

San Jose State University
School of Journalism & Mass Communications
Journalism 135, Reporting, Editing and Management
Spring 2014

General Information

Professors/advisers:	Richard Craig, Scott Fosdick, Kim Komenich, Mack Lundstrom
Guest advisers:	Diane Guerrazzi, Lloyd LaCuesta, Tim Mitchell, Bob Rucker
Office locations:	DBH Newsroom advisers' office (DBH209H); other offices as noted on JMC website (http://jmc.sjsu.edu)
E-mail:	profcraig@profcraig.com ; scott.fosdick@sjsu.edu ; kim.komenich@sjsu.edu ; charlie.lundstrom@sjsu.edu
Newsroom office hours:	3:00-6:00 p.m. (Monday-Fosdick; Tuesday-Lundstrom; Wednesday-Craig; Thursday-Komenich)
Class days/times:	Critique/Assignments: MTWR 10:30-11:45 a.m. Lab work on stories: MTWR 3:00-6:00 p.m.
Classroom:	DBH209
Prerequisites:	Reporters: JOUR 61, JOUR 132; Photographers: JOUR 95; Editors: JOUR 135 as reporters; non-majors with demonstrated writing and/or Web-design skills: instructor consent.
Course Web site:	http://www.profcraig.com/135s14.html

Course Description

A team of reporters, photographers and editors will produce student media publications. The editors will direct the coverage, including digital photography and audio/video streaming. May be repeated for credit with instructor consent.

Content

Journalism 135 is a laboratory operated by you as students to help you improve your reporting, writing, editing, photographing and other media production skills. Most of you receive three units of credit and a grade. As such, while you're producing content for the *Spartan Daily* newspaper and website, *Access* magazine, *Update News* and other student media projects, this is still an academic enterprise.

It is also a not-for-profit enterprise generating advertising revenue to publish news content for roughly 30,000 student, faculty and staff members of the San Jose State University community.

Some editors earn a stipend for their efforts. If you're a reporter or photographer, you earn only credit, and experience, which many of your predecessors say is worth more.

In prerequisite courses and other publications, you have been taught to write and photograph and edit fairly and accurately. You all understand the power your stories, pictures and video can wield: to reveal the facts about events and issues, to expose wrongdoing. Your advisers urge you to follow those principles, but as a staff you may publish what you wish without prior restraint.

Your ultimate boss, the chancellor of the California State University system, cannot stop you from printing a story, nor can the president of the university, nor the director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, nor your advisers. If they know in advance about your intent to run a story fraught with peril – and it should be your common sense to make sure that they do – they may advise you not to run it. Still it's your call, and generally your advisers will back the publication of any story you print if you have produced an accurate, balanced account and you have given deliberate consideration to the consequences of running the story, column, editorial, photograph or cartoon.

Your advisers hope that you print hard-hitting news and compelling feature stories and pictures that are factual. Your advisers hope that you publish considerate and persuasive opinion pieces on the editorial page. And your advisers hope we can help you have fun while you're doing all this. But your advisers also ask that you remember that while this is your newspaper, it is our class. Please allow us the freedom to use our experience to help you learn.

Publication requirements

Semester minimums (students in all areas of specialty):

- Broadcast – Assist in production of one multimedia story package, One VO/SOT (voice over), One TV news package (your VO/SOT can lead to full package)
- Magazine/Feature/Opinion – One short assignment for Access (including art), two feature/opinion pieces in any outlet
- Daily News Stories – 9 stories (2 in first 5 weeks, 3 in second 5 weeks, 4 in third 5 weeks), at least one table/infographic
- Multimedia/online – Develop one story into individual multimedia package for Daily website (min of 4 elements) – deadlines determined at random across thirds of semester
- Photo – one published photo with caption per 5 weeks, one of the following: photo story/spread for Daily or Access, audio slideshow

Additional requirements for students in each specialty area (you will pick from one of these)

- Broadcast – minimum plus: At least one news package per 5 weeks (news, sports, feature), one special report, one live report
- Magazine/Feature/Opinion – minimum plus: 3000 more words across two or more stories; must include art in two or more stories
- Daily news – minimum plus: three additional stories each 5 weeks, which should include at least one opinion, one Sports and one A&E story
- Multimedia – minimum plus: create all content, design and develop one Web multimedia package OR one mobile app

