



# Journalism

Course Syllabus

Mr. Blanchard

Fall 2020

## Course Description

This course will introduce you to the main types of journalistic writing, including news writing, the feature story, the column, the review, sports writing, investigative reporting and “new” or literary journalism. The content of the course will be newspapers themselves—in most cases the *Providence Journal*, *Barrington Times*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Times* and *Washington Post*—as well as other news media outlets including print and online newspapers, magazines, blogs as well as television and radio news broadcasts and features. The product of the course will be the planning, reporting, writing, editing and designing of the Barrington High School newspaper *The Talon*. Additionally, we will explore the history of the newspaper industry and its role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; issues relevant to the field of journalism like ethics, plagiarism, sensationalism, social media as well as the effect Supreme Court cases have on student journalism.

## Responsibilities

Your success in this course largely depends on your full participation as a positive and productive team member of *The Talon* staff for the semester. Our goal is to publish at least four (4) quality issues of the school newspaper in which at least one major article reported and written by you will appear.

In order to succeed in this unique classroom environment, you must attend all staff meetings and meet all deadlines for major articles and assignments to be considered for an “honors” grade—i.e., and A or B. Only excused absences will be accepted and these must be accompanied by a personal explanatory note from your parent/guardian. Additionally, if you are late to class three (3) times, it counts as an unexcused absence as per school rules.

We will analyze a variety of news media, hold staff meetings, host visiting professionals from the field and work in a newsroom environment on a weekly basis whenever possible. The weekly schedule for the course will be as follows unless otherwise noted in advance:

Day One	Class Activity
Day Two	News Analysis
Day Three	Staff Meeting
Day Four	Guest Speaker or TEDTalk, YouTube video
Day Five	Class Discussion
Day Six	Newsroom: Interviews, Reporting & Writing

Please bring your textbook—*Introduction to Journalism*, Reque, et. al. (2001)—a notebook, and a pen/pencil to all class sessions, unless otherwise directed.

## Assignments

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance in the following areas:

Homework

10%

Quizzes	10%
Staff Meeting, Newsroom & Other Class Activities	10%
Major Articles & Deadlines	70%

- **Homework Assignments & Quizzes**

Reading/and research assignments will be assigned on a regular basis—about two each week—and will often require you to both read from the textbook or other media and apply the knowledge, skills, and/or understandings you have gained. Any notes you take while reading a chapter in the text for the purposes of aiding your retention or understanding can and should be used on the comprehension quiz that will most likely follow at the beginning of the next class period.

A homework scoring rubric is provided with your first homework assignment and will be used to evaluate homework throughout the semester unless otherwise noted in advance.

- **Staff Meeting, Newsroom & Other Activities**

Once every seven-day cycle, you will be expected to actively participate in a Talon staff meeting during which you will be expected to pitch story ideas, report on the progress of a major article(s) you have been assigned, and/or seek feedback and suggestions from other staff members for a draft of an article on which you are working.

Prior to each staff meeting, I will make the purpose of the meeting clear to you—i.e., story ideas, progress reports, draft article, etc.—and your full participation both as a contributor and a listener will be evaluated.

At the end of every seven-day cycle, we will work in a “newsroom” environment in a computer room where you will have time to report, research, write and revise major articles which you have been assigned for publication in the next issue of *The Talon*. Mature, focused and, above all, productive participation on newsroom days is crucial towards not only your success in this course but also the success of *The Talon* itself.

Of course, your active and intelligent participation and contributions during all class activities, discussions and guest speakers is expected as well.

A participation rubric will be distributed at our first staff meeting.

- **Major Articles & Deadlines**

As a working, contributing member of *The Talon* staff, you are expected to report, write and revise at least four (4) major articles—each between 600-800 words—that will appear in the school newspaper throughout the semester. These articles can vary in type, focus and purpose but at least three (3) of them must be from the following categories: news story, feature story, and an opinion column, review or sports story.

Major articles are assigned at staff meetings and are largely reflective of your own personal interests and initiative. Strict deadlines will be set—and must be met to receive full credit and, more importantly, based upon the publication date for the next issue of *The Talon*.