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## **JOURNALISM COURSE SYLLABUS**

*“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” -Thomas Jefferson*

### **COURSE RATIONALE**

This class is designed to introduce the student to the fundamental elements of news writing, page layout, and photography. Students will learn the terms and concepts of journalism, including the history of the field and the ethics of journalism. Classes will include discussions, workshops, group and individual meetings, writing, revising, and publishing. Students will read and discuss recently published articles that have appeared in print or online, and will also read and evaluate some examples of creative journalism.

In addition to class assignments, students will be producing the La Jolla High School newspaper, the *Hi-Tide*. Since this is an English elective class, students should be mindful that the skills sharpened in English class will apply also to this class, especially grammar and usage, although there are some important differences between journalistic and academic writing.

After the introductory 1-2 class, students will be able to find a particular niche within the wide field of journalism and spend time directing his/her energy toward that area of interest. For example, he/her may be more interested in photojournalism than in feature writing, or editorials than sports writing, and will have the opportunity to apply to be an editor.

### **JOURNALISM 1-8: COURSE DESCRIPTION** [UC] [CSU]

A course in which students learn the basic techniques and skills of journalistic writing, investigate the source and meaning of “freedom of the press,” and explore the dependency of other freedoms upon an informed citizenry. Higher level courses (3-8); students learn and practice newspaper writing, editing, production, and business management. Students also work as staff writers for the school newspaper, *Hi-Tide*. Course fulfills area “G” (college preparatory elective) in the A-G graduation requirements.

Prerequisite: “A” or “B” in both semesters of the previous English class; approval of the journalism advisor.

### **STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS**

The extent to which a student will succeed in this course involves a combination of time management, goal-setting, and adherence to societal expectations regarding interaction with and respect for fellow students and staff.

To demonstrate effective time management skills, students are expected to maintain a calendar/planner and devote enough time each night to complete the homework, review concepts, and study, as well as read regularly for schoolwork and for pleasure. To meet goals, students need to continue a cycle of self-reflection: *what did I need to learn today (what was the purpose of the lesson), did I achieve the stated outcome, and what can I do to continue to improve/learn?* To achieve success in the La Jolla High School environment, read the school’s mission statement, core values, and student-learner outcomes.

### **LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL’S MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES**

LJHS strives to provide an effective, innovative, and relevant educational experience for its students, challenging them to achieve their full intellectual, social and emotional potential.

**CORE VALUES:**

- Excellence – We encourage faculty, staff, coaches, and students to innovate and collaborate with each other in order to experience a productive process and meaningful outcomes.
- Honor – We create a culture of honesty and respect for all interactions.
- Fortitude – We foster an appreciation and respect for intellectual curiosity, academic rigor and the hard work required to achieve lasting success.
- Community – We engage fully in our environment—on campus, in our neighborhoods, and in the world beyond us.

**LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL’S SCHOOL-WIDE STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES (SSLO’s)**

1. *COMMUNICATE AND COLLABORATE*

Students will demonstrate effective oral, written, technological, visual, and interpersonal communication skills in order to experience a productive and meaningful outcome.

2. *ANALYZE AND EVALUATE*

Students will demonstrate the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation in order to cultivate intellectual curiosity, engage in academic rigor, and develop a focused work ethic.

3. *ENGAGE AND INTERACT*

Students will engage in their school environment in order to create a school community that fosters a culture of honesty and respect for all interactions. Students will develop strength of character that prepares them to make a significant difference in the world.

4. *THINK BEYOND*

Students will become thoughtful, engaged citizens in a global society prepared for participation in the world beyond high school. Students will learn about the cultural, political, historical, scientific, ethical, and economic forces shaping the world.

**ASSESSMENT**

Students earn a letter grade each grading period based on summative assessments and the student-led conference. A *summative assessment*, such as a published article or multiple-choice exam, is an evaluative score and figures into the calculation of the student’s final grade.

<b>How Summative Assessments are Weighted in a Standards-Based Gradebook</b> (these percentages do count in PowerSchool)				
<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Speaking and Listening</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Timeliness</i>
22.5%	22.5%	22.5%	22.5%	10%

*Formative assessments* are diagnostic and practice assignments intended to give students feedback on standards leading up to an embedded assessment or exam (summative grades) and are entered into PowerSchool gradebook as a quintile score. Some formative assessments may be revised into summative assessments, such as rough drafts, or accumulate into a summative grade.

