

QCSD Planned Course

Name of Course: JOURNALISM	
Grade: 10 - 12	Board Adopted Signature and date:
Course Description	
<p>In this course students will learn the skills necessary to write, edit, photograph, design and publish professional non-fiction stories. We will cover the basic principles of journalism as well as more advanced news and fiction writing and photography and layout techniques.</p> <p>In addition to the studio practices, this class also introduces students to a variety of well-known and historically significant photographers and photographic processes. Students will learn to take part in active discussions and reflections upon their own work and the work of their peers. They learn to identify meaning in photographs by analyzing the photographer's choices and uses of the elements and principles of design. Through this process we learn to use photography as a medium for visual communication and storytelling.</p>	
Titles of Units	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ETHICS: Students learn the methodology and ethics of being a journalists, from respecting the press pass to being objective and fair and balanced in reporting. Students will also follow the rules for what may be published and what may not. They will also learn Associated Press stylebook ethics as well as proper grammar and diction choices. Students will gain access to a press pass for local events, but they will need to understand the importance of honoring that privilege and not abusing it. Students will examine the role of non-fiction writers who need to stick to the facts and truth and cannot stray from that, for fear of violating the public's trust.2. EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS: Students will utilize pens, pencils, reporters' notepads, recording devices, cell phones for recording/taking photos/navigating/researching, Internet research, digital cameras, transportation, email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.3. NEWSWORTHINESS: Students will learn the criteria for determining a story's newsworthiness: proximity, impact, conflict, loss of property/destruction, prominence, timeliness, novelty, etc. Students will study where editors and publishers place stories and evaluate how important one story might be compared to another. Students will look into source bias, as in the case of rivals Fox News and CNN and MSNBC. Students will understand that their target audience for <i>Paw Prints</i> ranges from high school students to faculty to the community of Quakertown, and their stories must appeal to that audience. Students will differentiate between being objective and representing both sides of an issue to being biased, subjective and judgmental in a column or editorial.4. INTERVIEWING/QUESTIONING: Students will learn questioning techniques, from yes/no, true/false, short answer and open-ended for multiple interview subjects. They will learn note-taking techniques, interview setup procedures, etc. They will learn to research reputable texts and sources (experts) to supplement their stories. Students will watch the investigative journalism staple "All the President's Men" to analyze all the methods used by Woodward and Bernstein to acquire information, even from unwilling sources. They will generate 10 questions to use for story 1. They will keep their interview notes with them throughout the semester. Students are required to incorporate three sources into each story—at least two from interviewing	

and one from research.

5. **WRITING (News, Feature, Ledes, etc.):** Students will learn the inverted pyramid top-down news story technique, five W's and the H, and ledes of under 25 words.

FEATURE WRITING STYLE: Students will employ more creative and descriptive feature-writing techniques like capturing visual details, symbolism, body language and gestures, capturing observable **anecdotes**. Students will contrast Hemingway-style short journalistic sentences vs. long-winded, descriptive southern writing from novelists like William Faulkner.

Students will study samples of Pulitzer-Prize winning feature writers like Rick Bragg and his use of literary devices and description, which add to what we call the new literary journalism. Students will also study nationally-renowned feature writer Gary Smith, formerly of *Sports Illustrated* fame.

Students will watch an ESPN video feature on one of the top athletes of the century, the race horse Secretariat. If someone can write a detailed feature story about a horse, which can't speak, they can certainly do the same for a human being.

WRITING STYLE: Students will craft interesting, revealing anecdotes followed by grounding nut graphs that set the theme of the story. They will learn to use appositives to tighten their prose and to eliminate using dead verbs: am is are was were be been being have has had got get did. Students will refrain from non-specific nouns and words, such as the three FORBIDDEN WORDS: very, things, stuff. Students will eliminate weak sentence starters—There is There was There are There were It is It was It's. Students will build their stories around strong action verbs and specific nouns while conveying newsworthy information via deft storytelling that informs, engrosses and entertains readers.

