

Course: J100: Principles of Reporting & Writing (3 units)

Instructors: Gary Moskowitz and Jessica Langlois

Section 1 Instructor: Gary Moskowitz TAs: Michael Dalebout, Rachel Loyd Location: Northgate Hall, Room 105 Office Hours: TBA	Section 2 Instructor: Jessica Langlois TAs: Marylee Williams, Lauren Schwartzman Location: LeConte Hall, Room 2 Office Hours: TBA
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Course Overview

This is a fast-paced, intensive introductory 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 news discussions, textbook readings, exercises, quizzes, and a “newsroom” approach to story development. 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 pitching, writing/reporting, editing, and revising several different types of stories. The course is modular, so you will build basic skills one at a time while working towards more ambitious projects.

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

We'll learn about the nuts and bolts of reporting — interviewing, quoting and note-taking skills — and build on that with additional skills such as observing detail, drawing character, and scene-setting. Students will learn how to report on civic events and how to write about arts & culture, and they will learn about opinion writing, the profile piece, and the longer, more in-depth news feature story.

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.

Instructor Bios

Jessica Langlois writes about grassroots arts and political movements with a focus on race, class and gender equity. Based in Los Angeles, she contributes regularly to L.A. Weekly and has written for the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, Oakland Tribune, East Bay Express, Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture, Los Angeles Review of Books, and more. Currently a visiting assistant professor at Loyola Marymount University, she has also taught journalism and writing at Mills College, California State University, Northridge, and others. Her story about Los Angeles as a character in television was a finalist for an L.A. Press Club Entertainment Feature Award, and she heads the Southern California chapter of the Journalism and Women Symposium.

Gary Moskowitz writes and reports on the music industry for the Economist and has written about music, arts & culture for the New York Times, the Atlantic, San Francisco Weekly, San Francisco Magazine, the Village Voice, and other publications. He teaches journalism and advises the student newspaper at California State University, East Bay. He has taught journalism courses and advised student journalism publications at San Francisco State University and City University London. He is a former Mother Jones Magazine fellow and a former

community news beat reporter for the Los Angeles Times. He is also a trumpet player and gigs regularly in the Bay Area. He is working on a nonfiction book about life in bands.

Required Readings

- [Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method \(Mass Communication and Journalism\) 8th Edition](#) by Carole Rich
- Additional readings provided via bCourses
- Students who are currently working at the Daily Cal or who intend to continue journalism-related work while completing this course are urged to buy the [Associated Press Style Guide](#) (print copy or mobile app) as a desk reference.
- You are expected to read reliable **newspaper, magazine, and web journalism stories every day**, and be able to summarize, describe, and aggregate those articles via the class *News Aggregator rubric*

DAILY CLASSROOM AGENDA

Our daily work flow will include the following three elements:

Current events

Discussion of the news of the day via News Aggregations (using News Aggregator rubric)

Textbook

Readings + exercises + discussion + quizzes pulled from the assigned texts

Newsroom

Story pitches + Writing + Reporting + Editing + Revising

J100 “NEWSROOM” SCHEDULE

Our story production cycle begins on WEDNESDAYS and proceeds like this:

Wednesday: PITCH
Thursday: STORY SKELETON
Monday: ROUGH DRAFT
Tuesday: FINAL DRAFT

Weekly Workflow

Graded Assignment / Submitted for Credit / Completed for Workshopping

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Week 1		Guest Speaker: Robert Rogers	Civic Event Story Pitches Due 9am	Quiz #1: Leads 9am Workshop Civic Event Story Skeleton

Week 2	Workshop Civic Event Story Draft	Guest Speaker: TBA Civic Event Story Due 11am	Culture Feature Pitches Due 9am	Quiz #2: AP Style 9am Workshop Culture Feature Skeleton
Week 3	Workshop Culture Feature Draft	Guest Speaker: Otis R. Taylor, Jr. Culture Feature Due 11am	Opinion Story Pitches Due 9am	Quiz #3: Bias 9am Workshop Opinion Story Skeleton
Week 4	Workshop Opinion Story Draft	Guest Speaker: Charles Vogl Opinion Story Due 11am	Profile Story Pitches Due 9am	Quiz #4: Profiles 9am Workshop Profile Story Skeleton
Week 5	Guest Speaker: Nitasha Tiku Workshop Profile Story Draft	Profile Story Due 11am	News Feature Pitches Due 9am	Quiz #5: Ethics 9am Workshop News Feature Skeleton