<p><b>Formative Assessment Quintile Scores Conversion Scale</b> (ignore percentages in PowerSchool; they do not count)</p>
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<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>No evidence of standard</i> <b>0%</b>	<i>Incomplete evidence of standard</i> <b>1 - 39.99%</b>	<i>Emerging evidence of standard</i> <b>40 - 69.99%</b>	<i>Proficient evidence of standard</i> <b>70 - 89.99%</b>	<i>Exemplary evidence of standard</i> <b>90 - 100%</b>

A “0” simply means the student missed that opportunity to be assessed. Since they are not averaged into the final grade, students need not be duly concerned about missing an occasional formative assessment; however, if a pattern emerges, I will sit down with that student for a frank but constructive discussion.

### **TIMELINESS**

As the popular saying goes in journalism, “The only reason for missing a deadline is death. Your own.” That said, being an academic elective class, we do accept late summative assessments, such as an article for publication, but they will incur a late penalty. If a student wishes to turn in a summative assessment late, he or she understands that we will deduct five (5) points from their 50-point “Timeliness” grade for each class or day the assessment is overdue. Thus, a draft due Friday but uploaded to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) on Monday will be assessed a 15-point late penalty in “Timeliness” in the most recent 3-week progress report. Timeliness constitutes 10% of your total class grade. The 50 points of “Timeliness” will be distributed over five 3-week progress reports, worth 10 points each, over the course of the semester. In-class summative assessments are assigned well in advance. If you know you are going to be absent the day of an assessment, please let me know as soon as possible via email. Truancies, unexcused absences, or students who display a pattern of absenteeism may not participate in make-ups. For further clarification, see the [LJHS Academic Handbook](#).

Catastrophic emergencies will be dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Computer problems are not catastrophic events; either submit early or accept the late penalty. All late summative assessments need to be submitted by the final week of the quarter, or they are a “0”.

Excused absences five (5) school days or longer usually require a work contract through the office; if you’re absent two (2) periods or longer, an email prior to your return so work can be prepared for make up is appreciated.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Rigorous academic honesty is my expectation. A student will earn a low scholarship grade if he or she chooses not to follow the academic honesty policy. A first offense for plagiarism or cheating is a “0” on the assignment, a referral, and a “U” in citizenship for the progress reporting period. A second-time offense will earn an “F” in scholarship, a referral, a “U” in citizenship for the semester, and removal from the course. I can and have flunked students for plagiarism. That is not an idle threat, but a promise to uphold academic integrity. Students can anonymously report instances of plagiarism [on the LJHS Website](#).

### **CITIZENSHIP GRADING**

To graduate from high school, and to participate in many extracurricular activities including athletics, students are required to maintain a 2.0 GPA in citizenship. The following descriptions should provide a guide in determining what students can expect in this course.

4.0 E = Excellent

3.0 G = Good

2.0 S = Satisfactory

1.0 N = Not Satisfactory

0.0 U = Unacceptable

The following are the citizenship descriptors and attendance policies of LJHS:

- The “E” student demonstrates the citizenship values above, consistently participates in class, and shows leadership qualities. The student has no warnings or reminders about behavior. The student consistently meets and often exceeds behavioral expectations. His/her absences are minimal and excused. The student follows classroom rules consistently and dependably. The student completes assignments on time. The student has fewer than three tardies.
- The “G” student demonstrates the citizenship values above, participates a few times, and has at most one reminder about behavior. The student typically displays positive behavior and contributes to the learning environment. The student is consistently on task and engaged. The student follows classroom rules. The student generally submits work on time. The student may have one to three tardies.
- The “S” student may demonstrate citizenship values above, but his/her participation is inconsistent. The student has turned in late work more than a few times. The student is inconsistent about following classroom rules. The student has been warned about a recurring unacceptable behavior and has not corrected or changed his/her behavior. The student may have more than three tardies. The student may have one or two unexcused absences.
- The “N” student does not demonstrate citizenship values above. The student frequently exhibits disruptive behavior and fails to follow classroom rules. The student is almost always late with assignments, or does not turn them in at all. Negative behavior patterns have not improved. The student has more than five tardies. The student may have three unexcused absences.
- The “U” student breaks classroom rules regularly (at least weekly, sometimes daily), and has received multiple warnings. The student makes little attempt to change his/her behavior. The student seldom completes work. The student has frequent tardies, three or more unexcused absences (or one verified truancy), or has exhibited behavior in class that led to severe disciplinary action.

