

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO
Journalism 128 / Copy Editing and Ethics
Fall 2009

Meets: 6-9:50 p.m. Wednesday, MND- 3002
Professor: Mark Ludwig
Office: MND-5035
Office hours: Ludwig, 1-3 p.m. Wednesdays; 10-11 a.m. Thursdays
Office phones: 278-5814
E-mail: mdludwig@csus.edu
Course Web site (SacCT): <http://online.csus.edu>
Readings: <http://locus.csus.edu>

Catalog description

Instruction and practice in editing, headline writing, caption writing and journalism ethics.

Prerequisites

Jour 20, Style for Media Writers. You may take Jour 20 concurrently with this course but *you must pass Jour 20 in order to receive a grade for this class.*

Jour 30, News Writing. If you took the equivalent of Journalism 30 elsewhere, please provide proof in the form of a transcript or grade report.

Summary

Although this course is designed to introduce you to news editing for daily publication, the skills you develop here will be useful in other media. The goal is to develop a working knowledge of the micro and macro elements of editing, and to develop the practical skills that will help prepare you for a career in journalism.

This course will emphasize critical thinking, organizational skills, clear expression, accuracy, attention to detail, careful use of English, and working under deadline pressure, all of which form the bedrock of editing. The course will introduce you to, among other things, news advisories, content editing, wire service editing, copy editing, writer-editor relationships, handling graphics and photos, and editing for diverse audiences.

You also will learn about the elements of editing and what goes into being an editor, and will practice editing a variety of news articles. You will edit stories for accuracy, clarity, fairness, thoroughness, consistency, organization, style, length, grammar, spelling, syntax and punctuation.

This class will also explore some of the ethical problems that confront journalists today.

Required books

- *Modern News Editing*, fifth edition, by Mark D. Ludwig and Gene Gilmore (bring CD to class)
- *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (bring to class)
- *Thinking Clearly: Cases in Journalistic Decision-Making*, by Tom Rosenstiel and Amy Mitchell
- A paperback dictionary, preferably *Webster's New World* (bring to every class)

Recommended books

- *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk and E.B. White
- *Sin and Syntax*, by Constance Hale

Knowing the news

To learn how to be a journalist, and to continue on as an effective journalist, you should keep up with the news. For this class, you should stay current on national and world news as well as Sacramento news. Current events quizzes will be given periodically.

Course requirements and grading

This is a hands-on course and many assignments will be completed in class and/or reviewed in class. You cannot expect to do well if you are not present to do the work and receive help. You will not have the opportunity to make up missed lab work.

Unless otherwise instructed, all assignments must be typed.

Deadlines are deadlines, just like in the workplace. One of the characteristics of a good journalist is ability to meet deadline; for the purposes of this class, deadline is the *start* of the class on the date due. Work turned in after the start of class but before class is over will be marked down one grade. Once class is over, I will not accept it.

The four components of your grade:

Lab work & quizzes	:	50 percent
Term paper:		15 percent
Midterm :		15 percent
Discussion leadership:		5 percent
Final:		15 percent

Lab work and quizzes will be both in-class work and homework and may also include reports on guest speakers. Quizzes will be on current events and style and will be given most weeks.

In-class work cannot be made up, so it behooves you to come to class. However, because it's possible that you will need to miss class for legitimate reasons, you will have one opportunity to earn extra credit toward the end of the semester.

Term paper: You will receive a separate handout on this.

The midterm exam will cover the material from the first half of the course.

The final exam will cover material from the second half of the course.

Ethical conduct

The online readings include a link to the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. You are expected to be familiar with the Code of Ethics and conduct yourself accordingly.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves the copying of another's work without attribution or citation and is an affront to both journalism and university study. The Communications Studies Department policy on plagiarism follows:

Any student proved guilty of plagiarism in this course will be failed for the entire course, not just for the piece of work in which the plagiarism occurs. It is important, therefore, to understand exactly what plagiarism is.