- Photo – minimum plus: 12 published photos with caption and one enterprise photo story or essay

Student Learning Objectives

This course will teach you how to produce content for student media. By the end of this semester, students should be able to:

- Understand and 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
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications
- Show understanding of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Show ability to think critically, creatively and independently
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- Show ability to critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- Demonstrate basic numerical and statistical concepts
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Policies and Procedures

- The following procedures are mostly specific, but you should view the policies as broad guidelines. When faced with a problem, try for guidance from an editor or adviser, but if that's not possible, avoid a snap decision. Even on deadline, you can stop for a minute and think it through.
- Generally, it's a good rule to treat sources the same way you would expect to be treated if you were being interviewed for a story. Be aboveboard at all times. Make it standard operating procedure when talking to sources to identify yourself as a *Spartan Daily* reporter, photographer or editor.

- When you're away from the newsroom working on a story - especially one on deadline - let your editor know where you are. On a breaking story, find a phone immediately after arriving and sizing up the situation and call the desk.

Before you go out on a story

- If the story has been assigned to you as a turnaround, a story to be published for the next day's paper, make arrangements for linking up with your editor. (If, for example, it's a breaking story, size up the story when arriving at the scene, find a phone and CALL YOUR EDITOR.)
- If the story has a longer deadline, make sure you know when your editor expects it. If the story has not been assigned - i.e., an enterprise story - make sure you've cleared it with an editor so it can be budgeted.
- Check *Daily* clips in the file cabinets in the kitchen/morgue or in the archives of <http://www.thespartandaily.com>. Sometimes you will save yourself hours of legwork.
- Form a clear idea of why you are doing a story, what its basic news value is.
- Ask editors if they have suggestions about contacts or where to start. Ask your advisers, other reporters as well.
- Once you've made a contact, ask for an interview or make an appointment. Be as accommodating as possible, but always keep in mind your deadline. Ask your contacts to suggest other sources.
- When you've sized up your story, see your editor or the Photo Editor about a photo request.

Grading criteria

Reporters are graded largely on individual performance - number and quality of stories, attendance at critique, professionalism and effort. Editors are judged more on collaborative results. The advisers will observe, consult with staff members and assign letter grades weighing those factors.

Sources

- Multisource stories must have at least three sources or they will not be run. There are always at least three judgments about anything. Try to get more sources than you will use; four or five would be ideal. (On rewrites, the handout does not constitute a source; the legitimacy of every release must be verified.)
- Anytime you are having source problems with a story, talk to an editor as soon as possible.

Interviewing advice

- Always be courteous and professional. Remember you are representing your publication, which is a professional news organization. The impression people form of you will be their impression of our student media.
- While courtesy is imperative, never shy from asking tough questions. If someone is hiding something, your readers should be told why.
- Get names in stories right. Ask sources to spell the names they prefer, first, middle, last, nicknames. Many things are forgivable, but spell a person's name wrong in print and you become a "slimeball journalist" faster than you can say "typo."
- Get those phone numbers, including where a source can be reached at given times.
- Let your sources know you value them and their opinions.
- If you use a recorder, take notes too.
- Pencils write uphill, when wet and when cold. Most ballpoints don't.

Reading stories to sources

Because accuracy is paramount, we want you to read quotes back to the source who gave them to you and read back material that you attribute to that source. Other than putting the quotes or paraphrases in context, however, do not read back anything more.

That's important because sources commonly ask reporters to let them see the story before it appears. Sometimes they make it a condition before they'll agree to an interview. Or they argue that they merely want the story to be accurate.

The danger arises when the sources read something they do not like and make threats. As you learned in media law, our system of journalism does not allow for prior restraint. We publish the story. If we make a mistake, we correct it.

The other argument against reading back stories is, again, a matter of fairness. If you are doing your job right, you will have written a provocative story full of sources. And it would be unfair to let any one of them see it if you are not going to let all the other sources in your story see it ahead of time also.

Off the record

Sources rarely know the meaning of "off the record." Nothing spoken to a reporter is ever "off the record" in a legal sense, unless prior arrangements have been made. So if a source tells you something, and then immediately says, "Oh, that was off the record," you can use that information, as long as you identified yourself as a reporter. The honorable thing to do, however, would be to let the source know that you intend to use the material. The official legal jargon is:

- **On the record** - Everything is fair game and may be printed.