In addition to the usual citizenship expectations for LJHS students, Journalism students are held to a higher standard of personal and academic conduct when it comes to honesty, accuracy, and fairness of reporting as outlined in the *Hi-Tide* editorial policy and staff contract. Editors are in leadership positions and must score 90% on each semester mid-term and final exam in order to retain their position. The advisor, in consultation with the editor-in-chief, reserves the right to remove an editor from a page if his or her conduct repeatedly violates the [Hi-Tide Staff Contract](#). In exceptional cases, I can and have removed students from the class. Journalism can be great fun, stressful and tremendously rewarding, but professional conduct must apply to all staff members.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

To support student learning, I have weekly Office Hours for students who need additional support and tutoring. They are Tuesdays before school from 7:20 - 8:30, unless announced otherwise. Students who schedule conferences with me beforehand have priority; drop-ins will be seen in order of arrival.

### **STUDENT LED CONFERENCES**

Passing period and the first fifteen minutes of class are usually quite hectic for me, so please wait for an appropriate time to for questions regarding homework, and so forth (after the warm-up and preview of the day's agenda is an excellent time). Questions about individual grades, no matter how brief, are not an appropriate use of class time. Schedule an appointment during Office Hours so you have my undivided attention and we can review a grade in detail. It is my policy to conference with parents or guardians about student grades only if the student is present, so there is a plurality of perspectives, during Office Hours. Printed progress reports for parent/guardian signature go home every third Monday, and I'm happy to correct accounting errors via email.

Each semester students will lead a student-led conference (SLC) with me and present their learning goals, their challenges, and their evidence of growth and the degree of success they achieved in each of the Common Core standard strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. We will discuss the student's achievement and decide which letter grade best describes the evidence presented. While I have the final authority to determine a student's grade, I value parent and student feedback in this process in offering a more holistic view of the learner.

### **HOMEWORK AND PREPARATION**

In order to be successful, students must read every iota of the assigned text before coming to class. Be prepared to work with the text. Discussing varying aspects of literature, including style and structure, will be a daily practice. In preparation for these discussions, students will sometimes be asked to complete written homework to accompany reading homework.

### **HALL PASSES**

So long as students follow the procedure outlined in class, I trust they can heed the call of nature and then return to class without delay. In the rare cases this privilege has been abused, I have alternative procedures. Documented medical conditions will be treated in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

There is no such thing as extra credit.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

As it says in the LJHS Academic Handbook "All electronic devices...are not to be used during instructional hours...unless specifically authorized by the instructor." If I determine an electronic device is posing a distraction, I will hold it for the appropriate time period depending on the situation.

### **UNIVERSAL TARDY POLICY**

The first week of each semester will be a tardy grace period (i.e., tardies will not be recorded). Teachers will counsel students about the tardy policy, and tardies will count thereafter. After the first week:

- Level 1: For the first 1-3, teachers give a warning.
- Level 2: For 4-5 tardies; after 4 tardies: citizenship grade may be lowered, parent contacted by teacher. After 5 tardies: citizenship will be lowered, parent contacted by teacher.
- Level 3: After 6 tardies, student gets a referral and sent to a VP for further disciplinary action. Tardy counts start over at the semester.

If you are not early, then you are late. Being early to class is "on time." Being late is unacceptable. If you miss a warm-up grade due to unexcused tardiness, then that is a logical consequence of being late.

### **LJHS UNEXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY**

By the end of each progress reporting period, I will check the absences records for students and count the number of unexcused absences. One to two unexcused absences may reflect a clerical error or failure by the parent to call in an excuse. But a third unexcused absence in a 6-week progress reporting period shows a pattern of absences that will lower a student's citizenship grade to an N. Four or more unexcused absences will earn the student a U. If an unexcused absence is verified as truancy (marked with a "Z") then the citizenship grade may drop immediately to a U.

