

The Basics of Journalism: Learning, Creating, Preparing

Course Description

Welcome to Trinity's new Basics of Journalism class! In this online-hybrid class, you will learn all the necessary foundations for understanding the field of Journalism, including writing techniques, styles of communication, how to create stories, interviewing strategies, and more. You will start the semester by exploring the concept of Journalism itself: why it's important, what it involves, and how we experience it in society. With these concepts as your foundation, you will spend the remaining weeks learning how to develop story ideas, write various styles of articles, create and execute your own interview, practice doing research and sourcing, explore alternative media formats, and even create your own culminating final project.

Journalism is a cornerstone for a democratic society, and freedom of the press is a defining characteristic of our country. However, Journalism has recently been considered a dying industry with the rise of social media where nearly everyone can document and share current events. This class aims to combat that, by getting students interested in Journalism by uncovering the inner workings of the industry and displaying the value and importance of what it produces. Journalism not only sheds light on important figures and events, but gives the people a voice - it allows room for people to communicate what they find noteworthy and to share their experiences. Journalism includes many fields such as news reporting, editorial writing, interviewing, broadcasting, documentary film, magazine writing, photojournalism, investigative journalism, and sports writing. There is a place in Journalism for anyone with an interest in shedding light on truth or simply in providing a form of entertainment and relatability for others. This class will give students essential skills that will help in many fields and will prepare students as they look towards college or career opportunities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

1. Explain the importance of journalism
2. Write and edit articles
3. Interview subjects and gather quotes
4. Produce a journalistic piece
5. Create original content ideas
6. Work with various formats and media
7. Do research and cite sources

Expectations and Grading

In this course, you will be graded on participation (crucial!) in discussions and class activities, writing mechanics, attention to instructions and assignments, and creativity. The Trinity Writing Rubric will be used to evaluate all formal written assignments. Other grading will be at the instructor's discretion and will be based on qualities such as level of effort and thought, editing (proper grammar, punctuation, formatting), and originality. Homework will be comprised of reading assignments with annotations/notes, online discussion boards, short reflections on course ideas/readings, handouts/worksheets, and short writing/creating/researching/interviewing assignments. These will be given on a weekly basis at the start of each week. All homework will be assigned with a clear due date, typically being the next class period (either independent or in-class days). Quizzes will occur every two weeks at the end of each unit, and they will cover all the major information from the unit. These quizzes may range in format from short essays to multiple choice. The Final Project will be a culmination of all the material learned throughout the semester and will combine student's skills into one complete journalistic piece. Students will be given more details about the project at the end of Week 12. Finally, students will be graded on participation, as

this class focuses on experiential learning, so students must be engaged in the material to gather necessary skills. This category is mostly comprised of doing a weekly reading/viewing of a piece of journalism and writing a short comment/opinion in the class discussion board. This grade also takes into account participation in discussions, asking questions, fully completing assignments, and any other participation the teacher sees.

These are the methods of evaluation for the course:

Homework (35%)

Quizzes (20%)

Final Project (35%)

Participation (10%)

Grade Replacement Opportunity: Any student that writes for or participates in The Blue & Gold will receive the ability to replace a quiz grade by giving evidence to the teacher of meaningful work done for the publication.

This class will meet one day per week, and will consist of independent, online work for the other two class periods. Because of this schedule, students are expected to keep up with assigned work and look for regular announcements. Failure to do so will result in a lowered grade. Also, since face-to-face class time will be limited, students should participate meaningfully when in class in order to use the most of our time.

Semester Layout

The semester consists of about 14 weeks, so there will be 7 units in the course, each lasting two weeks.

This outlines the semester and briefly summarizes the content of each unit:

Class Week	Learning Objectives	Unit	Topics
Weeks 1&2	#1	Introduction	What is journalism? Why is it important? How do we experience it? What are the effects of the media? The five W's and How?
Friday, Week 2	#1	QUIZ	
Weeks 3&4	#2	Writing Styles	Structures of different types of articles. Essential writing skills.
Friday, Week 4	#2	QUIZ	
Weeks 5&6	#2, #5, #7	Finding Content & Creating Stories	Looking for inspiration. Relevancy, Importance, and Creativity.
Friday, Week 6	#5	QUIZ	
Weeks 7&8	#3, #6	Fundamentals of Interviewing	Who? How to form questions. Recording conversations. Rules and boundaries. How to quote.
Friday, Week 8	#3	QUIZ	
Weeks 9&10	#7	Researching and Sourcing	Avoiding "Fake News". Correct citation techniques. Finding reliable, useful sources.
Friday, Week 10	#7	QUIZ	
Weeks 11&12	#5, #6, #7	The Various Forms of Journalism	Moving beyond words on a page: Social Media, Digital, Broadcast, Documentary, Video, Photography, etc.
Friday, Week 12	#6	QUIZ	
Weeks 13&14	#2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7	Final Project: A Full Journalistic Piece	Creating and executing a complete journalistic piece (any format) from start to finish using semester-long skills.
Friday, Week 14	#2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7	FINAL PROJECT DUE	

Resources

Because of the dual nature of this course (in-person and online), we will use one central hub, Google Classroom. Through this platform, students will receive all announcements, assignments, projects, discussion boards, and anything else related to the course. Students should check this page regularly to keep track of the course schedule and required work. Classroom will also contain this syllabus and any other large course materials. It is also where students will turn in all assignments and projects unless otherwise instructed, typically using Google Drive and Google Docs as their platforms for completing work. If students are having issues understanding or working with Classroom, please contact your instructor.

Along with Classroom, this course will use additional resources and readings, which students will do outside of class when assigned. This will include a regular, weekly assignment to read/watch at least one journalistic article/piece of the student's choice from any reputable news source and record that for the instructor, which will be calculated as part of the class participation grade. We will also look at articles and videos from many sources, including but not limited to, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, WRAL, NPR, *The News & Observer*, *VICE*, and *Time Magazine*. We will also read and study excerpts from the following books: *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect*, *Truth Needs No Ally*, and several others that will be provided through Classroom or in hard copy. We will often read and analyze articles, photos, videos, and news reports by various creators. These will be given and cited when needed.