

# Journalism I Syllabus 2018-19



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## Overview and Purpose

This course is designed to be an introduction to the study and practice of Journalism. Throughout the next 12-15 weeks, we are going to work a lot on the skills that journalists practice every day. This is a writing course and we will be writing a lot. Unlike other writing courses you may have taken, everything counts—spelling, grammar, and the numerous rules of style that are unique to journalism. Since journalistic writing is designed to be published to a wide audience, mistakes, even minor ones are to be avoided wherever possible.

Topics covered during Semester One include:

- History of journalism
- Role of journalist in a democratic society
- Libel and copyright law
- News literacy (including recognizing Fake News!)
- Journalistic ethics
- Journalism style
- Interviewing skills
- ALTs (Alternative Copy Formats)
- Feature writing
  - \*Informational features
  - \*Human interested features
  - \*Personality Profiles
- Opinion Writing
  - \*Editorials
  - \*Reviews
- Basic photo composition

**Attendance:** Essential. My hope is that you will get most of the work I assign done \*during\* class. (Gasp! Is this Verwys speaking?!?) ☺ So if you are absent, you will have to make the work up on your own time. This is a performance based class; students must be present to perform.

**Grades:** Every assignment will be worth a certain amount of points. Grades will be determined by dividing the total number of points you earn in the marking period. These are all in one “bucket” and the only “assessment” score you will receive will be your Final Exam in January.

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**Assignments:** You will have a LOT of choice over your assignment topics this semester. The full class will do some assignments, but you will also report and write stories for which you will choose your own topics.

**NOTE:** Misuse of class time can result in grade penalties for each unit.

**Completion of assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour. Please note: this does NOT mean five minutes into the hour or at the end of the hour/day. It means: at the **beginning**. There will be no time given for printing. One thing that journalists have to deal with is deadlines, and in the real world editors don't accept excuses. You meet deadlines. Period.

However, since I know this is high school, not quite the real world, ☺ I will accept late assignments under the following conditions:

1. Regular assignments: I will accept late assignments up until Friday of the week they are due. However, LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE WORTH A MAXIMUM OF 50% OF THEIR ORIGINAL VALUE.
2. Major assignments (articles, processed pieces) will go down 20% each day they are late. After 5 class days have passed, they will no longer be accepted.

*Major writing assignments (articles, etc.) will go through several drafts. Each draft must meet each editing deadline. (Example – a typical story might be due on Monday, then you would get it back on Tuesday and then a revised draft would be due on Wednesday. You'd get a second set of edits on Thursday and then a final draft would be due Friday.) Any deadlines you miss during that week are subject to the penalties outline above.*

**Food, drink, clothing and cell phones:** I follow your student handbook on policies. You are welcome to bring food and beverages into the class as long as they don't crunch or crackle.... And as long as you treat the space respectfully. I'm a stickler on respect for this room and everyone one it.

## **Semester Two:**

Should you successfully complete the requirements of the course, you will be admitted into a temporary position on the Roar staff. You will be involved in the bullpens, assignments and editing process that leads to the final publications of each issue.