

COURSE SYLLABUS

Intro to Journalism/Newspaper

Adviser: Mrs. Williams

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Content Summary & Expectations

Students in this class will be solely responsible for producing the University City High School newspaper, *U-Times* and its website *utimesonline.com* and potentially contributing to the yearbook. Students will have the opportunity to develop transferable skills that will serve them well beyond secondary education and into the professional workplace. Basics of journalism, photography and computer technology will be stressed. Students will learn to work within the hierarchy of a newspaper staff, much like an organizational chart in the workplace. Experienced students serve as editors; new students are staff members. Adviser to the editor and staff is Mrs. Williams.

Students are expected to work after school (or on Thursday or Friday) as determined by the teacher to meet a given deadline.

Textbooks

Students will use selections from the following texts:

[High School Journalism](#), Homer L. Hall and Logan Aimone, rev. ed. 2009, Rosen Publishing Group

[Convergent Journalism](#), Stephen Quinn and Vincent F. Filak, 2005, Elsevier

[The Elements of Journalism](#), Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenthal, 2007, Three Rivers Press

Unit Outline/Scope and Sequence of Course

During the first six weeks of school, students will be instructed on the basics of journalism. For new students, this will be an intensive period of learning. For returning students or students who have taken Intro to Journalism, this will be equal parts review/mentoring/planning for first issue.

1. Basics of Journalistic research, style, terminology, reporting, writing and editing.
2. Language, grammar, and analytical styles.
3. Basics of graphic design.
4. Basics of digital photography, photo composition, perspective, contrast, depth and resolution.
5. Advertising sales.
6. Computer-based instruction on the basics of Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign and Photoshop).

After the first six weeks, the course becomes production-oriented and students are operating on deadlines for the following:

1. Story Planners
2. Rough Draft
3. Final Draft
4. Photography
5. Advertising

GRADING

Your grade is comprised of summative and formative assessments. The summative assessments are 70% of the final grade and the formative assessments are 30% of the final grade. Summative assessments are assessments *of learning*. Summative assessments measure mastery of a learning target. Formative assessments are assessments *for learning*. Formative assessments guide the teachers and students by measuring the progress being made toward a particular learning target.

A typical semester in Newspaper looks like this:

| Type of Assignment | Percentage of Grade | Total points per semester | Breakdown of points |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Summative | 70% | 100 pts. | 40 pts. -Final stories |
| Formative | 30% | 500-600 pts. | Ranging from 10-50 pts. -Meeting deadlines, transcribing interviews, writing and editing stories, taking pictures, writing captions, designing pages, working after school, attending events. |

The final exam counts for 10% of student's overall semester grade.

If a student does not achieve mastery on a summative assessment, it may be retaken one time during the following unit. In order to redo a summative, a student **MUST** attend a tutoring or relearning/reteaching session before the retake. The student will earn the higher of the two test scores (up to 80%).

Important Assessments and Projects

The newspaper is printed 4-5 times per year. The newspaper website is updated daily. Meeting these deadlines with quality work is the most important element of this class. When required, students need to stay after school to meet their deadlines, interview their subjects, or attend an event.

Assignments and Instructional Methods

Assignments are made well in advance of the deadlines. Students typically have 4-6 weeks to complete their work for each deadline. In most cases, students pick their story topic and work fairly independently to complete the steps of the process. I serve as an adviser and guide the students through the process. Staff members are encouraged to work with their editors to solve problems. Lessons use focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning.

Deadlines/Homework

Deadlines are based on the printer's deadlines. As soon as these become available, students will be informed. Assessments are given in tandem with deadlines. It is imperative that students meet their deadlines because missing a deadline causes delay in publication, and often requires another student to complete the work.

Materials

Students will need a separate folder or binder, notebook, writing utensil, a reporter's notebook and press pass (provided by teacher).

Late Work Policy

Late work will be accepted within 2 days of due date. For each class period that the assignment is late, 10% of the overall grade will be deducted. *It is the responsibility of the individual student to ask Mrs. Williams for work they have missed while absent.*

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. An automatic zero with a parent conference is the first action. Administration will determine if further action needs to be taken.

University City High School Expectations

- Completion of homework is not optional and is expected to be done on a timely basis. Expect to have 20 minutes of homework each night for each class.
- Use the UCHS planner or other appropriate planner to record assignments.
- Use an organizational system that works for you, such as a folder for each class.
- Be sure to bring appropriate materials to class and also to take home for homework.
- Work with your parents to designate a quiet, organized place to study.
- Produce neat, quality work.
- Turn in assignments on time.
- Communicate with your teacher if you're having difficulty with a particular assignment or consistently cannot complete your assignments..
- NO CELL PHONES!

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Support and Resources

Students are encouraged to come into my class after school. In addition, newspaper and yearbook students are placed in my seminar unless they are in an AP class or another organization that meets during seminar.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/02/> (AP Style)

<http://jea.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/stylebook.pdf> (*The News Writer's Handbook* by Rob Melton)

Lastly, my desire is to maintain an open line of communication regarding the newspaper with students and parents. We have a challenging job ahead and need to work together as a cohesive team. Please feel free to contact me any time a concern arises.