

Syllabus – JOUR 61

Newspaper Staff

De Anza College

T/Th 4-5:15, Room L-42, 3 units



COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Practical experience in gathering and reporting news and features as members of the college's newspaper staff. Staff includes reporters, editors, photojournalists and graphic artists. Positions are self-selected except for editors, who participate in an interview process. May be taken six times for credit.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Name: Beth Grobman

Office Hours: T/TH 5:30-6:30

Office Location: L-41

Phone: 408-864-8588 (office) 408-864-5626 (La Voz main office)

Email: Grobman@fhda.edu

Instructor Web site: <http://faculty.deanza.edu/GrobmanBeth>

AOL IM: DeAnzaBeth

La Voz Web site: <http://www.lavozdeanza.com> **Facebook & Twitter:** LaVozNewsJunky

Journalism Dept. Web site: <http://group.deanza.edu/journalism>

THE FINE PRINT: *This class is unlike most college courses because:*

LA VOZ STAFF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRODUCING A PUBLIC DOCUMENT, with a print circulation of 3,000+, and additional Internet circulation. No other De Anza class shares its work as often and as publicly as this class does, nor does any other class represent De Anza to the community and the public to the extent that this class does. *La Voz* is a First Amendment newspaper, which means that all decision-making over the editorial content is in the hands of student editors. That responsibility is a serious and important obligation, not to be taken lightly.

LA VOZ IS A BUSINESS, with deadlines and responsibilities to its advertisers and its public. This class functions more in the style of a work team than as a typical class. Missed deadlines, irresponsibility, or shoddy work ethics affect not just the individual, but the rest of the team. Deadlines are important, and excuses, unfortunately, don't get the paper out. Producing the newspaper requires a group effort of responsible and dependable people. Student staff must work hard at maintaining communication with one another.

STUDENTS MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN LEARNING: This class is a practical course in producing a newspaper. The deadlines come quickly and before students may be taught what they need and want to know. Students are expected to learn as they go, learn on their own, learn from their mistakes, ask lots of questions, and be responsible for their own learning. (One of the best ways to learn is to read a daily newspaper with a critical eye, noting writing and graphic styles, format, and section definition.) In other words, this course requires initiative and commitment. Students will need to seek out sources and materials on their own, although the instructor and one or more editors will be available most days for conferencing and consultation.

CLASS LISTSERV (Group email):

The instructor posts announcements and messages to the listserv (group email), and the *La Voz* staff uses the listserv for story, photo and graphic assignments and other communication related to the paper. All staff must have an email address and will be subscribed to the listserv.

If you haven't received a listserv message within four days after starting the class, please tell the managing editor.

To send a message to the listserv, send an email to: LaVozStaff@googlegroups.com

The listserv Web page is at: <http://groups.google.com/group/Lavozstaff>

TEXTS:

Kershner - Elements of News Writing (required)

La Voz Handbook (given out in class)

Associated Press Stylebook + Brief. on Media Law (recommended, but there are copies in the newsroom you can use)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In this course, students will:

- Oversee the gathering, organizing, and presenting of news, information, and opinions to produce a First Amendment student newspaper
- Gain proficiency in the operation of a weekly newspaper and an appreciation the inherent problems
- Improve their journalism skills including news writing, headline writing, editing, AP style, photography and design.
- Build on past experiences, improve the newspaper and try new approaches
- Improve management and communication skills while working with other staff members
- Use the responsibilities given to them that's inherent in a free student press
- Compile a portfolio which reflects the course work and which can be used professionally

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

La Voz staff is required to:

- ❑ **ATTEND CLASS:** Attend class meetings and spend six or more additional hours a week involved in producing the newspaper, including time in the Journalism Publications Lab
- ❑ **READ ASSIGNMENTS:** Read the *La Voz Handbook* and the Kershner textbook and take quizzes on the material
- ❑ **CHECK CLASS LISTSERV:** Monitor the La Voz staff listserv (group email)
- ❑ **ASSIST NEWBIES:** Act as leaders/coaches to newer members of the staff
- ❑ **TURN IN 9 STORY ASSIGNMENTS:** Complete a minimum of 9 regular weekly story assignments on deadline, **3 which must be news**. A story assignment generally consists of:
 - a 400+ word story
 - two series of photos
 - one complex graphic.(Larger submissions may count as two or more assignments, based on consultation with and approval of managing editor.)
- ❑ **TURN IN 6 SMALL ASSIGNMENTS:** Complete a minimum of 6 small weekly story assignments (called "weeklies" or beats) turned in by deadline. (Examples: DA Voices, athlete of the week)
- ❑ **COMPLETE 1 MULTI-MEDIA PROJECT:** Turn in one multi-media project for the Web (podcast, slide show, video)
- ❑ **TURN IN STORY IDEAS:** "Blanket" the campus to find news stories and photographs (wild art) and provide tips to the editors on news, feature, and photo assignments to aid the editors who make the assignments.
- ❑ **CREATE/TURN IN PORTFOLIO:** Turn in a portfolio at the end of the quarter, which contains
 - a collection of published and non-published work, with description of the contributions, if not evident
 - a self-evaluation form
 - a Weekly Log describing the activities, learning and time spent

