

SYLLABUS, PUBLIC-AFFAIRS JOURNALISM COURSE
Journalism 298, Journalism 197
University of California Center Sacramento (UCCS)
SUMMER SESSION 2008

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Associate Instructor: A.G. Block, Director, Public-Affairs Journalism Program, UCCS, and former editor and publisher of *California Journal* magazine. Phone: 916-445-7300. Email: ag.block@ucop.edu.

Mentors and Editors: Sigrid Bathen, instructor in journalism, California State University Sacramento and former associate editor of *California Journal* magazine. Rebecca LaVally, doctoral candidate in journalism, University of Texas Austin and former political reporter, United Press International and *The Sacramento Bee*.

Class meeting time and place: June 16-28, Monday-thru-Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM, UCCS. July 11-August 22, Friday, 8:30 – 10:00 AM, UCCS.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The public-affairs journalism course is an experiential learning program that teaches the reporting skills, resources and institutional context for covering California government and politics. Students will take classes designed to teach basic journalistic techniques, as well as the political culture inside the State Capitol. Students enroll at the UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism for summer session. The course has six components:

- Reading assignments to be completed before each student arrives in Sacramento and focused on journalism and California politics.
- A two-week “boot camp” that includes:
 - Intense instruction in journalistic ethics, reporting, interviewing, news writing, story development and organization, the development and use of sources and resources. In addition, each student will research, report and prepare daily writing assignments.
 - Lectures on the inner workings of the governor’s office, Legislature, lobbying corps, and press corps. Guest speakers and faculty will provide an understanding of legislative leadership and the committee system, the state budget process, special interests and lobbying, political campaigning, state agencies and the role of the media.
- A two-day training session conducted by the Committee of Concerned Journalists and focused on issues of accuracy, bias and the culture of professional newsrooms.
- Friday morning seminars featuring conversations with legislators, lobbyists, reporters and editors, and legislative and campaign staffs. Each seminar is designed to provide insight about how journalists interact with various political and legislative institutions.

- An internship with a Sacramento news organization that will allow students to work as Capitol reporters. Each student will receive press credentials from the Governor's Office and the State Legislature. Students will be assigned stories that could lead to by-lined publication with various news outlets and will work with bureau chiefs and state editors --- as well as with UCCS faculty --- to develop, research and write stories.
- Thursday Film Night where movies related to journalism are viewed and discussed over pizza and popcorn.

REQUIRED READING

- "Paper Trails: A Guide to Public Records in California" by Stephen Levine and Barbara Newcombe, Center for Investigative Reporting, California Newspaper Publishers Assn.
- "American Carnival: Journalism Under Siege in an Age of New Media," by Neil Henry, University of California Press
- "We the Media" by Dan Gillmor, O'Reilly Media Inc.
- "The Interviewer's Handbook" by John Brady, The Writer Books

SUGGESTED READING

- "Reporting: An Inside View" by Lou Cannon, California Journal Press
- "The Sociology of News" by Michael Schudson, Norton
- "Fly on the Wall" by Tony Hillerman, Harper Torch
- "Digital Journalism" edited by Kevin Kawamoto, Rowman & Littlefield
- "California: America's High Stakes Experiment," by Peter Schrag, The New Press
- "California, the Great Exception" by Carey McWilliams, UC Press

REFERENCE GUIDES

- "The Associated Press Stylebook"
- "The California Political Almanac" edited by Jerry Lubenow and A.G. Block, Congressional Quarterly Press
- "Pocket Roster & Government Guide" from State Net Publications
- "Computer-Assisted Reporting" by Brant Houston, Bedford/St. Martin's

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students must complete each session of "Boot Camp," including training programs conducted by the Committee of Concerned Journalists. Students also are expected to attend and actively participate in all seminars and to meet story and assignment deadlines established by faculty and internship hosts. Students also are expected to read at least two newspapers each day, including weekends.

Journalism 298 ("Boot Camp," seminar program) (4 units) is graduate level and grades are awarded as *satisfactory/unsatisfactory*. **Journalism 197** (internship) (1 or 2 units) is undergraduate level class graded *pass/no pass*, although students may request a letter grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE: “BOOT CAMP” (Journalism 298)

“Boot Camp” takes up the first two weeks of session and is taught in the UCCS classroom. Some writing assignments may be posted to the UCCS Web site. Unless otherwise noted, all lectures are conducted by Rob Gunnison and A.G. Block.

MONDAY, June 16:

Move in to student housing

Late afternoon orientation at the UC Center, followed by dinner.

Writing Assignment 1: Profile a classmate. Students should be prepared to conduct interviews during “move-in” and/or the afternoon orientation. (Profiles will be pre-assigned by faculty via e-mail prior to the students’ arrival.) **Deadline: Tuesday, June 17, 8 AM.**

TUESDAY, June 17:

UCCS welcome (Dr. Gary Dymski, Conference)

AM Lecture: Insider Guide to Sacramento (Block, Conference)

Noon: Field Trip: Capitol Building, Associated Press

PM Lectures and Exercises: The Basics of Interviewing; Writing Leads; Journalistic Ethics; Rules of Engagement (Conference)

WEDNESDAY, June 18:

UCCS administrative orientation (Wireless)

PM Lectures: Computer-assisted Reporting; Budget Basics I* (John Griffing, Conference)

Writing Assignment 2: In the morning, students will select an event to cover from the AP Daybook and write a 350-word story based on the event. Students should select an event held between 8 AM and 11 AM, or after 2:30 PM. Time for writing will be provided in the late afternoon. **Deadline: 5 PM**

Writing Assignment 3: Students will be asked to write a 700-word story based on “Budget Basics” lectures noted above and below. Students should supplement what they learn in those lectures by conducting interviews with outside sources. Students may NOT interview John Griffing. **Deadline: Saturday, June 21, 5 PM**

THURSDAY, June 19:

AM Lecture: Organizing Stories.