- **Off the record** - The reporter cannot use the information in the paper. (There are various schools of thought regarding off the record. Some believe that it's as if you never heard the information and can't use it at all. Some say to not listen to the information at all. Most journalists end up writing the information down and trying to get the source to go on the record with it or using the information to get someone else to go on the record.)
- **Not for attribution/background** - You can use the info, but without identifying your source. Be as specific as possible. Example: "... according to a university official familiar with building safety, Dudley Moorhead Hall, Morris Dailey Auditorium and Sweeney Hall are not up to minimum earthquake safety standards."
- **Deep background** - This is when your source wants you to know something to help you out, but does not want you to attribute it to anyone. Your only option here is to use the information to find someone you can persuade to go on the record.

Try not to use these terms when talking to sources. It's better to use the above definitions. If your source uses the term "off the record," respond with something like, "Tell me what that term means to you." If it jibes with your definition, fine; if not, come to a meeting of the minds. Be aboveboard.

Never, under any circumstances, include material in your article that your source told you for deep background or clearly off the record. If you do this, that source will probably never again want to speak to one of our reporters.

Consult with your editor if you are having doubts about what to include in your article or how to get a source to go on the record.

Our student media always try to use on-the-record sources.

Freelancing

Reporters may freelance their work for student media to other organizations as long as it has first been published in our media or our editors have had the right of first refusal.

Ethics

As a reporter, you will have to make decisions on the fly about ethics. Following are intended as suggestions to help you. Consult an editor or adviser if you find yourself in a bind.

- Always be up front with people and identify yourself as a reporter for your given outlet.
- Get all sides of the story, usually more than three.
- Decline gifts given to you as a reporter, or donate them to charity. The only exception here is if you are given passes to an event that you have been assigned to cover by an editor. If you are a sportswriter/photographer and food is offered at a game, don't be a pig. It won't hurt to mind your manners, too, and thank the person in charge.
- If in doubt about accepting a freebie, don't.

- CDs, DVDs and other recordings are considered press releases and can be kept, but not resold.
- You may not use your position for personal gain or to threaten anyone.

Diversity and Controversial Issues

Throughout the semester, in news stories and in class, we will discuss matters relating to differences in race, culture, social class, sexuality and many other issues. In the beginning, this may seem uncomfortable, but the goal is to create an environment where we can talk about such matters thoughtfully, frankly and with respect and empathy. By doing this, we aim to make you comfortable dealing with these matters while working on your stories. You should always consider how your story might affect different groups on campus, and talk to members of those groups as part of the process.

Likewise, every semester we deal with controversies. These can range from publishing material some people don't want published, revealing information that makes someone look bad, voicing unpopular opinions, or simply covering a story in a way someone doesn't like. We WILL NOT shy away from controversial topics, but we need to do a thorough job in reporting on them. Reporters need to think about the effect a story will have on different students, faculty, staff and administrators, and talk to people on various sides of the story. We want you to learn to be responsible journalists and raise the standards of the profession.

Conflict of interest

- To avoid conflict of interest or the appearance thereof, reporters are forbidden from writing about organizations or employers for whom they work, have worked, volunteer or have volunteered. This means you may not write about the bookstore if you have worked there, or the San Jose Sharks if you work in their media office. There are rarely any exceptions to this rule.
- Now comes the hard part: At the end of the semester, Joe Student reads an opinion piece by the newly appointed sports editor, who covered women's soccer and wrote about Title IX as a part of her beat during the semester. If the new sports editor complains that SJSU will never meet the proportional requirements of women's athletics, how will Joe Student react? Will he say, "Now I know why she was always bad-mouthing the athletic director?" Do we care? Your advisers think we should. That's why reporters are forbidden from writing opinion pieces about the beats they will cover or have covered. The rule does not apply to editors. Editors are supposed to write columns, editorials. That's part of their job descriptions.

Libel

Watch out for stories:

1. Accusing someone of a crime.

2. Implying dishonesty or immorality.
3. Making statements about unchastity, marital discord or sexual orientation.
4. Assessing guilt or casting suspicion.
5. Stating or implying someone has a loathsome disease or mental disorder.
6. Engaging in ridicule.
7. Comparing someone to a person of ill repute or certain animals.
8. Drawing connections between a person and others with bad character, even friends or relatives.
9. Making statements affecting a person's occupation or business: breach of ethics, incompetence, inefficiency, bankruptcy, fraud, dishonesty, financial difficulty.
10. Disparaging a person's nationality, race or religion.
11. Questioning a person's loyalty to a nation, organization or church.
12. Accusing corporations of illegal activity or negative actions; criticizing a product.
13. Expressing favoritism in government.

