

ENGLISH 153: JOURNALISM

Tuesday & Thursday, 11 am to 12:20 pm, #2953 (Truman College, SPRING 2009)

Instructor: Benjamin Ortiz, Assistant Professor (<http://www.benortiz.com>)
Office/Hours: #2737 — Tues. & Thurs. 8:30 to 9:30 am / Tues. 1 to 3 pm / Thurs. 5 to 6 pm
(...also by appointment, per your request and teacher availability...)
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→ Course Description and Objectives

Building on English 151 (basic news), English 153 ("Journalism") teaches how to apply the fundamentals of reporting and writing to a variety of stories, including news briefs, arts reviews, columns, opinion pieces, full features, and on-line blogging. Students and instructor will prepare the reading list collaboratively and study writing in different journalistic contexts, toward drafting more involved stories and pursuing advanced reporting experience in the field. Finally and significantly, 153 students will be involved in tutoring, advising, coaching, and critiquing students in the basic news class (151). This will be a crucial piece of team-editorial experience in working with others and teaching the art of journalism that you have learned, thus promoting a network of student reporters, writing professionals, and leaders.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- English 151 News R+W textbook, for reference to basic journalism principles, etc.
- The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law. Latest edition.
- Articles assembled collaboratively through original database and internet research.
- + **In-class guest speakers, readings, hand-outs, and screenings (keep a handout folder)**

→ Method

Using traditional texts and assignments, the course functions much like any other class at Truman, but we will also connect instructional experience, guest speakers, workshop-style assignments, case studies, and real-world approach to learning a profession that usually trains new journalists through on-the-job deadline pressure and the constant testing of conscience.

→ Educational Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the successful student will have the ability to apply the elements of journalism in a variety of contexts and kinds of written assignments:

- (1) **PRINCIPLES** — The journalist-in-training will have a reasoned respect for the principles and ethics of journalism as a profession grounded in truth, rigorous verification, loyalty to readership, independence from interest, and the responsible exercise of conscience per Constitutional rights. The writer will recognize the unique features of journalism as a crucial piece of democracy and a kind of writing distinct from others, whether in straight news or other kinds of journalism.
- (2) **REPORTING** — Student journalists will possess advanced reporting skills and proficiency at communicating facts in the development of a diverse portfolio of written pieces.
- (3) **WRITING** — The successful student will have assembled a versatile portfolio of new works to showcase for academic, career, and creative advancement.
- (4) **EDITING** — The writer will also have a grasp of workshoping, copyediting, and arranging pieces of journalism to craft the best writing possible, in addition to active coaching experience.
- (5) **CAREER EXPERIENCE** — A successful student will be able to pursue advanced training with a sense of options and networking savvy for a future in journalism or related careers.

→ City Colleges General Education Goals

English 153 feeds the following General Education Goals: *GOAL 1 (...communicate effectively in written and oral forms)*, *GOAL 2 (...demonstrate the ability to gather, interpret, and analyze data)*, *GOAL 3 (...demonstrate the ability to think critically, abstractly, and logically)*, *GOAL 4 (...demonstrate the ability to perform effectively in the workplace)*, *GOAL 5 (...exhibit ethical and social responsibility in a global community)*, and *GOAL 6 (...learn independently)*.

→ Course Requirements

(1) Preparation for class through careful time management, advance planning, thorough reading, complete research, vigilant reporting and proofing, etc. (2) Prompt arrival at class, consistent attendance, and full participation. (3) Completion of all assignments, readings, exercises, and projects. (4) Attention and courtesy to classmates, guest speakers, and instructor.

→ Fundamentals for Success

(1) START PAYING ATTENTION TO THE NEWS — If you aren't already media savvy, start reading, watching, listening, and talking about the news. *TODAY*. In every medium you can access. (2) READ AS MUCH AS YOU CAN IN ADDITION TO CLASS TEXTS: journalism, literature, etc. (3) CREATE THE CLASS — Bring thoughts, readings, or other texts relevant to class. Share them during a session. Contact the teacher ahead of time or right before start-time if you want to bring up an item, issue, or topic for class consideration. Is there a writer, text, story, or development we should know about? The class is yours to shape and complete.

→ Professional and Academic Etiquette

(1) Absolutely no cell phones or other forms of electronic interruption. (2) Act with courtesy when class is underway; for example, ask classmates AFTER the session for an update on what you missed, if you are late. (3) Civil discussion: No name-calling or any such viciousness over disagreements. (4) Food and drink are OK only if you are badly in need of a snack, but don't go overboard or disrupt with eating noises. (5) Dig into the class. Be enthusiastic if possible, or at least offer questions, comments, and even relevantly provocative statements when you have the floor to speak. (6) **VERY IMPORTANT**: Please come to class every time on time. (For record-keeping purposes, more than 10 minutes late or missing will constitute a full and unexcused absence.) You are allowed two absences for whatever comes up (sickness, personal business, etc.), but you will start losing 10 points from your Contributions grade for every absence thereafter – *six absences means an automatic zero for your Contributions grade*. The teacher can also subtract for repeated tardiness, so please carefully manage your own time.

