

UC BERKELEY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Introduction to News Reporting (section 3)

Instructor: Jeremy Rue

Room: 102 Wurster Hall

Class Times:

4 p.m. – 6 p.m. (Mon, Tues, Weds)

4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. (Thurs)

No class on Fridays

Class Dates: July 2 to Aug 9 (no class July 4)

Course Description:

Welcome to J100 session D. This is an introductory course that aims to teach students about a critical component of democracy — the press. We will do this by training you to be journalists in six weeks. You will learn to write like a journalist. Report like a journalist. And assume all of the core values of what it means to conduct thorough evidence-based reporting that has the power to move people.

This will be a fast-paced, intensive course that lays out basic journalism techniques and principles, introduces students to classic examples of journalism, gives them exposure to professional practitioners and newsmakers, instills ethical behavior, and provides practice in writing various types of journalistic stories. Designed both for those who are new to journalism and those with some journalism experience, this course will boost the skills of students no matter their level of expertise. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Each class will focus on key journalism concepts via textbook readings, exercises, in-class assignments and field reporting. Students will receive hands-on instruction in interviewing, reporting, writing leads, story structure, and working with speed and accuracy. Students will apply their learning by writing and reporting different types of stories.

This is a lively seminar-style class, so student participation in all discussions and classroom activity is vital. Students are expected to be involved, show improvement, and produce publishable journalistic content, and therefore will be edited much more closely than you may have experienced in other courses. Writing, editing, and rewriting is the way reporters learn.

Learning Objectives:

Students will learn the nuts and bolts of reporting — Interviewing, quoting, and note-taking skills. In addition, students will learn how to be keen observers, draw characters through writing, and set scene through prose.

Students will learn about the role the press plays in society, and challenge foundational questions that have arisen recently: Is the press biased? Who owns the media? How should it be funded? What is the role of the media in an age of social media and user-generated content?

By the end of the course, students should fully understand all of these story types and be able to produce polished reporting and writing for publication. You will understand the basics of pitching a story, finding sources, conducting interviews, organizing your story, writing, rewriting, revising, and editing your draft.

Required/Recommended Readings:

- **Writing and Reporting News: *A Coaching Method 8th Edition* by Carole Rich.** Will accept 5th edition or higher. **NOTE:** No reading assignments or other assignments will be given that necessitate possession of this book. But all of the course material will come from this book. This book is essential for anyone planning to pursue journalism or public communications as a career.
- **[Associated Press Style Guide \(Links to an external site.\)](#)****[Links to an external site.](#)** (either book or digital subscription.) This will be important. Several AP Style quizzes will be given, and it may be challenging to complete them all without an AP Style reference.
- **[A New York Times EDU Digital Subscription \(Links to an external site.\)](#)****[Links to an external site.](#)** Due to a metered paywall, you can access 10 articles for free without paying subscription price. The discounted cost for students is \$7.50/month.
- You are expected to read reliable newspaper, magazine, and web journalism stories every day, and be able to summarize, describe, and aggregate those articles.
- Additional readings provided via bCourses.



Assignments

In-class activities: There will be many in-class activities and group discussions. Simply participating in these activities usually results in a full grade for those assignments (except where noted otherwise).

Homework assignments: Each week, a few easy assignments will be given to help sharpen your skills. These will come in the form of simple quizzes (you have unlimited tries for the quizzes), writing exercises, news literacy activities, or other group activities. These are designed as practice rather than testing competency.

AP Style quizzes: There are 16 AP Style quizzes, each only five questions long. You have unlimited tries on these quizzes. The goal to help you practice your skills and learn the subject matter. You can start these immediately, if you wish, or wait until weeks two and three when we will cover these topics in more detail.

Reporting assignments: Over the course of the six weeks, you will be given three reporting assignments. These are assignments where you will have to report stories on your own. During this process, you will have research information, speak to members of the general public, and condense information into a coherent form that engages news consumers. The assignments are:

1. Interview a classmate (assigned at random) and write a profile story.
2. Attend a city council or similar meeting to write and report a story.
3. Write a feature story or a story on a planned news event.

Lastly, attendance in this course is mandatory and will count toward a fourth of your grade. See the section on attendance policy.

Attendance	25%
Assignments, in-class activities, quizzes	25%
Reporting Assignments	50%

Grading Standards and Scale

All grading will be done through bCourses. Students can periodically check their grade through the site. In most cases, objective determinations will be made on how to evaluate scores on assignments through the use of grading rubrics. Students should make sure they pay attention to the grading rubrics to see how each assignment will be evaluated throughout the course.

For more subjective determination of work, the following standards will be used:

Outstanding — Exhibits original thinking, ambitious reporting and research, excellent grammar & style. Strong ledes and nut grafs. Participates actively in class discussions; meets deadlines & misses little or no class time.

Very good work. — Assignments exhibit original thinking, strong reporting and research, fact-checking and proofreading, limited grammar and style errors, and good journalistic style. Effective ledes & nut grafs. Participates in class and in news discussions; meets most deadlines & misses little class time.

Satisfactory work — Stories contain minimal reporting and lack original ideas or research, need more fact-checking and proofreading, and show little grasp of journalistic style. Weak ledes & nut grafs. Consistent style and grammar errors. Some participation in class and news discussions; misses multiple deadlines & more than ONE class session. Does little of the reading.

Poor work — Stories contain little to no reporting, original ideas or research. Major style and grammar errors in all work. Work is sloppy, rushed or not factual. Little to no grasp of journalistic style. Hardly ever participates in class or news discussions; misses most deadlines & more than TWO class sessions. Isn't doing the reading. Shows no improvement over the course of the semester.