AM Lecture: Budget Basics II* (John Griffing, Conference)

PM Training Session: **Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ) module on “Bias and Verification.”** (Conference)

Evening: Dinner with students, CCJ trainers and UCCS faculty.

Final project: Each student will select a topic of his or her choice to be developed into a 1,500-word feature story. **Deadline: August 22.** Faculty and students will meet to discuss topics of interest for each student. **Topics must be selected by Saturday, June 28.**

FRIDAY, June 20:

AM Training Session: **CCJ module on “Engagement.” (Conference)**

PM Training Session: **CCJ module on “The Next Newsroom” (Conference)**

Writing Assignment 4: 500-word story on some aspect of CCJ seminars. **Deadline: Saturday, June 21, 8 AM.**

SATURDAY, JUNE 21:

AM Lectures: Reporting in the Capitol; the Capitol Staff

Brown Bag lunch: Rick Nelson, Copy Editor, *The Sacramento Bee*: “What Happens After My Story is Filed?” (Conference)

PM Meetings: Preliminary session with faculty on final projects.

Writing Assignment 3: Previously assigned background story based on budget lectures.

Deadline: 5 PM

Writing Assignment 5: A 750-word profile of a lobbyist. Faculty will assign each student a lobbyist to interview and profile. **Deadline: Monday, June 30, 4 PM**

MONDAY, June 23:

AM Lectures: Legislative Committees; Feature Writing (Mitchell Benson, UC Davis) (Conference)

Brown Bag Lunch with Richard Zeiger, Chief of Staff, Sen. Tom Torlakson

PM Lecture: Profile Writing (Wireless)

Writing Assignment 6: 350-word story on a bill heard in committee, or a 350-word budget story about an agency or department. **Deadline: 5 PM**

TUESDAY, June 24:

AM Lectures: Radio and TV Reporting; Broadcast Writing (Conference)

Brown Bag Lunch with John Myers, KQED Radio (Conference)

Writing Assignment 7: 500-word story on an event from the AP Daybook. Students should check the book between 8 and 8:30 AM and select an afternoon event. Time for reporting and writing will be provided after lunch. **Deadline: 5 PM**

Writing Assignment 8: 700-word story about a bill that includes its fiscal impact.

Deadline: Thursday, June 26, 5 PM

WEDNESDAY, June 25:

AM Lectures: Lobbyists; Writing for the Web; Blogging (Conference)

Brown Bag Lunch with blogger Shane Goldmacher (*The Sacramento Bee*).

PM Lecture: Computer-assisted Reporting II (Secretary of State’s Executive Conference Room, 11th and O Streets)

Writing Assignment 9: Convert Tuesday’s story to broadcast style. **Deadline: 5 PM**

THURSDAY, June 26:

AM Lectures: Campaign Reporting; Campaign Finance Reporting (Wireless)

Brown Bag Lunch with Dan Morain (*Los Angeles Times*)

PM Lecture: News Writing (Wireless)

Writing Assignment 8: Completion of the campaign story assigned Wednesday, June 27

FRIDAY, June 27:

AM Lectures: Investigative Reporting I and II (Wireless)

Brown Bag Lunch with Marc Lifsher (*Los Angeles Times*) and John Howard (*Capitol Weekly*)

PM Lecture: State Agencies (Conference)

Writing assignment 5: Time will be provided in the afternoon to complete interviewing and writing the lobbyist profile, **due Saturday, June 28**

SATURDAY, June 28:

Writing Assignment 5: The previously-assigned lobbyist profile is **due Monday at 4 PM**

Final Project: Each student will meet with faculty to finalize a topic for his or her 1,500-word feature story. Deadline: August 20, 4 PM

COURSE SCHEDULE: SEMINARS (Journalism 298)

(Topics and guests are subject to change, based on availability of guest speakers)

WEEK 3, Thursday, July 3, 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM: Lobbyists and the Press

Guests: Emily Pappas, Andrew Govenar (Note: Due to the July 4 holiday, this seminar will be held on Thursday afternoon, rather than Friday morning)

Suggested reading: “The Third House” by Dan Walters and Jay Michael, IGS

WEEK 4, Friday, July 11, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Elected Officials and the Press

Guests: Assemblyman Roger Niello (R-Sacramento)

Suggested reading: “Willie Brown: A Biography” by Jim Richardson, UC Press

WEEK 5, Friday, July 18, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: The Administration and the Press

Guest: Rob Stutzman, former Communications Director, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger

Suggested reading: “Governor Reagan” by Lou Cannon, PublicAffairs

WEEK 6, Friday, July 25, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Campaigns and the Press

Guest: Matt Rexroad, consultant and Yolo County supervisor

Suggested reading: “Uncivil Wars” by Thomas Hollihan, Bedford/St. Martin’s

WEEK 7, Friday, August 1, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Legislative staff and the Press

Guest: Andy Lamar, communications director, Senate Pres. pro Tem Don Perata

WEEK 8, Friday, August 8, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Accountability in the Press

Guest: Armando Acuna, Ombudsman, *The Sacramento Bee*

Suggested reading: “The News at any Cost” By Tom Goldstein, Simon and Schuster

WEEK 9, Friday, August 15, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: The Future of News

Guest: Howard Weaver, Vice President for News, McClatchy Newspapers

Suggested reading: “Images of a Free Press,” Lee Bollinger, Univ. of Chicago Press