→ Academic Integrity

All of the usual rules about plagiarism apply (refer to *Chronicle* article), as well as the principles unique to the practice of journalism, including rules about truth and rigorous fact checking. The teacher will expand on fabrication, conflict of interest, misinformation, dishonesty, reckless writing, and related ethical breaches. Violation of professional principles means that you are not only transgressing academic values but also the basic ethical considerations of journalism, on par with medical malpractice or attorney breach of ethics. Of course, the consequences can include failure of the course and expulsion from our community of student professionals.

→ Assignments/Grades

READING

In the schedule that follows, our main writing assignments shape course progression. For each assignment, you'll notice a section devoted to it in the schedule, and you are required to find articles (through on-line database research) for that section. Find at least two library-database articles of medium length (or the equivalent) within the first week of that section. For example, when we move to the opinion/editorial piece, you should find two exemplary pieces and submit them electronically to the instructor within the first week of study. The teacher will then distribute the required reading, which should be completely read within a week, for in-class discussion.

ALSO: Consistent contribution to our reading list will count for 5% of the final grade.

JOURNALISM

For workshop comments, bring enough copies for everyone to class. Submit these pieces for teacher-evaluation via hardcopy with all prior drafts stapled behind the latest revision. Print only on one side of each 8½-by-11-inch sheet of paper. In the upper left-hand corner of page one, type: (1) your name followed by (2) the date, (3) a headline and sub-headline, (4) "Piece #" ID, (5) word count, and finally (6) story text organized with clear paragraph indents and breaks, in double-spaced, 12-point TIMES NEW ROMAN font.

ALL PIECES SHOULD BE FORMATTED PER AP STYLE! KEEP UP WITH YOUR AP BOOK...

JOURNALISM (continued...)

Here are the kinds of pieces we'll do this semester (and the grade-percentage breakdown):

1. *Pyramid- or alt-pyramid-style news brief (200-400 words)* = 5%
2. *Arts review (300-500 words)* = 5%
3. *Column-style voice-driven piece (400-600 words)* = 10%
4. *Opinion/editorial piece (500-700 words)* = 15%
5. *Final Feature Story (700-1000 words)* = 20%
- + *Weekly blogging (at least one paragraph)* = 5%

For Pieces #1-5, students should submit a Reporting Plan within the first week of that section, and then immediately start reporting/drafting. Before the piece is finalized, drafts must go through at least one in-class copy workshop and one copy session with the instructor. These pieces are due for teacher evaluation when we start the next section.

For the weekly blogging assignment, I strongly recommend MySpace, for easy use and access.

REMEMBER: The focus and reader-target for each piece should be Truman/Uptown.

Note: Scrupulous fact-checking, beating deadlines, and producing clean copy are standards for professional journalism. This class requires you to develop your own professional habits while meeting typical journalism expectations. Accordingly, student work that misses the professional mark will be subject to point-penalty, per the instructor's judgment. Your own textbook puts it best: There is no good excuse for a mistake. Of course, we all make mistakes, but try to keep the best habits possible. Winning praise for good work starts with taking personal responsibility.

MOREOVER: WORK FOUND TO BE FABRICATED, PLAGIARIZED, CONFLICTED (WITH SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST), OR RECKLESSLY SLOPPY WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT/CLASS, AT THE TEACHER'S DISCRETION.

ALSO: PLEASE BE SURE TO ATTACH ALL DRAFTS OF EVERY STORY TO EVERY REVISED SUBMISSION.

EDITORIAL WORK

1. *Class contributions (including attendance and advising)* = 10%
2. *Class exercises (various home- and in-class work)* = 10%
3. *Final Portfolio* = 10%
4. *Participation on School Newspaper* = 5%

NOTE: Class runs 11am-12:20pm, and you will make up the rest of the scheduled meeting time by coming to Newspaper meetings on Thursdays, 12:30 to 1:20 pm. You are also encouraged to participate by pitching work from this class for publication in Truman's Uptown Exchange student newspaper.

Details: Students will collect three shorter pieces of journalism and the Final Feature Story in a *Final Portfolio*, whose format (electronic or hardcopy) and arrangement are entirely up to the student. This project will test editorial and design skill and should be considered a public showcase of class work. (ALSO: Include all prior drafts behind each revised portfolio piece.)

FINAL GRADE NOTE: Assignments and course progression make it impossible to pass the class without consistent attendance and engaged contribution. This is NOT a web class. The teacher also reserves the right to apply extra credit for exceptional attendance and participation.

