

J310 Writing, Reporting & Ethics III

Fall 2008

Course website: www.j310.weebly.com (static content)

Course blog: j310.wordpress.com (evolving content)

Professor: Melissa Wall, Ph.D.

Office: 330 Manzanita Hall; Hours: 1-2 p.m., 6-7 p.m. Thursdays

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About the Prof: www.melissawall.wordpress.com

Prerequisite: A grade of "C" or better in Journalism 210 or its equivalent

Course description: J310 assumes you already have basic news reporting and writing skills. We will further develop these with a range of reporting assignments – from multimedia features to more in-depth reporting on social/political issues. We will consider both classic and newer forms of storytelling. Your work in J310 will make you more marketable to employers.

Book:

"Bush's Law: The Remaking of American Justice," by Eric Lichtblau. Pantheon, 2008. Available at the university bookstore or buy online.

AP Stylebook

Other online readings will be assigned.

Assignments:

- In-class exercises/quizzes/citizenship (**cannot be made up**): 20 percent
- Formal out-of-class assignments (excluding final project) Online review & Google Map, How-to (print & video versions), Citizen journalism article: 30 percent
- Major final project: Traditional print profile & microsite w/video version of same material: 30 percent
- Final exam: 20 percent

No late assignments will be accepted.

Factual errors will result in an F with the option to revise and take the average of the two grades. Spelling and grammatical errors will result in a significantly lower grade.

Class citizenship: Computers should only be turned on when professor asks the students to do so. Your cellphone or other similar devices should be turned off for the entire class unless the professor asks you turn it on. Texting, instant messaging, taking calls, etc. during class can result in a "0" for that day regardless of whether you complete the day's assignment. Rude, disrespectful or disruptive behavior can result in a lower overall grade or even a failing grade – no matter what your performance is on assignments – depending on the severity of the behavior.

Equipment policies. During the course of the semester, you will be using department equipment. In order to use this equipment, you will need to read the check-out policies form and sign. You agree to pay for or replace any lost/damaged/stolen equipment or have your final grade withheld and other possible disciplinary procedures.

Plagiarism: All work must be based on original reporting. The Journalism Dept. is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not tolerated. Anyone caught cheating automatically will receive a failing grade in the course and be reported to the University for possible further disciplinary action. For further explanation of the behavior defined as

cheating, and a more details regarding disciplinary procedures, consult the current CSUN catalog. Please also note that much of the information on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own violates CSUN's plagiarism policy and carries the penalties outlined above.

Diversity: Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people from ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. This is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.

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Aug. 28 First day: "Powerful New Ways to Tell Stories"; class survey; Kyolo you

Sept. 4 Reviews: Traditional reviews and their components; world's best reviewers and what makes them great; from Amazon to Yelp: Rise of online reviews

Sept. 11 Google Maps: Ubiquity of online maps in 21st century newsrooms; using online maps; creating your own map; using a map as a story planning device. (*Assignment: Review an assigned San Fernando Valley Park, post on Yelp, post on Google maps. Due Sept. 18*)

Sept. 18 Video boot camp: Review of newspaper websites' use of video; basics of video editing; introduction to Windows Movie Maker

Sept. 25 Video boot camp (continued): Shooting video: basic techniques; interviewing with a camera; video story forms; why online newspaper videos are not TV

Oct. 2 Explanatory Journalism and its simpler cousin: How to stories

Print versions vs. video versions. Watch the following videos on "How to make a how-to video": [Videojug](#) on how to make a how to video; [Ask the Builder](#) on how to make a how to video. (*Assignment: How to print and video version. Must be CSUN-related topic. Due Oct. 23*).

By class have read: Chapters 1 & 2 Bush's Law

Oct. 9 Profiles: (*Assignment: Print and video profile with microsite. See handout. Due Dec. 4*)

Read: Liz Ohanesian's feature stories for "LA Weekly."

- [The Anime Collective: Baka Deshi Productions; where the otaku world and music geekdom collide](#)
- [Khmer Wedding: Dengue Fever. Reminding the hipster community: There are other places to gaze besides your shoes](#)
- [Gabber Gabber Hey! Subgenre Resurfaces in L.A.](#)
- [Droid Behavior: Robot Rock](#)

- Hearst student award profile stories (First, Second and Third place – see class blog for links)

Oct. 16 Free-lancing: Guest Speaker: Freelance music writer Liz Ohanesian; query letters; researching a potential publisher for your work.

Oct. 23 Microsites: Creating a home for your story; Writing for the Web

Oct. 30 Twitter, Live blogging, etc

Due Profile: Who will you interview?

By class have read: Bush's Law Chapters 3, 4 & 5

Nov. 6 Citizen Journalism

Assignment: Citizen journalism article due (tentative) Nov. 20

Nov. 13 Law & Ethics

*By class have read: Bush's Law Chapters 6, 7, 8 & 9
Due Profile: Story plan (sources, timeline, video plan)*

Nov. 20 Go crazy: Vlog

Due: Citizen journalism article

Nov. 27 Thanksgiving

Dec. 4 Last Day

Presenting student's profile packages

Due: Profile print and video versions

Dec. 11 3- 5 p.m. Final exam

****Schedule may change at instructor's discretion.***