

De Anza College
JOUR 21B, Feature Writing and Reporting, spring 2024

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Farideh Dada (*she, her, hers*)
Course: JOUR 21B, Feature Writing and Reporting, three units
Office Location: The journalism lab in L41, in the red **L4 building** on this [map](#)
Email: dadafarideh@fhda.edu (preferred)
Telephone: 408-864-8588
Class Days/Time: Tuesday (April 9 – June 25), 1:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Classroom: L42
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in L41, La Voz newsroom, or on Zoom upon request
Thursday 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in L47, Language and Communication Village
Newsroom Hours: Tuesday/Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Counselor for journalism major: [Trisha Tran](#) is a Career Services counselor who specializes in counseling for journalism and other career training majors. Visit Career Services Counselors.

Course format

The course is hybrid. It is taught in-person on Tuesdays with **no** Zoom component. A computer or a laptop and a digital audio recorder or smartphone that can record interviews are needed.

REQUIRED TEXT:

The Associated Press Stylebook
56th edition, ISBN: 978-0-917360-70-1
Publisher: The Associated Press, 2022-2024

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

* Inside Reporting,
a Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism
By Tim Harrower
* Writing and Reporting for the Media.
By Bender, Davenport, Drager, Fedler
* Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines
The Pursuit of Excellence
By Edward Jay Friedlander and John Lee
* Dynamics of News Reporting and Writing:
Foundational Skills for a Digital Age
By Vincent F. Filak
* The Elements of News Writing
By James W. Kershner

OTHER READINGS: Daily publications and news outlets, such as The New York Times, the Mercury News, San Jose Spotlight, AP News, The Guardian, BBC News, etc.

ADVISORY: Completion of Jour 21A
Not to be taken concurrently

NOTE ABOUT THE CLASS:

Please know that our class sessions will be spent mainly on covering main topics, your presentations and answering questions. You must take responsibility for your own learning by reading chapters and suggested materials, practicing writing, participating and asking questions.

CANVAS INFORMATION:

This course utilizes Canvas, De Anza's Online Learning Community. Please go to the [Canvas website](#) to log in. Please note that you will be unable to log into our classroom until the first day of class. Additional instructions and assistance can be found on the "[Guide to the spring quarter](#)" "[Canvas Student Guide](#)" and the "[Online Education Center](#)" site.

You should log onto Canvas **at least twice a week** to keep up-to-date with reading requirements, assignments and when everything is due. Please **do not turn off notifications** from Canvas, but rather manage how many you get by going to **Settings – Notifications** in your Canvas account (top left corner of Canvas). Always start by reading the **Overview** first to unlock access to all materials. Sometimes other items in the weekly modules will remain inaccessible until you've reviewed the Overview.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Fundamentals in feature writing for newspapers, magazines and other media with instruction and practice in profile, human interest, enterprise news and opinion features. Practical experience in interviewing, writing special story types and revising.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

When this course is completed, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the fundamentals of feature writing including the organization and structure of feature stories.
- Gather, organize and synthesize information to compile into multi-source feature stories, and write these stories.
- Prepare several types of feature stories for news media.

COURSE GRADING:

Grading is based on a 1000-point system. Students must adhere to professional standards, meet deadlines and follow rules of punctuation, grammar, spelling and style. To earn an A in the course, in addition to 900 or more points, a student must turn in all assignments, complete all live reporting assignments and not miss more than two classes.

*A + = 1,000+ points	A = 950-1,000 points
A - = 900-949 points	B + = 870-899 points
B = 840-869 points	B - = 800-839 points
C + = 760-799 points	C = 700-759 points
D = 600-699 points	F = 599 points or less

*To earn an A+, students must have perfect attendance and participation in addition to earning 1,000+ points, not including extra credit.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

200 points:	7 Quizzes
100 points	Discussions / exercises / short videos
500 points:	5 Articles/proposals/peer reviews
40 points	Final exam
30 points:	AP presentation video
30 points:	Feature article presentation/analysis
100 points:	Attendance, professionalism, participation and punctuality
1,000 points	Total

IMPORTANT NOTE

YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR PRESENTATIONS AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS TO PASS THE CLASS.