Plagiarism is literary thievery: the use of somebody else's material as your own in a speech, film, or research paper without giving credit to the author. It includes, particularly, the following:

1. Use of somebody else's exact wording, whatever the material, without indication of the source and quotation marks or other accepted typographical devices. Changing a few words here and there is not sufficient to avoid plagiarism.
2. Borrowing the whole pattern of organization and points of view of a source without giving credit via standard in-text written citation.

3. Borrowing facts, figures, or ideas which originated with and are the property of a particular source, rather than a matter of common information available in many sources.
4. Collaborating with other students to the extent that two or more assignments are identical in pattern of organization, points of view, or wording.

And I add this note: In addition to failing you for the class, I will send your case to Student Affairs for disciplinary review. The university can expel you for plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty.

You also should be familiar with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, which you can find here:

<http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMA00150.htm>

SacCT and Locus

Part of this course will be conducted on SacCT and on Locus. You access SacCT at <http://online.csus.edu> and Locus at <http://locus.csus.edu>. During the first week of class, I will give you a brief overview of how to use these. Online tutorials are also available.

If I need to contact the class outside of class, I will post an announcement on Locus. Locus will forward the note to you via e-mail, if you provided your e-mail address when you signed into the class.

E-mail

I am happy to communicate with you by electronic mail. Unless I am out of town, I check my e-mail at least once a day; more frequently on weekdays. When you send me e-mail, Jour 128 in the subject line, to help me keep things sorted. If I do not respond within a day, you should assume that your e-mail went astray and try again, or contact me some other way.

Some advice about e-mail. I would recommend that for academic and professional purposes, you abandon any e-mail addresses that might cause the recipient to not take you seriously (such as 2sexy4u@hotmail.com). Those are just fine for use with your friends, but no potential employer will give you the time of day, not to mention old befuddled professors like me who just shake their heads.

Classroom conduct:

Treat this class as a job. I expect you to come to class and to be on time. Some other things worth noting:

1. Technology has provided marvelous ways to enhance education, but it also has provided new distractions. Please turn your cell phones to silent or off. Please do not answer your phone in class. Please do not text-message friends, enemies, or relatives, or anybody else during class. If you use a computer in class, please limit its use to material/applications relative to what we're discussing. (By that I mean, it's OK to take notes or visit Web sites relevant to class discussions; it's not OK to be checking or sending e-mail or instant messaging or watching YouTube or browsing Facebook or otherwise surfing the Web.) All of these things are a distraction not only to me, but more importantly to those sitting near you in class. If these things are more important to you than class, I'm OK with that, but please take them somewhere else.
2. Please do not chat with others while class is going on. Again, this is a distraction to those sitting near you.

Study guides

I am frequently asked before tests, "Will there be a study guide?" The short answer is no. Follow the syllabus, take notes in class, do the readings, review before the tests, and you will be fine.

Accommodations

Students requiring special accommodations should document their needs with the SSD office and let me know privately in advance of any quiz or test as required by university policy.

Author, author!

Finally, if somewhere down the line you write a book, I would love to have an autographed copy for my library of works by former students. Get writing!

CLASS SCHEDULE

Subject to change depending on needs of class. Reading assignments should be completed before each class.

Week	Date	Topics	MNE	TC	On Locus
1	9/2	Intro. to journalism ethics	1, 14	Intro	Ethical codes
2	9/9	What editors do	2, 3		Online journalism ethics
3	9/16	Micro editing	5, 6		Identifying rape victims
4	9/23	Writing headlines	7		Anonymous sources
5	9/30	Visuals	9	1	Conflicts of interest
6	10/7	Staff management	4	2	Fabrication
7	10/14	Editing the wires	10, 12	3	
8	10/21	Midterm exam			
9	10/28	Editing & the law	13	4	
10	11/4	The big picture	11	5	
11	11/11	HOLIDAY / campus closed			
12	11/18	Profits vs. community service	15	6	
13	11/25	No class / Outside assignment due 11/29			
14	12/2	Introduction to design	8	7	
15	12/9	Catchup week / lab work		8	
	12/16	Final, 5:15 p.m.			