

SYLLABUS, PUBLIC-AFFAIRS JOURNALISM COURSE
Journalism 298, Journalism 197
University of California Center Sacramento (UCCS)
SUMMER SESSION 2009

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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*; Molly Dugan, instructor in journalism, California State University Sacramento and former Capitol reporter for *The Sacramento Bee*.

Class meeting time and place: June 15-June 27, Monday-thru-Friday, 9 AM – 5 PM, UCCS. July 13-August 28, 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 documentary films and movies related to journalism are viewed and discussed.

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 Directory of the California Legislature" from Capitol Enquiry
- "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 15:

Move in to student housing

5 PM 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 16, 8:30 AM.

TUESDAY, June 16:

Course Orientation/Brief History of Journalism (Gunnison/Block, Room 127)

Noon: Field Trip: Capitol Building, Associated Press

PM Lectures and Exercises: The Basics of Interviewing; Writing Leads; Journalistic Ethics; Rules of Engagement (Room 127)

WEDNESDAY, June 17:

UCCS administrative and safety orientation (Conference Room)

AM Lecture: Insider’s Guide to the Capitol (Block, Conference Room)

PM Welcome: Special Director’s Welcome (Dr. Gary Dymski, Room 127)

Writing Assignment 2: In the morning, students will select an event to cover from “Capitol Morning Report” 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: Thursday, June 18, 2 PM

THURSDAY, June 18:

AM Lecture: Organizing Stories (Room 127).

AM Lecture: Budget Basics (John Griffing, Conference Room)

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

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

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. (A list of potential sources will be provided, along with contact information. It is recommended that students conduct these interviews in groups rather than individually.) Students may NOT interview John Griffing but may use notes from his lectures.

Deadline: Saturday, June 20, 5 PM

FRIDAY, June 19:

AM Training Session: **CCJ module “Conscience and Communication.”**
(Conference Room)

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

Writing Assignment 4: 500-word story on some aspect of CCJ seminars.

Deadline: Saturday, June 20, 4 PM.

Final project: Each student will select a tentative topic of his or her choice to be developed into a 1,500-word feature story.

Deadline: August 28. Faculty and students will meet to discuss topics of interest for each student. **Topics must be selected by Friday, July 3.**

SATURDAY, JUNE 20:

AM Lectures: Legislative Committees; Capitol Staff (Room 127)

Brown Bag lunch: Rick Nelson, Copy Editor, *The Sacramento Bee*: “What Happens After My Story is Filed?” (Room 127)

PM Meetings: Preliminary session with A.G. Block 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: Tuesday, June 30, 4 PM

MONDAY, June 22:

AM Lectures: Reporting in the Capitol (Block/Gunnison); Feature Writing (Mitchell Benson, UC Davis) (Room 127)

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

PM Lecture: Profile Writing (Room 127)

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 23:

AM Lectures: Radio and TV Reporting; Broadcast Writing (Carroll Wills, California Professional Firefighters, former radio reporter, Room 127)

Brown Bag Lunch with John Myers, KQED Radio (Room 127)

Writing Assignment 7: 500-word story on an event from “Capitol Morning Report.” Students should check the “Report” 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 focuses on its fiscal impact.

Deadline: Thursday, June 25, 5 PM

WEDNESDAY, June 24:

AM Lectures: Lobbyists; Multi-media story telling (Paul Grabowicz, UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism, Room 127)

Brown Bag Lunch with blogger Shane Goldmacher (*The Los Angeles Times*).

PM Lecture: Campaign-Finance Reporting (Dan Morain, former reporter, *The Los Angeles Times*) **Writing Assignment 9:** Convert Tuesday's story to broadcast style.

Deadline: 5 PM

THURSDAY, June 25:

AM Lectures: Campaign Reporting; News Writing (Room 127)

Brown Bag Lunch with Bill Enfield (9-1-1 and blog editor *The Sacramento Bee*)

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

Writing Assignment 8: Completion of the fiscal story assigned Wednesday, June 24

FRIDAY, June 26:

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 Monday, June 29**

SATURDAY, June 27:

Writing time

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

Deadline: August 28, 4 PM

COURSE SCHEDULE: SEMINARS (Journalism 298)

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

All seminar sessions will be held in Room 127.

Most suggested readings provided on CD.

WEEK 3, Thursday, July 2, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Lobbyists and the Press

Guests: Emily Pappas, Andrew Govenar

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

WEEK 4, Friday, July 10, 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 (CD)

WEEK 5, Friday, July 17, 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 (CD)

WEEK 6, Friday, July 24, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Campaigns and the Press

Guest: Steve Maviglio, former deputy chief of staff, Assembly Speaker’s Office, campaign manager, Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson

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

WEEK 7, Friday, July 31, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Legislative staff and the Press

Guest: Jim Evans, communications director, Senate Pres. pro Tem Darrell Steinberg

WEEK 8, Friday, August 7, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: Accountability in the Press

Guest: To be announced

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

WEEK 9, Friday, August 14, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: The Future of News

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

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

WEEK 10, Friday, August 21, 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM: -30- on Summer Session