Editors are required to:

- ❑ Do all the above, except the story and small assignments
- ❑ Attend Editorial Board meetings and hold at least one office hour a week.
- ❑ Assume responsibility for their assigned section or assignment, including assigning and editing stories, writing stories as needed and participating in page or media production

NEWSROOM/LAB POLICIES:

Students must follow lab policies and act in a professional manner in the lab/newsroom.

The Editorial Board is responsible for setting the standards in the newsroom including:

- keeping it clean
- assuring that staff follows safety standards
- assuring that staff acts in a professional manner
- assuring security of the equipment, materials and lab
- assisting and coaching reporters, photojournalists and other members of the staff.

Students should not be in the lab unless an instructor, lab tech, advertising/office manager, editor in chief or other senior editor is present, unless they have permission from the instructor. No one may be in the lab between midnight and 6:00 a.m. The department chair or the division dean may revoke students' permission to use the lab/newsroom subject to inappropriate, unprofessional behavior.

GRADING:

Students in this class should consider themselves to be on the payroll of a professional newspaper, performing their jobs with a professional attitude, meeting deadlines, showing initiative and satisfaction in a job well done. Results, not intentions, are what count. Absences, missed deadlines, unprofessional behavior and slipshod work ethics will lower grades. The portfolio should be professional-looking, suitable for using for job/internship interviews.

Students will be graded on a combination of:

1. Story assignments turned in
2. Multi-media project
3. Attendance
4. Portfolio
5. Quizzes

Assignments turned in will be given points by the managing editor.

POINTS:

Multimedia project	5 points
News story assignment	3 points
Non-news story assignment	2 points
DASB mtg. notes w/audio	1 point
X of the week w/photo	1 point
Police log	1 point
Helping w/multimedia project	1 point
Multimedia add-ons	1 point
Campus snapshot w/cutline	1/2 point
Turning in a story idea on slug	1/2 point

The managing editor will determine the point value for other assignments. Points will be reduced for late, incomplete or unsatisfactory stories. Staff members are welcome to negotiate points with the managing editor if they feel an assignment was especially difficult or time-consuming.

Students must have 35 points (in addition to a satisfactory multi-media project, satisfactory portfolio, satisfactory quizzes and at least 90 percent attendance) to receive an A.

STORIES ARE DUE ON MONDAYS at 5 PM BY EMAIL

ASSIGNMENTS DUE ON THURSDAYS:

Week 1: Read Syllabus and Chapters: *What is News, Kershner's Five Rules of Journalism, Basics of Good Journalism, a Stylebook Primer, How to Read a Newspaper*

Week 2: Read Chapters: *How to Write a News Story in 15 Steps, How to Write a Strong Lead, How to Structure a News Story, How to Conduct an Interview*

Week 3: Read Chapters: *How to Write Reviews and Criticism, How to Write Editorials and Columns, How to Write Profiles, How to Write Feature Stories*

Week 4: Read Chapters: *How to Cover Meetings and Speeches, How to Cover Police and Courts, How to Cover Disasters and Tragedies, How to Write Obituaries*

Week 5: Read Chapters: *Commonly Misused Words, A Concise Guide to Comma Usage, Colons and Semicolons, Punctuating Quotations, Active and Passive Voice, Spelling Checkers*

Week 6: Read Chapters: *How Newspapers are Organized, How to Plan a Newspaper, How to Lay Out Pages, How to Write headlines,*

Week 7: Read Chapters: *How to Write Cutlines, How to Use Photos and Graphics, How to Edit Stories*

Week 8: Read: *History of Journalism in the U.S., Legal Considerations in Journalism, Ethical Considerations in Journalism, The Role of News Media in American Society*

Week 9: Read: *Tips from the Best*

Week 10: Turn in for viewing in class: *Multi-media project*

Week 11: Turn in to instructor: *Portfolio*

McHUMOR.com by T. McCracken



"Don't tell me. More last minute editorial changes."