic and the Internet—as well as producing content for multi-media distribution in a converged media environment. Emphasis on how different media require different writing styles.

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

The course is required of all journalism and public relations majors, and it must be taken prior to entry into professional courses in both majors.

Student Learning Objectives

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

- Demonstrate that they can write a hard news story in multimedia formats for radio, TV, newspapers, magazines and online.

Demonstrate that they can write and/or produce content for convergent media.
- Demonstrate the ability to transcribe quotations exactly and attribute all information or action to a source if they don't observe it.
- Demonstrate the ability to verify all assertions of fact when gathering information and when interviewing sources for a story.

- Write and/or produce stories that demonstrate good journalistic writing that is factually accurate, fair, clear, concise and has good sourcing and attribution as well as the correct use of quotes, grammar, spelling and Associated Press style.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for good journalistic writing, including factual accuracy, fairness, clarity, conciseness, good sourcing and attribution as well as the correct use of quotes, grammar, spelling and Associated Press style.
- Explain how different approaches to news consumers shape the conception, reporting and writing of stories in various media.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Recommended for this course Harrower, Tim (2006). *Inside reporting: A practical guide to the craft of journalism*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. (Reference book)

Strongly Recommended Support Text:

Brooks, Brian S., Pinson, James L., & Wilson, Jean Gaddy (Eds.) (2005). *Working with words: A handbook for media writers and editors*. New York: Bedford-St. Martin's. (Reference book)

Instructor Handouts/Internet Information. You will be responsible for assigned reading based on the text and handouts prepared by the instructors teaching Jour 61 this semester. Additional assigned reading will be based on information that you will be asked to look up on the Internet. The reading will be timely and made in conjunction with each of your assignments. They will be posted either online or sent by class e-mail.

Course Requirements:

Professor Rucker will utilize a variety of reading materials which help provide a basic understanding of the various news and information writing styles. He will try and post most handout material on his website: www.profbob.com. Student must stay current with the readings assigned. You will be quizzed in class, usually through writing assignments.

Current Events appreciation and understanding is crucial. Students must daily go online, read newspapers, watch TV news or listen to KCBS newsradio 740am. There is an old saying ... "Before you shoot off your mouth, make sure your brains are loaded."

Media professions usually prioritize completing assignments on or before deadlines. Students should never expect to receive extra time to meet expectations.

Today's emphasis on convergence includes being able to work with others, **work quickly** to meet basic requirements, and **take direction well** from people with specialty skills and abilities.

HELP YOUR WRITING:

Take notes in all J61b classes.

Ask questions each class to make sure you understand the thinking and writing needs of each assignment. Ask for an office hour appointment to discuss your writing.

Grading: [Professor Rucker's J61 Online Writing students will be evaluated as follows:](#)

25% Grade – **Current Events** knowledge. Discussions in class and written quizzes.

25% Grade – **Class Participation**. Asking clarifying questions before writing assignments.

50% Grade – **Writing Assignments**. Evaluation of how well you meet basic style requirements.

Late Papers and Missed Assignments

It is absolutely essential that journalists meet deadlines. No credit will be given if an assignment is late without excused permission. SJSU academic policy enables students to submit a written medical excuse or documentation of a family emergency or death in the family for excused permission.

Students should not expect to pass J61 if they miss ANY lab writing classes. One is enough to set a student behind and catching up may prove very difficult. Students may not drop J61 after the university drop date each semester, no exceptions. Withdrawal requests from classes are also, NOT automatically approved.

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

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.

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.

Specific Classroom Policies for Professor Rucker:

Note: Professor Rucker has severe allergy issues. He is allergic to colognes and perfumes. Students in his classes are asked to refrain from wearing these to his class sessions. You may be asked to leave the room.

Excused absences must be requested in advance. Call Prof. Bob's office BEFORE any class you anticipate missing and briefly explain. Remember: Illness and personal emergencies are always SJSU approved reasons. Never expect approval for most other reasons.

10 minute arrival rule. You may not enter the classroom after this time. You will be asked to leave.

If you miss a quiz, test, guest speaker, or any lecture/discussion/presentation, **expect NO make-up opportunities.**

No credit for assignments offered past deadline. You are learning based on professional standards.

Use office hours to discuss your writing in detail. Come in as often as you wish. Make a point of it.

Mature and respectful conversations are always expected. No exceptions.

Critical analysis of student writing (individually and with the entire class) should always be expected. Learn from critiques and never make the same mistake twice. Listen and learn from writing concerns expressed by both Professor Rucker and your classmates.

Don't get personally attached to any writing assignment that you can't take or learn from critical analysis. Writing by veteran & respected professionals is always reviewed and edited by others.

Take the initiative. Research and find ways to help you improve your spelling, grammar and writing. Don't wait to be told to do this. Address your needs and save yourself from potential embarrassment.

No false reporting of information. Never prioritize expediency to save a grade over accuracy and truth. Students who do so may be considered for immediate dismissal from this class. Journalistic integrity and ethical standards of proper conduct always apply.