

**MVLA
2019-20
COURSE INFORMATION SHEET**

Course Title: Introduction to Journalism

School: Mountain View High School

UC/CSU requirement: Yes, "g"

Textbook and/or other learning resources: *Journalism Today*, *Journalism Today Workbook*, along with selections of journalistic texts from a variety of sources:

- newspapers
- online news sites and weblogs
- periodicals
- television news programs
- films about journalism
- radio news programs
- our school newspaper

Student Learning Outcomes:

Introduction to Journalism helps student develop media literacy skills, as well as news, features, and opinions writing skills and technical skills necessary for mastery in the modern world of journalism. Essential questions explored: *How and why do stories become news? To what extent does the audience affect what you write and how you write it? What are the ethics of journalism?*

Assessment and Grading ([BP 5121](#) / [AR 5121](#)): To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning, the course instructors implement aligned grading practices and common assessments with the same frequency.

1. Grading categories and their percentage weights:

Grades will be weighted according to the following categories for **first semester**:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| ● Understanding of History of American Journalism | 10% |
| ● Understanding of Feature Writing | 10% |
| ● Understanding of News Writing | 10% |
| ● Understanding of Editorials and Opinion Pieces | 10% |
| ● Understanding of Sports Writing | 10% |
| ● Understanding of Culture Writing and Critique | 10% |
| ● Understanding the Elements of Journalism in a Newspaper | 10% |
| ● Understanding of Podcasting, Photography, Advertising | 10% |
| ● Understanding of the Role and Responsibility of a Reporter | 10% |
| ● Quality of Basic Journalism Portfolio | 10% |

Grades will be weighted according to the following categories for **second semester**:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| ● Understanding of Literary Journalism | 10% |
| ● Understanding of the Documentarian as Journalist | 10% |
| ● Quality of Literary Journalism Portfolio | 10% |
| ● Demonstration of Interview Skills | 10% |
| ● Quality of Story Leads for News | 10% |
| ● Quality of News Stories and Headlines | 10% |
| ● Demonstration of Proper Use of Quotes in Stories | 10% |

- Understanding of Staff Organization for News 10%
- Understanding of Layout 10%
- Understanding of Writing for TV, Radio, Desktop Publishing 10%

Grades in each particular category will reflect students' performance across the reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards

1. Achievement evidence collected within each grading category:

Our publications and the process leading up to publication provide a large part of the evidence used to determine grades. Other data collected includes records of student timeliness for stories, fulfillment of production night's hours (varies by role), distribution of the paper, and other duties.

Students will also be quizzed on various chapters from the textbook, and they will be required to write original articles related to the types of articles they study in the textbook.

1. Grading scales:

The following scale will be used for determining semester grades.

Mark	Low Rubric	High Rubric
A+	4.66	5.00
A	4.33	4.65
A-	4.00	4.32
B+	3.66	3.99
B	3.33	3.65
C+	2.66	2.99
C	2.33	2.65
C-	2.00	2.32
D+	1.66	1.99
D	1.33	1.65
D-	1.00	1.32
F	0.00	0.99

1. Homework/outside of class practices ([AR 6154](#)):

Students on the *Oracle* staff conduct most of their newsgathering and produce most of their journalistic content outside of class. Hours needed to produce quality content vary depending upon assignment, but can require up to five hours per week during the peak of the six cycles of publication. Averaged over the school year, however, outside of class time required for the class is closer to two hours per week. Leaders with greater amounts of responsibility, especially the three students on our Executive Team (Editor-in-Chief, Print Managing Editor and Web Managing Editor), spend more time outside of class, planning, collaborating and generating class activities.

1. Excused absence make up practices ([Education Code 48205\(b\)](#)):

Oracle staff members are expected to communicate with their editors about all absences and make plans for completing story assignments on time regardless of absences.

1. Academic integrity violation practices ([LAHS Academic Integrity Policy](#) / [MVHS Academic Integrity Policy](#)):

Oracle staff members are expected to know and comply with all legal and ethical journalistic practices. They are taught the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics and follow its guidelines. Staff members who plagiarize another journalist's work, whether student work or from a professional publication, will be removed from our staff.

1. Late work practices:

Since we have strict publication deadlines, late work is generally not accepted, unless publishable on our digital platforms. When it comes to in class assignments, however, students may submit late work after having asked for an extension.

1. Revision practices:

Each issue of the paper is an opportunity for learning and revision. Student growth is taken into account in grading overall participation in the *Oracle* staff. Because the class emphasizes the learning process and because the staff is made up of students at all levels of experience, journalistic content is graded on the basis of completion rather than quality, making a revision policy for writing unnecessary.

1. Extra credit practices:

Students' willingness to go above and beyond their specific duties on the *Oracle* staff, to perform extra services on behalf of the *Oracle* community, to support others on staff even those not in their sphere of management, to model excellence in student journalism, and to seek greater proficiency as journalists by availing themselves of learning opportunities outside of class, will all be considered instances of extra credit and considered in overall assessment of each student.

1. Additional grading practices:

Students submit self-evaluations and evaluations of their peers from above and below. These evaluations are considered in the grading process, but are not the final word. Although almost every aspect of the journalism program is student-run, the advisers of the program (Amy Beare and Steve Kahl) make all assessment decisions and submits all grades.

Instructors' email addresses:

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Additional information:

Mountain View High School *Oracle* publications are forums for student journalists to inform and educate their readers as well as for the discussion of issues of concern to their primary audience—other students. These publications are not reviewed or restrained by school officials prior to publication or distribution. Students assume full responsibility for the content of *Oracle* publications and are aware of their legal

obligation to avoid obscenity, libel, slander or content that “so incites pupils as to create a clear and present danger of the commission of unlawful acts on school premises or the violation of lawful school regulations, or the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.” (*Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48907*)

The overall purpose, role and goal of *Oracle* publications is to:

1. Inform, challenge and entertain readers and viewers with accurate reports and thoughtful perspectives, where information has been impartially gathered and thoroughly verified;
2. Serve as an educational laboratory experience for those on staff;
3. Be accurate, fair, and impartial in its coverage of issues that affect the school community;
4. Cover relevant topics, even in cases of possible controversy;
5. Cover the total school population as effectively and accurately as possible;
6. Report all issues in a legal, objective, accurate and ethical manner, in accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Society for Professional Journalists which includes guidelines for accuracy, responsibility, integrity, conflict of interest, impartiality, fair play, freedom of the press, independence, sensationalism, personal privacy, obstruction of justice, credibility and advertising.