### **HOMEWORK REQUIREMENTS**

Students will be expected to...

- Keep a notebook daily in class.
- Write extensively in the notebook.
- Use the notebook as starting points/inspiration for fully developed final drafts.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN**

Before a unit of instruction begins:

- Daily agenda will list the purpose and outcome for each day's lesson.

During instruction:

- The teacher will provide instructions in at least two ways (verbal, written).
- On specific activities, students will be able to ask for help from fellow students.
- On most writing assignments in this class, multiple drafts are required and reviewed during the workshop process which includes brainstorming, models of the type of writing expected, peer editing, and the chance for revision.
- The teacher is available during Office Hours if a student needs further clarification or help with an assignment.
- The teacher will answer questions via e-mail (but not the night before an assignment is due).

After assessment:

- After a final draft of an article is graded, a student may ask to review the details of the parts of the article that did not meet the expected standards in an afterschool meeting with the teacher upon request, in order to learn from his/her mistakes and improve on the next assignment.

## **GRADED ITEMS:**

**Summative Assessments:** *Articles/Pages, Midterm Exam, Final Exam, Writing Portfolio, Film Study Guides*

**Formative Assessments:** *Class work, Response Journal, AP Style Quizzes, Newspaper article rough drafts, and notes*

**The *Writing Portfolio*** will be assessed at five points during the course. At each assessment, the portfolio should be up to date with final copies of the assigned articles.

## **+Δ FINAL**

My class with the highest average score from Visiting Teachers will earn a +Δ final project or exam grade, meaning that period's students' final embedded assessment or exam will be calculated only if it boosts their individual grade. Otherwise, that grade will be dropped. In the likely event of a tie, the +Δ final will go to the class with the least number of tardies.

## Year-at-a-Glance

### Semester 1

#### **Week 1-2: Introduction to Course/Journalism History** (Aug. 27 - Sept. 7)

Start Daily Response Journals/Journalism Questionnaire/Intro to Journalism history/ History project/ Important Dates in Journalism/Online Scavenger Hunt

Viewing Guide: *Snow Falling on Cedars*

#### **Week 3-4: Law & Ethics and the First Amendment** (Sept. 10 - Sept. 21)

Notes on Law & Ethics/First Amendment Free-write  
HT Article #1 due

#### **News Writing/Effective Leads/ Headlines/ Interviewing**

Introduction to News Writing/ Writing a News Story Handout/ What Makes Your Story News? / Interview Notes--Handout/Interview Practice with classmate/ Interview Assignment--Create questions

Using Direct Quotes/ Traditional pyramid structure in news articles. Variety of leads and strategies for introductions. Organizing ideas and introducing quotes. Subjective vs. objective language in copywriting.

#### **Week 5 – Feature Stories** (Sept 24 - Sept. 28)

Features: Types of Features/Features: Structure Packet/Discuss Human Interest-Information- Profiles-Voice-Transitions / Decide on Features Story Topic/Write Questions

**Editors:** Presentations on Journalism Laws & Ethics

#### **Week 6: Sports and Writing** (Oct. 1 - Oct. 5)

Sports Stories/Sports Terms Assignment/Sports: Notes/Topic Ideas/Read some examples

#### **Editing and revising Articles –**

**Writing Portfolio Assessment: Two Finished articles need to be in your portfolio.**

At least 1 Final Article will be used for publication /Templates on Computers/Captions/Headlines/Visual Study/Layout for Issue

Viewing Guide: *All the President's Men*/Watergate & How it Changed Journalism

#### **Weeks 7-8: Law & Ethics Continued** (Oct. 8 - Oct. 19)

“Shattered Glass” /Interview with Stephen Glass/ Censorship: [Tinker](#), [Bethel School District](#) and [Hazelwood School District](#) decisions/ [Sixth Amendment](#) /[Shield Law](#)/ [Right to Privacy?](#)

#### **Editorial Writing**

Editorial Notes/Read Examples of Opinion/Editorials/Decide on Editorial Topic/Editorial Work Time/Supporting Your Ideas Handout/Editorial Brainstorm Handout

Editors: Presentations on Individual Pages

#### **Week 9: Writing a Review** (Oct. 22 - 26)

Culture: music reviews, film reviews, local student productions and exhibits. The role of the critic in journalism. Proper structure and voice in critical journalism. The importance of genre.