GRADE SCALE:	<u>Excellent</u>	90-100 =	A
	<u>Good</u>	80-89 =	B
	<u>Acceptable</u>	70-79 =	C
		60-69 =	D
		BELOW =	F

DATES to REMEMBER for YOUR OWN Planning

2/16/09 (Monday): President's Day Holiday (NO CLASS)
3/18/09 (Wednesday): Spring 2009 Mid-Term Mark
4/6/09 thru 4/12/09: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)
4/20/09 (Monday): Last day to withdraw from a course.
5/16/09 (Saturday): Spring 2009 semester ends!
6/1/09 (Monday): Summer 2009 classes begin.

→ City Colleges “Active Pursuit” Policy

In order for students to remain in English 153, they must actively pursue the objectives for this course. At midterm, any student who does not meet the following criteria for active pursuit will display a lack of interest in successfully completing the course and will, therefore, have to be administratively withdrawn from this class.

- A student must complete and turn in all Journalism-writing assignments that are due before midterm.
- A student must have class Contributions, Exercises, Blogging, School Newspaper Participation, and Readings grades of 75% or higher.

If any student fails to do the above, then it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor prior to March 18, 2009, and indicate his or her serious intent to pursue the course by explaining any unusual circumstances. The teacher will then be able to determine whether the student can continue in the course. Being issued an ADW will have consequences on your grades, financial aid, and other aspects of attending Truman. Simply attending classes, but not producing work and/or participating, does not constitute active pursuit.

→ Disclaimer

All assignments, scheduling, and deadlines are subject to changes per class progression and instructor choice. Also, specific readings and exercises might change if alternatives arise.

→ Final Thoughts

Overall, you are strongly urged to consult the teacher during office hours with any questions or requests for assistance that you cannot fit into class time. Moreover, you are encouraged to help set the agenda, content, and style of this class with your own personal interests, experiences, and expectations for career and project-based learning. Resources exist throughout Truman to assist and enhance your education; for example, writing tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in L129 (contact ajohnston@ccc.edu or find out more under “Student Services” on the Truman web site, at <http://www.trumancollege.edu/>). Also, consider your teacher a resource for class and career counseling.

→ A Personal Statement

The schedule that follows includes a lot of blank spaces, signifying both my flexibility and your obligation to contribute. This course is under construction, and your contributions will create the reading list, set the standards, schedule and beat deadlines, and establish the mark for the exemplary Journalism 153 Portfolio. Your work this semester is important and greatly appreciated, as I collaborate with you in developing the course for upcoming semesters. Much of what you do in class will be review from English 151, but we will work together in creating a balance, so that you get the most out of the new assignments on this syllabus. I look forward also to your classroom assistance, when we share what we know about journalism in this combined section with the News course.

And be sure to keep in touch about your progress.

Your teacher,

Benjamin Ortiz

Journalism Adviser and Assistant Professor of Journalism, Literature, and Writing

→ Calendar: Dates, Topics, and Assignments

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

WEEK ONE

T 1/20 Questionnaire then Syllabus
 Introductions + Q/A
 Syllabus + Q/A
 Define class terms together: news, reporting, writing, journalism
 State of the Profession: HANDOUTS
 Discussion
 ASSIGNMENT: Develop a Reporting Plan (HANDOUT) by the next class for Piece #1

SECTION TWO: THE BRIEF NEWS PIECE

Th 1/22 Review of Reporting Plan for Piece #1
 Start blogging this week and start researching for our group readings.
 QUESTION for READING SELECTION: Why is this a good news piece?

WEEK TWO

T 1/27

Th 1/29

SECTION THREE: The ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW

WEEK THREE

T 2/3

Th 2/5

WEEK FOUR

T 2/10 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 2/12

WEEK FIVE

T 2/17

Th 2/19

SECTION FOUR: THE COLUMN

WEEK SIX

T 2/24

Th 2/26

WEEK SEVEN

T 3/3 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 3/5

WEEK EIGHT

T 3/10 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 3/12

SECTION FIVE: THE OPINION/EDITORIAL PIECE

WEEK NINE (MID-TERM MARK ON 3/18/09)

T 3/17 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 3/19

WEEK TEN

T 3/24 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 3/26 GUEST SPEAKER

WEEK ELEVEN

T 3/31

Th 4/2 The Literary Journalism handouts (for Final Feature ideas...)

***** SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS 4/6/09 through 4/12/09 *****

SECTION SIX: THE FINAL FEATURE

WEEK TWELVE

T 4/14

Th 4/16 GUEST SPEAKER

WEEK THIRTEEN (LAST DAY FOR STUDENT-INITIATED WITHDRAWAL on 4/20/09)

T 4/21

Th 4/23

WEEK FOURTEEN

T 4/28

W 4/30

WEEK FIFTEEN

T 5/5 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 5/7 GUEST SPEAKER

WEEK SIXTEEN

T 5/12 GUEST SPEAKER

Th 5/14 Presentation (Final Feature & Portfolio Due in class...)

— **END OF CLASS** —