Week 6	Workshop News Feature First Draft	Guest Speaker: TBA Workshop News Feature Second Draft	Final Edits to News Feature Draft	News Feature Story Due 9am
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Overall Grading Breakdown:

	% of grade	Assessment	Learning outcomes
Final Stories Civic Event Story (5%) Culture Feature (10%) Opinion Story (10%) Profile Story (15%) News Feature (20%)	60%	Graded	Recognizes newsworthy stories; chooses best story structure; interviews effectively; produces polished pieces; observes detail; writes in authoritative style; uses evidence;meets deadlines;

			includes multiple viewpoints; avoids bias
Assignments Two News Aggregations Five story pitches	20%	Submitted for completion	Develops and assesses sources; pitches effectively, critically analyzes news media
Quizzes	10%	Graded	Demonstration of textbook reading comprehension, understanding of media ethics, style & story forms
In-class participation & attendance	10%	News & textbook discussions, newsroom work	Understands current forms of journalism, understands social and political role of journalism, critically analyzes story and grasps importance of news, understands ethical dilemmas

Standards and Evaluation

Expect your assignments to be rigorously edited by your instructor, GSI, and/or tutor.

We give the kind of editing you could expect from a professional workplace and newsroom (as well as from graduate school), and it's designed to give you detailed feedback on what's working and what isn't, as well as give you some ideas about how to improve. Your effort, improvement over time, in-class participation and timely, thorough completion of the coursework will be considered in your overall assessment.

Grading Criteria for Reported Stories

Topics that are relevant, timely, and interesting

Clear, concise, compelling, attention-grabbing lede

Clear, concise, explanatory nut graf

ORIGINAL attributed quotes

Original reporting

Sourced facts

Explanatory paragraphs arranged in a logical sequence/order

Ideas/issues explained simply and clearly

Informed/critical analysis of a chosen topic/issue

Neutral tone

Proofread for grammar, punctuation, spelling

Absence of bias & assumptions

Absence of plagiarism

Follows AP style

Turned in by deadline

Overall effort

Grading Standards & Scale

A+ (98-100%) A (93-97%) A- (90-92%)	Outstanding work. 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. Shows improvement over the course of the semester.
B+ (87-89%) B (83-86%) B- (80-82%)	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. Shows some improvement over the course of the semester.
C+ (77-79%) C (73-76%) C- (70-72%)	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. Shows little improvement over the semester.

D+ (67-69%) D (63-66%) D- (60-62%)	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. Almost never 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.
F (≤ 59%)	Failing. Misses most classes, completes little or no class work.

Deadlines

News Aggregations and Pitches must be uploaded to bCourses by 9:00 a.m. the day they are due. Final stories must be uploaded to bCourses by 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays. Learning to meet deadlines is an important part of becoming a journalist, so we do not grant extensions for any reason other than illness or family emergencies.

Late stories will be marked down 10% (one letter grade) for each day they are late. Assignments that are more than three days late will not be accepted. Quizzes cannot be made up. Credit-only assignments (News Aggregations and Pitches) will not be accepted after the deadline.

Attendance Policy

Class starts on the hour. If you are late, it is your responsibility to check in with the GSI to ensure you are not marked absent. Please do not schedule interviews or reporting trips during class time. If you miss more than two class sessions, you will be in danger of failing the course.

If you must be absent because of an illness, travel or unavoidable personal appointment, please give the instructor or GSI notice as far in advance as possible. All your assignments will still be due on bCourses the day you are absent. It is your responsibility to catch up on anything you miss if you are absent. That means: checking bCourses, getting notes from a peer, or seeing the instructor/GSI during office hours.

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.

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 extension-dss@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.

Course Calendar

Week 1

MONDAY, May 22

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Syllabus

Expectations

Deliverables

Quizzes

TEXTBOOK

Why is journalism important?

Where do we get our news and how do we get our news? What's the difference? What's news and what's just noise?

Clip: Spotlight or All the President's Men

NEWSROOM

Discuss our "Newsroom" process: our news cycle begins on WEDNESDAYS!

Discuss 5 story assignments

Discuss PITCH, SKELETON, & EDITING checklists

Go over *sample* News Aggregation

TUESDAY - May 23

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading due:

[“What is Journalism For” \(online\)](#)

[Chapter 2 - The Basic News Story](#)

In-class discussion:

What is newsworthy?