**Editors:** Presentations on Individual Pages

**Week 10 – Review and Midterm** (Oct. 29 - Nov. 2)

**Weeks 11-12: Journalism History Continued** (Nov. 5 - Nov. 16)

Viewing Guide: All the President's Men/Watergate – how it changed journalism

**Week 13-14: Editing and Revising Articles** (Nov. 26 - Dec. 7)

**Writing Portfolio Assessment: Two Finished articles need to be in your portfolio.**

At least 1 Final Article will be used for Issue/Templates on  
Computers/Captions/Headlines/Visual Study/Layout for Issue

**Weeks 15-16: Advertising and the Media** (Dec. 10 - Dec. 21)

Advertising: Types of Advertising/Advertising Appeals Assignment/*Saturday Night Live* Ad  
Parodies-Worksheet on Ad Appeals with video/Advertising Lecture: 7 Types of  
Propaganda/Quotations from *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think  
and Feel* /Morgan Spurlock's 30 Days: "Minimum Wage" /Advertising PowerPoint Project

**News Parody**

Hunter S. Thompson and Dave Barry Writings/Story Assignments/Captions

**Week 17: Introduction to Literary Journalism.** (Jan 7. - Jan 11)

The role of the journalist, and the different definitions of “truth.” The importance of style and  
tone and imagery. Introduction to Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* and S2 reading assignment.

**Literary journalism project:** topic selection

**Week 18: Writing Portfolio Assessment** (Jan. 14 - Jan. 18)

**Writing Portfolio Assessment: Five Finished articles need to be in your portfolio, in  
addition to one cartoon or photo with graphic organizer.**

At least 1 Final Article will be used for Issue/Templates on  
Computers/Captions/Headlines/Visual Study/Layout for Issue

**Final Exam Day: MC Final Exam based on Editors’ Presentations**

## Semester 2

### Week 1: Documentaries

The documentarian as journalist: VG: *God Grew Tired of Us*

### Week #2: Advertising and Fundraising: Val-Grams

### Week #3: Direct Marketing

AP Style Quiz #1

### Week #4: Fundraiser: Val-Grams

AP Style Quiz #2

### Week #5: Photojournalism

AP Style Quiz #3

### Week #6: Photojournalism

AP Style Quiz #4

**Writing Portfolio Assessment: Two Finished articles need to be in your portfolio**

### Week #7 Interview for next year's Editor-in-Chief

AP Style Quiz #5

### Week #8

AP Style Quiz #6

### Week #9 Photojournalism (1-2)

Telling a story through pictures – voice, tone, setting, character, etc.

**\*Photo Essay due prior to the end of P2 in April**

### Week #10 Hiring: New Page Editors Interviews

### Week #11 Hiring: New Page Editors Interviews

### Week #12 Writing Portfolio Assessment: Four Finished articles need to be in your Portfolio

### Week #13 The Senior Issue Ideation

Assemble Senior Issue and Final Print *Hi-Tide* Edition

### Week #14 Senior Editors Train New Editors

Assemble Senior Issue and Final Print *Hi-Tide* Edition

### Week #15 Senior Editors Train New Editors

Assemble Senior Issue and Final Print *Hi-Tide* Edition

### Week #16 The Senior Issue Sent to Press

### Week #17 Final Print *Hi-Tide* Edition Issue Sent to Press

### Week 18: Writing Portfolio Assessment June 3 - June 7

**Writing Portfolio Assessment: Five Finished articles need to be in your portfolio, in addition to one cartoon or photo with graphic organizer.**

At least 1 Final Article will be used for Issue/Templates on Computers/Captions/Headlines/Visual Study/Layout for Issue

**Paper Plate Awards for Journalism**

**Final Exam Day: MC Final Exam: AP Style and Conventions**

*“I think journalism is a great way to do public service, to have an impact on your community.”*

[Bob Schieffer](#)