A student who earns 700 points but has not done the major projects will NOT pass.

QUIZZES, DISCUSSIONS AND EXERCISES:

The quizzes will mostly consist of multiple-choice and essay questions. Quizzes, Discussions and Exercises will close at the deadline on Canvas and they **will not be reopened**. Exercises are designed to practice techniques or strategies covered in the textbook reading or to enhance the reading by putting the ideas into practice. All exercises should be typed using 12-point font and submitted as a Word document. Save your exercises/stories by using your name followed by the assignment name (i.e., Farideh Exercise 3-1). Some exercises should be done as a group. Do not wait until the last minute to post! Anticipate emergencies and computer/internet/connectivity issues.

REWRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

You are expected to engage in peer review and rewrite assignments accordingly. Your revised submissions should demonstrate that you have integrated and applied the feedback and comments provided previously.

BLOG:

If you have created your blog for JOUR 21A, continue posting your articles there. If you do not have a blog, use any web authoring software or an online site such as blogger, Blogspot, Medium, Wix, Weebly or WordPress to create a blog. The site should be public and accessible. It is highly recommended that you build your blog earlier in the quarter and post all your articles in your blog.

Main Components of your blog:

- ✓ Post your articles as blog posts. Link key words in the story.
- ✓ Include gadgets such as:
 - Sidebars
 - Multimedia links
 - Interactive options
 - Comments, surveys – if possible, ask friends and classmates to post comments and respond to surveys.
 - *Complete the video portion of the assignment.*
- ✓ Double-check the setting to ensure it is public and viewable.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Active participation in the class is mandatory. You are required to participate in class discussions. You should attend the in-person class sessions. Also, you should be active on Canvas. The instructor may drop any student who has not logged into the Canvas course site for more than seven days. You need to log on to Canvas, at least, twice a week and turn in assignments. You must attend every class for the first two weeks of the quarter, or you may be dropped. If you miss more than one class before the last day to drop with a W, the instructor may drop you. Arriving late to class or leaving early is a distraction. Therefore, if you are late three times or leave the class early three times, it will be considered as one absence. If you cannot be in class, please communicate ahead of time, so that we might try to make other arrangements.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Read the textbook and assigned readings.
- Read feature articles regularly.
- Complete all in-class and Canvas assignments.
- Rewrite assignments as required.
- Participate in class discussions.
- Share your work with others when requested.
- Edit others' work.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- You must arrive on time in class.
- Be courteous.

- Sit with a new classmate every session.
- Review the syllabus and the class schedule every session.
- Do not disrupt the class by leaving early or coming late.
- Turn off cell phones and other personal electronic devices, unless you are instructed to use them for class-related activities.
- Do not schedule personal appointments that conflict with the time the class meets.
- Any student disrupting the class may be asked to leave the class. Administrative follow-up may result. Examples of inappropriate behaviors during class include displays of contempt; disturbing others; talking when someone else is talking; listening to music in class; using cellphones and other devices; and working on other assignments during class.
- For every class session, you are required to bring a notebook for taking notes, pens including red, the syllabus, AP stylebook, handouts and your assignments.
- **DO NOT** ask for extension of deadlines. **DO NOT** turn in assignments late. **Deadlines are final!**
- **ALWAYS** keep a copy of your submissions as a backup in case something happens to the one posted. This is especially important in an online class since (electronic) stuff happens.
- When contacting the instructor, it is preferred you send an email or use the inbox messaging on Canvas. Be sure to write **STUDENT** or **JOUR 21B** in all caps in the subject line, along with the subject. That way it won't be confused with spam.
- Schedule your time appropriately; I may take up to 48 hours to respond to queries. If I don't reply after two days, feel free to remind me.
- Don't procrastinate. Start work early in the week. Sometimes the internet or the Canvas course site may be down later in the week or you may have some other emergency. Plan ahead, especially for the projects, which are lengthy.
- Look ahead at the assignments and readings, if the modules are open.