Anyone can be a journalist, but not everyone is.

Anatomy of a News Story: [Renters in Alameda win ‘just cause’ eviction protections](#)

Guest Speaker: Robert Rogers

Covering news & public events: Brown Act, gaining access, setting up interviews & researching ahead, what’s news & what’s just details

NEWSROOM

Review Story Pitch process

Go through Bay City News Service Datebook & Brainstorm ideas for Civic Event Story

WEDNESDAY - May 24

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 5: Interviewing Techniques](#)

Chapter 13: Speeches, News Conferences & Meetings

In-class discussion:

Interviewing & Note Taking

Quotation marks

Developing interview questions / polishing interviewing techniques

Using “on/off the record” and “on background.”

NEWSROOM

DUE: Civic Event Story pitches

In-class pitches

Workshop pitches in editorial cohorts

News Story Skeletons due Thursday

THURSDAY - May 25

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Chapter 7: Leads and Nutgrafs

Government stories - p. 359-368

Sample civic news stories

QUIZ #1: Leads & Interviewing

In class discussion:

Finding the story's lead

Lead writing exercises

Review anatomy of news story

NEWSROOM

Workshop story skeletons, make reporting plans

Week 2

MONDAY - May 29

HOLIDAY, NO CLASS!!

Keep working on Civic Event Story Draft!

TUESDAY - May 30

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Chapter 8 - Story Organization

AP Stylebook entries: abbreviations & acronyms, capitalization, courtesy titles, geographic names, headlines, names, organizations and institutions, quotations, second reference, time element, time of day, titles

Three different news stories on L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti's 2015 South L.A. Town Hall

- [Los Angeles Sentinel](#)
- [ABC7](#)
- [Los Angeles Times](#)

In-class Discussion:

Story organization, objective writing, balance, attribution

Compare several news stories about the same news event - Who is audience for each? Which has the best lead? Which offers the most context/analysis? Which contain bias?

NEWSROOM

Workshop Civic Event Story

Discuss/Brainstorm Culture Feature Pitch

DUE 11:00 a.m.: Civic Event Story Final Draft

WEDNESDAY - June 1

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Chapter 12: Online Journalism

“How to Find an Original Idea” & “Strong Angles and Focused Ideas” (online)

Sample Culture Feature Stories / Samples of guest speaker’s work

In-class Discussion:

Guest Speaker: TBA

NEWSROOM

DUE: Culture Feature Pitch

Workshop story pitches

Begin Culture Feature Story Skeleton

THURSDAY - June 2

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 4 - Sources and Online Research](#)

[AP Stylebook entries: months, numerals, plurals, possessives, temperatures](#)

[AP Stylebook Punctuation Guide](#)

In-class discussion:

QUIZ #2: AP Style

Review key elements of AP Style -- naming conventions, punctuation, numerals

Finding expert sources

NEWSROOM

Workshop Feature Story Skeleton

Week 3

MONDAY - June 5

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 9 - Story Forms](#)

[Jimmy Breslin "Digging JFK's Grave Was His Honor"](#)

In-class discussion:

Descriptive leads writing exercise

NEWSROOM

Submit/Edit Feature Story Rough Draft

TUESDAY - June 6

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Op-Ed Guide](#) (Columbia University)

[Selected readings from Otis Taylor:](#)

[Our schools need to teach human decency, how not to be racist](#)

[BART crime a sign of challenges in East Oakland](#)

[Ann Coulter's appearance at Berkeley isn't about free speech](#)

[East Oakland eviction saga is complex](#)

[A death that reminds us to live](#)

In-class discussion:

[Guest Speaker: Otis R. Taylor, Jr.](#)

From the op-ed to the thinkpiece -- how informed opinion & analysis are still journalism

NEWSROOM

Submit/Edit Feature Story Final Draft

Discuss/Brainstorm Opinion Story ideas

WEDNESDAY - June 7

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading due:

[Tips for Op-Ed Writing](#) (Op-Ed Project)

[Let Ann Coulter Speak](#)

[Ann Coulter isn't promoting free speech. She's promoting herself.](#)

[Academia, Political Tolerance, and Ann Coulter](#)

In-class discussion:

Issue vs. argument - getting specific & backing it up

NEWSROOM

Due: Opinion Story Pitch

Workshop opinion story pitches

Begin opinion story skeleton

THURSDAY - June 8

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 16 - Multicultural Sensitivity](#)

["Sexism, Racism and Other 'Isms'" \(online\)](#)

["Hold up! Time for an explanatory comma"](#)

[\[PODCAST\]](#)

In-class discussion:

QUIZ #3: Opinion Writing & Multicultural Sensitivity

Word choice, inclusivity

[Diversity Style Guide](#)

NEWSROOM

Submit/Revise Opinion Story Skeleton

Week 4

MONDAY - June 12

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Jean-Luc Mélenchon should be French president.](#)

[Here's why](#)

[Guardian Comment is Free](#)

In-class discussion:

Opinion structure, ethos/pathos/logos, knowing your audience

[A Thanksgiving Eel \[VIDEO\]](#)

Reverse outline video; how does it employ humor, anecdotes, draw on experts; who is the audience?

NEWSROOM

Workshop Opinion Story Rough Draft

TUESDAY - June 13

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Examples of Profile Stories: [Janelle Monae](#)

Research Charles Vogl & read selections from “The Art of Community”

In Class discussion:

Guest Speaker: Charles Vogl

Finding newsworthy profile subjects

NEWSROOM

DUE: Opinion Story Final Draft

Discuss/Brainstorm Profile Story Pitch ideas

WEDNESDAY - June 14

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Chapter 17: Profiles & Obituaries

[The Strange & Curious Tale of the Last True Hermit](#)

In-class discussion:

In-depth interviewing techniques, anecdotes, building trust

Two NPR interviews with Chrissie Hynde: why one worked, and one didn't.

NEWSROOM

DUE: Profile Story Pitch

THURSDAY - June 15

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due: “Profiles: Slices of Life” & “Anecdotes”
(online)

[A Toast Story](#)

In-class Discussion:

Quiz #4: Profiles & Storytelling

Developing character, finding anecdotes, the importance of “warts & all” profiles

NEWSROOM

Submit/Revise Profile Story Skeleton

Week 5

MONDAY - June 19

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 15: Media Ethics](#)

[Select Readings by Nitasha Tiku](#)

In-Class Discussion:

[Guest Speaker: Nitasha Tiku](#)

NEWSROOM

Workshop Profile Story Rough Draft

TUESDAY - June 20

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[SPJ Code of Ethics](#)

[“What does ‘objectivity’ mean to journalists of color?”](#)

[\[PODCAST\]](#)

In-Class Discussion:

The opinions of news reporters, conflicts of interest, freebies, deception, anonymous sources, privacy, plagiarism

NEWSROOM

DUE: Profile Story Final Draft

Discuss/Brainstorm News Feature ideas

WEDNESDAY - June 21

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 14: Media Law](#)

In-class discussion:

Libel, Invasion of Privacy, Shield Laws, Copyright & Fair Use

Gawker & Hulk Hogan, other sample cases

NEWSROOM

DUE: News Feature Story Pitch

THURSDAY - June 22

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Chapter 10: Storytelling and Feature Techniques](#)

[The Girl in the Window](#)

In-class discussion:

Quiz #5: Ethics & Law

Fiction writers' toolkit: theme, setting, characters, plot, dialogue, suspense

Good narrative journalism should tell us something about "The Way We Live Now"

NEWSROOM

Submit/Revise News Feature Story Skeleton

Week 6

MONDAY - June 26

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

[Statistical Stories - pp. 369-377](#)

[TBA sample stories](#)

In-class discussion:

Basic math for journalists, interpreting data, when numbers don't tell the whole story

NEWSROOM

Submit/Edit News Feature Story Rough Draft

TUESDAY - June 27

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due 21: Disasters, Weather & Tragedies
Regarding the Pain of Others (online)

In-class discussion:

Guest Speaker TBA

NEWSROOM

Continue Editing/Workshopping News Feature Story

WEDNESDAY - June 28

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reading Due:

Chapter 23 - Media Jobs & Internships

In-class discussion:

The future of news

Applying a journalist's skill to other work & personal pursuits

NEWSROOM

Continue Editing/Workshopping News Feature Story

THURSDAY - June 29 (Final Class!)

CURRENT EVENTS/News Aggregations

TEXTBOOK

Reflections, Evaluations

NEWSROOM

DUE: News Feature Story Final Draft!