6. **HEADLINES/PHOTO CREDITS/CAPTIONS:** Students will learn writing style for headlines—leaving out articles and weak verbs, building around action verbs and specific nouns, filling the allotted space in the headline, substituting synonyms to change length, sizes of different headlines, historical headlines, banner, display and hammer headlines, the use of puns and alliteration in headlines, the role of a headline, etc. They will study the terms “column” and “deck” regarding headlines and write their own for their stories. Students will learn the format for writing photo credits (8 point, Times New Roman, bold, italicized, flushed right) and captions/cutlines (9 point, Times New Roman, regular, flushed left).

7. **EDITING/REVISING:** Students will learn the editing symbols and AP stylebook rules for journalists. They will edit each other's writing using those symbols and details. Students will question and fact-check the veracity of content in stories. Students will learn from mini-lessons about common grammatical errors like comma splices, run-on sentences, fragments.

8. **PARTS OF A NEWSPAPER:** Students will learn the parts of a newspaper and magazine, like headlines, captions, bylines, photo credits, flags, folios, jumps, art, infoboxes, headers, teasers, etc. They will incorporate them into their layouts, including photos and infoboxes with every story. They will learn about what makes a great photo, how to lay it out, how to make cutouts and to crop photos.

9. **LAYOUT AND DESIGN:** Students will lay out pages in Publisher using most of the parts of a newspaper we studied in class. They will make the cover look colorful and vibrant with colorful art beneath the Paw Prints flag and complimentary text. They will incorporate their mug shot and byline. They will jump stories to inside pages where stories will continue with a jump head, from line and text. Each story will have a student-generated and made infobox to go with the story.

PHOTOS/LAYOUT ART: Students will learn what types of photos to use in their layouts, from action shots to profiles and cutouts. Students will make sure action in photos faces the text and not off the page. Students will study photos from the greatest journalism photographers in history: Neil Leifer, Walter looss, Annie Leibovitz, etc., in addition to studying Pulitzer Prize winning photos. Students will study ways to group photos into packages.

10. **ORIGINAL CARTOON:** Students will brainstorm, develop and create an original political cartoon or other cartoon to run in *Paw Prints*. We will study professional samples and prior student samples.

Topics for new cartoons should relate to topical and timely issues of the day.

- 11. OBITUARY:** Students will write an obituary either about themselves living to age 80 or beyond or write about a character from a book you've read in class this year. The focus will be on writing the proper format with the appropriate information. Students should use this as an opportunity to look ahead to see what they want to ideally say about their own life upon reaching age 80. Many newspapers allow stringers or freelancers to break into the business by compiling facts such as these. Since this will most likely be the last time someone appears in a newspaper, getting the facts correct is essential! For this assignment, strong writing and creativity while conforming to the format will be necessary.
- 12. FIRST AMENDMENT:** Students will learn about the first amendment along with relevant terms such as libel, slander, allegedly, copyright, plagiarism, piracy, the fourth estate, watchdog, etc. They will also learn what does not get protected by the first amendment. They will study contemporary issues like the role of Wikileaks, Edward Snowden, NSA spying, the Pentagon Papers and Watergate and understand the balance between first amendment protection and threats to national security, a growing divide in the world. They will understand who has more first amendment protection under the law, public or private citizens.

Rationale for Course

Communication and writing lead the way in all forms of business and commerce and vocations. Journalism teaches students to communicate through interviewing, express themselves through visual representations like photos, infoboxes and cartoons, and teaches them critical thinking and analytical skills to important to making sense of the world and the shifting news cycles.

Students who navigate through the publishing process—brainstorming, researching, interviewing, writing, editing, revising, designing, publishing—understand the writing process. When they analyze their facts from interviewing and research and observation, they must settle on a story angle, which directly relate to hatching a thesis in academic essays. It also condenses disparate thinking into a cohesive focus. Journalism students gain global understanding of the news-making process and become better thinkers, writers, speakers and creators in the process.