(This section on libel reproduced with permission from the University of Missouri Journalism School's IRE Journal, Winter 1990, page 6.)

Investigative Reporters & Editors is a not-for-profit educational organization for Journalists. For more information about IRE go to <http://www.ire.org>.

If you encounter any of the foregoing, consult an editor.

Plagiarism

Any staff member who uses someone else's words as his or her own faces failing the course.

You will be protected from charges of plagiarism if you attribute to your source(s) all information you include in your article, or observe it yourself.

Corrections

We will prominently display the correction of errors, including those that alter the balance and substance of stories, misspell names and misquote sources.

California's libel law states that a newspaper has 21 days to respond to a demand for a correction in order to protect itself from damages. Because of the sensitive nature of corrections and the multimillion-dollar lawsuits stemming from them, extreme caution is urged when handling corrections. Use the 21 days to consult with your editors, advisers and legal counsel in the unlikely event the error may generate a lawsuit.

Returning as a *Spartan Daily* editor

The *Daily* executive editor is selected and the new editing staff members are trained during the last three weeks of the semester. After consulting with advisers, the new editor invites current staff members to return as editors, some of whom will receive grants in aid for the following semester.

Minimum requirements for consideration as executive editor are an overall GPA of at least 2.5 with a 3.0 in the major, journalistic leadership, competence, fairness, integrity, responsibility, professionalism and dependability.

On a specified date, nominations will open; reporters, editors and photographers may nominate colleagues for the position of executive editor, or candidates may self-nominate. Several days later, editor candidates will orally present their case before the staff during critique and answer questions, then post in the newsroom a document that includes a resume, platform statement and any other materials they wish to include (limited to a total of eight pages).

After reading the platforms and considering the choices for several days, *Daily* staff members will nominate, interview and elect from their number three members to the *Spartan Daily* Selection Committee. These three cannot be candidates for executive editor or any of the paid editor positions. They will join four faculty members as the selection committee to name a new executive editor after interviewing each candidate individually.

In making its selection by secret ballot, the committee will take into account the candidates' performance as reporters, journalism majors and university students, as well as the committee interview. The school director, who does not vote, will take the committee choice under advisement. After exercising the power to veto or approve the decision, the director will officially name the editor upon informing the college dean.

The new executive editor will consult with the advisers and assemble a staff of editors from among staff members eligible to return for another semester. Training begins the last two to three weeks of the semester, and the new editing staff will start phasing in to full editing and production during the final seven issues of the semester.

Opinion Content

Editorials are the official opinion of the newspaper. Topics are usually current events. Editorials are written by editors, although some may be assigned to reporters. The writer should present a position, clearly explaining the opinion of the *Daily*. The editorial should end with a cracker that provides answers for the reader. Editorials are usually written in a persuasive manner.

Editorial endorsements, if published, must be the opinion of the entire editorial board after the board interviews candidates.

Opinion pieces are the birthplace of ideas. They are where reporters are allowed to take a step away from structured news writing and put a little of themselves into a story. An opinion piece is the reporter's opportunity to try persuasive writing. Stream of conscious pieces can be effective, but usually the most effective are those in which the reporter has done some reporting before writing.

Columnists are editors and senior staff writers for the *Daily*.

Letters to the Editor are the lifeblood of the newspaper, whether readers are writing to complain or to commend. Most of them are printed, unless defamatory. They are edited as needed to conform to length stipulated by the editorial board in staff-box guidelines. A writer who submits a letter must list his or her name; class if a student or relevance to the university if a faculty, staff or community member; address; and phone number. Letters whose writers cannot be verified by phone call or other proof will not be published. Campus Viewpoints provide opportunity for writers in the campus community to submit more expansive essays. These are not to be confused with Letters to the Editor, which are shorter. Letters and viewpoints whose extreme assertions give the Opinion Editor pause should be referred to the full editorial board for discussion and decision about publication.

Editorial Cartoons are created by staff artists, if same are enrolled.