NOTE: I understand your possible reasons for not doing your assignments or not being in class. You have my complete sympathy, compassion and support, but the class has requirements that need to be met. **Deadlines MUST be met.** Your success is my goal.

ACCADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Original work is required for this class. Papers from other classes or your past writings are not accepted. Journalists have only one thing to offer: credibility. Making things up – quotes, people in stories, facts – and stealing the words of another writer or failing to give proper attribution to information obtained from other sources are deadly sins in journalism. The instructor may cross-check story submissions. There is a zero-tolerance policy in this class regarding plagiarism, fabrication and cheating.

PLAGIARISM: To plagiarize is to “steal and use (the ideas and writings of another) as one’s own.” Even using your own writing from the past instead of the required assignments is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism (copying work or cheating) is grounds for probation and/or suspension from the college. Any student who cheats on an exam, plagiarizes from JOUR 21B, Feature Writing and Reporting, spring 2024

somebody's work or lifts information from sources without citing those sources will receive a 0 for that assignment and a grade no higher than a C for the course. It means an A will change to a C, a B will change to a D and a C will change to an F. If you are uncertain about the college's policy on academic misconduct, please refer to the [Academic Integrity](#) section. An online site about plagiarism with suggestions on how to avoid it is available at the [Purdue University Online Writing Lab](#).

FABRICATION: The use of composite or imaginary situations or characters is not allowed. Occasionally a columnist may use such an approach in developing a piece, but it must be made clear to the reader that the person or situation is fictional.

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS:

You are expected to be honest. In this course, that means you should not turn in any work that is not your own, invent sources, mislead sources or invent quotes or sources. Even any work that was your own but was produced before or produced for other classes or other purposes is not acceptable. Examples of journalistic plagiarism and integrity lapses:

- Copy/pasting stories from online sources.
- Making up fictitious sources.
- Interviewing people by email/text unless absolutely necessary and received permission from your instructor first. **These are not genuine interviews!**
- Interviewing your friends or family members, unless explicitly told and got permission from your instructor for a specific assignment.
- Telling sources the story you're writing is "just for a class" or it "won't be published." This is not an ethical violation, but you will have a better learning experience if you take yourself and your work more seriously and seek to have it published.
- Using quotations from unnamed sources.
- Manipulating quotes, photos or other visuals.
- Using social media to get quotations for a story unless you can verify people's identity, you explicitly told and got permission from your instructor for a specific assignment.
- Using AI in doing your assignments; however, utilizing AI for brainstorming purposes is acceptable as long as you inform your instructor.

ACCURACY OF STORIES

To ensure students accurately report and write information from sources, I may randomly check facts and send out accuracy surveys to the people named as sources in stories. The surveys may include questions such as:

- Was the story fair and accurate?
- Were your name and title correct?
- Were you quoted or attributed accurately?

- Did the story omit any information you believe was important to full understanding of its content?
- How did the reporter conduct the interview? In person, by email or conference call?

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Follow instructions and submit your assignments as instructed.
- All assignments should be typed and double-spaced.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font.
- All assignments should be proofread for accuracy, grammar, punctuation, style and spelling. Errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar and AP style will result in the loss of points and a lower grade. Typos are considered spelling errors.
- All stories should include a headline and a deck (secondary headline).
- Save your work by using your name followed by the assignment name (i.e., Farideh Profile story or Farideh Ex. 6-2).
- Use a dictionary ([Merriam Webster dictionary](#) is preferred.) and the [AP Stylebook](#).
- Late assignments may not be accepted and won't receive full credit.
- All deadlines are final. Meeting deadlines is an essential part of journalism.
- The instructor is not responsible for stories lost because of system failures in your computer, the Canvas site or the email network.
- Save all your stories and assignments in a portfolio.
- Reviewing, editing and grading your classmates' articles are part of your assignments.
- Be prepared for your work to be shared and posted publicly online.
- Save all your stories and assignments as backup.
- Don't wait until the last minute to post!
- Usually, content dictates the length of assignments. Length depends on how many words are needed for a story to be told; unless the required word count is mentioned in the instruction.
- Tell your stories concisely, but with enough details to tell the reader the "who, what, where, when, why, how" and "so what" of a story.
- You will be penalized for omitting important facts.
- You are responsible for any missed classes or assignments. It is your responsibility to ask other students or the instructor about your assignments.
- AP practices and presentation are part of your assignments. More details will be given in the class.
- Weekly analysis of feature stories and presenting them in class are part of your assignments.
- Certain assignments maybe required to be published on YouTube and/or your blog.