A+	100%	to 99%
A	< 99%	to 93%
A-	< 93%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 87%
B	< 87%	to 84%
B-	< 84%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 77%
C	< 77%	to 74%
C-	< 74%	to 70%
D+	< 70%	to 67%
D	< 67%	to 64%
D-	< 64%	to 61%
F	< 61%	to 0%

Attendance Policy

Attendance in this course is mandatory, and is graded. Students need to be in the classroom no later than **5 minutes** after the hour.

Attendance will be taken through the use of an online form that records precisely when you filled out the form. This timestamp will be used in determining your arrival time. An additional 5 minute grace period will be given for students to have enough time to pull open their browser, type in the URL, fill out the form and submit.

Any timestamps recorded after 4:10pm will be marked tardy.

A tardy counts as 75% of that day's attendance grade (meaning, four tardies = one missed class).

Absences: Simply notifying the instructor of an absence is welcome, but does not make it excused. Only legitimate excused absences per California Education Code (CEC) include: [Accommodation of official religious creed](#), approved extracurricular activities (only will be considered if announced on the first day of class since the entire schedule is listed), accommodation for disability, pregnancy and parenting, approved CEC situations like funeral services or jury duty, and lastly due to minor illness with approved note from the UHS or other medical professional.

Attendance is graded through bCourses, and will count as 25% of your grade on a 100 point scale.

Making Up Missed Classes:

As quoted by the UC Berkeley guidelines on absences:

Students are responsible for material covered during missed classes whether or not they have been formally excused; therefore it is the student's responsibility to inform him/herself about the material missed....it is not the instructor's or the GSI's responsibility to tutor students in missed material. For this reason it is recommended that students absent from class for any reason make timely contact with several other students in the class to arrange for thorough briefing on the material they missed.

The instructor will make material available on bCourses as much as possible, and will attempt to help students when possible. However, it is the ultimate responsibility for students to make-up missed work on their own.

Weekly Schedule

The weekly schedule is **subject to change**. Any modifications will be noted here on bCourses and sent to students.

Week 1: Introduction to Journalism

July 2 - Welcome and overview of class. An introduction to journalistic standards, media convergence, and how people get their news.

July 3 - News judgment, what makes a good news story? A brief history of news, news literacy, identifying misinformation/fake news. In-class activity.

July 4 - **HOLIDAY - NO CLASS**

July 5 - Qualities of a reporter, finding stories, sourcing, inclusive language, digging deep. Fact vs opinion.

Week 2: Research and Reporting

July 9 - Structure of a basic news story, ledes, quotes, intro to AP Style. (Exercise)

July 10 - Public records research. A guest speaker will talk on public records, and how to cover local government. (How to submit a FOIA request.)

July 11 - Interviewing techniques. (Interview a classmate assignment.)

July 12 - Interview practice with mystery guest.

Week 3: Writing

July 16 - AP Style, Elements of Style, grammar.

July 17 - Leads practice, writing for the web, Numbers in the newsroom CH 12. (In-class assignment to condense story into a paragraph.)

July 18 - Exploring story structure. Write story based on scenario; science study activity.

July 19 - Features and long form storytelling.

Week 4: Law and Ethics

July 24 - Media Ethics. (JC example)

July 25 - Media law, copyright.

July 26 - Equity and inclusion in news.

July 27 - Debate activity. (Newseum Pentagon Papers)

Week 5: Journalistic Purpose and History

July 30 - Who owns the news? Includes group discussion. Assignment: How would you do it?

July 31 - History of Journalism.

Aug 1 - Make no Law reading discussion (current coverage discussion).

Aug 2 - Distribution and social media (Instagram stories, tweets, Facebook posts, etc.)

Week 6: Wrap Up

Aug 6 - Workshop roundup.

Aug 7 - Guest speaker.

Aug 8 - Presentations.

Aug 9 - Presentations.

Email, bCourses & Technology

Laptops and iPads are appropriate for taking notes, following along with course materials online, and engaging in peer workshopping, but should not be used for chatting, texting, email or using social media during class time. Laptops should be closed during guest speaker visits, unless you have an accommodation. Phones should be turned off.

We will use bCourses for a significant portion of this class. Students will submit all assignments via bCourses and will find supplemental readings, course updates, and announcements there. Students should check their UC Berkeley email daily for course updates or announcements. Students should use Google Docs for peer workshopping during newsroom time.

Instructor Contact / Office Hours

The preferred contact method is **through bCourses**. Please only use bCourses to message me rather than email. I cannot be certain I will track your message if you fail to

use bCourses. It is your responsibility to use bCourses. Messages sent to me via email may be missed.

Jeremy Rue

(510) 643-1927 (office number, no texting)

Office in room B1 of North Gate Hall

Office hours: Monday/Friday from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Appointments are highly encouraged as there are dates when I might not be present.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Students will abide by the Student Code of Conduct. There is a zero-tolerance policy for work that is submitted without proper attribution and that constitutes plagiarism. If students are unsure about the expectations regarding the Student Code of Conduct, please seek advice from the instructors.

Digital and paper trails are crucial elements of accountability in journalism. Students are expected to record all interviews with a digital recorder or their smartphone and keep an archive of them for the duration of the term. Students must also keep all reporting notes and completed assignments organized & accessible in Google Docs for the duration of the term. Students should be prepared to provide notes and/or recordings to instructors, if asked.

Disabled Student Services:

If you require an academic accommodations for this course, you must follow the intake and accommodation procedure to obtain a Letter of Accommodation. Please contact Extension Disabled Student Services (EXDSS) at extensiondss@berkeley.edu or (510) 643-5732. If you already have a Letter of Accommodation from Extension Disabled Student Services for this course, please make an appointment with me to have a confidential discussion of what you will require for this course.