WARNING: A factual error, such as misspelling someone's name, will result in a lower grade. A gross error, such as a potentially libelous statement, plagiarism, fabrication, etc., could result in an F for a story. Reporters must get the facts right.

READING

Reading is a major part of the course and a habit of journalists. Good writers are good readers. De Anza students have free access to the major U.S. dailies through the [ProQuest database](#). The best way to browse for a particular publication, for example the Wall Street Journal content, is to click on “Publications” above the search box, then select Wall Street Journal to access articles from the current day.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 9: First day of our Feature Writing class

April 19: Last day to [add 12-week classes](#)

April 20: Last day to [drop classes](#) without a W

May 25-27: Memorial Day Weekend - no classes, offices closed

May 31: Last day to [drop classes](#) with a W

June 19: Juneteenth Holiday -- no classes, offices closed

June 25: Final exam at 1:45 p.m.

June 29: [Graduation](#)

DROPPING THE CLASS

- Drops: Make sure to check the Academic Calendar for deadlines. I may drop any student who has not attended class or logged into the classroom for seven or more consecutive days, but you are responsible for dropping if you decide not to attend the class. Please see “[How to Drop Classes](#)” for regulations, dates and procedures for dropping classes.
- Students who have excessive absences or are not keeping up with assignments may be dropped by the instructor.
- Students who disappear and do not drop by the final “Drop with W” deadline will receive an “F.”

SUPPORT SERVICES

All services are available to students online and in person.

Guide to Student Services: <https://www.deanza.edu/services/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students who have been found to be eligible for accommodations by Disability Support Services, should follow up to ensure that their accommodations have been authorized for the current quarter. If you are not registered with DSS and need accommodations, please go to the DSS office in the Registration & Student Services Building – Room 141 for information on eligibility and how to receive support services. You can also visit online at <https://www.deanza.edu/dsps/> for additional information.

STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Need help with this class? You are not alone.

Student Success Center peer tutors can relate and are ready to help! Go to the [SSC homepage](#) and click on the yellow links for on-campus schedules and Zoom links.

 **Tutoring:** Drop-in or sign up for weekly sessions. Come with assignments or questions or just stop by to check it out.

 **Workshops:** Skills Workshops on a variety of topics—managing stress, anti-procrastination, study tips and tricks, finding resources and community at De Anza and much more!

 **Group tutoring and group study:** Connect with classmates and others learning the same material. Most people learn better with others ... give it a try!

 **Support for online learning:** Speak with a friendly peer tutor or SSC staff member about motivation and organization strategies to stay on track with less stress.

 **Need after-hours or weekend tutoring?** See the [Online Tutoring](#) page for information about NetTutor (accessible via Canvas).

Please [click to Join SSC Resources Canvas](#) ! This is a great source for reminders about tutoring and workshops and links to De Anza-specific curated resources for many subjects.

Questions? Contact Diana Alves de Lima alvesdelimadiana@fhda.edu, Melissa Aguilar aguilarmelissa@fhda.edu or the appropriate [SSC contact](#).

Studies show that students who participate in tutoring, group study or workshops for three or more hours succeed at much higher rates than those who do not.

CAREER SERVICES

The [Career Services](#) office offers workshops and resources to assist students in choosing a major, finding a job or planning a career. You can use the online scheduler to arrange an online meeting with a Career Services counselor.

COURTESY/EQUITY

In the discussions, I expect students to be professional and courteous, to listen to one another, and to show tolerance and respect for varying viewpoints. Students who exhibit inappropriate behavior will be docked points and/or excused from the class. All persons, regardless of gender, age, class, race, religion, physical disability, sexual orientation, etc., shall have equal opportunity without harassment in this course. Issues can be discussed in confidentiality with the instructor.

TIME MANAGEMENT

De Anza's guideline is that students should spend **9-12 hours per week** on a three-unit class. An average week might consist of:

- **Reading and quiz:** Two to four hours
- **Reporting:** Two or three hours
- **Writing, editing, proofing, rewriting:** Four to six hours
- **Total time:** At least nine hours per week

EXTRA CREDIT

1. Write extra feature stories for La Voz. (Does not include stories required for other classes.) You can get a maximum of 25 extra points per story by writing assigned feature stories for La Voz. This opportunity is not applicable to La Voz staff and editors.
2. Get your feature story published in a commercial newspaper. Turn in a clipping with your byline for up to 25 extra points per story.
3. Go see a journalism speaker and write a two-page profile story or report. Speakers in a class in which you are enrolled do not count! (Maximum 25 points).
4. Have an informational interview with a media or public relations professional (not someone you meet in class) about his or her career; write a two-page profile report. Up to 25 points. (See me for approval.)
5. Other extra credit assignments may be assigned throughout the course.

Note: Maximum points= 75 points.

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

The following schedule may change as needed. Event covering, extra readings, guest speakers, presentations, movie watching, etc. may be added based on the class progress. Possible changes to the assignments or due dates listed in the calendar will be announced in class. I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule and grading structure.

Week 1: April 8 – 14

- Introduction to the course and each other
 - The world of features
 - Diagnostic writing sample
 - AP video presentation (30 points)
 - Quiz 1 – Syllabus and Features Stories (16 points)
-

Week 2: April. 15 – 21

- Quotes and quotations
 - Making a short video (15)
 - Article #1 Reaction story (45)
 - Peer review (10)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
-

Week 3: April 22 – 28

- Interviewing techniques
 - Proposal for Article #2 Color/event story (25)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 2 – Interviewing (25)
-

Week 4: April 29 – May 5

- Feature leads
 - Article #2 Color/event story (75)
 - Peer review (10)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 3 – Feature story lead (20)
-

Week 5: May 6 – 12

- Feature writing – Trends
 - Proposal for Article #3 Trend story (15)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 4 – Feature style, structure and trendy ideas (25)
-

Week 6: May 13 – 19

- Feature writing – Profiles
 - Article #3 Trend story (100)
 - Peer review (10)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 5 – Profile Writing (20)
-

Week 7: May 20 – 26

- Short-form alternatives
 - Proposal for Article #4 Profile story (15)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
-

Week 8: May 27 – June 2

- Feature Writing – Reviews and How-to stories
 - Article #4 Profile story (100)
 - Peer review (10)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
-

Week 9: June 3 – 9

- Feature Writing – Narratives
 - Proposal for Article #5 Review or How-to (15)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 6 – Narrative nonfiction (50)
-

Week 10: June 10 – 16

- Writing fabulous leads
 - Article #5 Review or How-to (60)
 - Peer review (10)
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Quiz 7– Identifying and emulating feature leads (44)
-

Week 11: June 17 – 23

- Wrap up, review
 - Final exam review
 - Feature analysis presentation (30)
 - AP video presentation (30)
 - Group photo
-

Week 12: June 25

- Final exam (40)

PLEASE NOTE:

- ✓ *This syllabus, including the grade chart, is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and/or college.*
- ✓ *Continued enrollment in this course assumes that you have read and understood the information outlined in the syllabus and agreed with the terms and conditions.*

Good luck!