

SJSU School of Journalism and Mass Communications

Journalism 132, Section 1

Information Gathering

Spring 2015

Contact Information

Instructor:	Richard Craig
Office Location:	DBH108
Telephone:	(408) 924-3287
Email:	profcraig@profcraig.com
Office Hours:	Tuesday 3:00-6:00 p.m. (DBH209H); Thursday 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. (DBH108), and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday-Thursday 10:30 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.
Classroom:	DBH213

Faculty Web Page

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on my faculty web page at <http://www.profcraig.com>. You may follow me on Twitter at [@SJSUProfCraig](https://twitter.com/SJSUProfCraig) or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Profrcraig>. You are responsible for regularly checking your e-mail or my Facebook or Twitter to learn any updates.

Syllabus Supplement

You are required to read all information on this syllabus and on the syllabus supplement, which lists policies that apply to all my classes. It is available on the class home page and on the Web at <http://www.profcraig.com/syllsup.html>.

Course Description

Emphasis on reporting—gathering/verifying facts for news stories through observation, interviewing, attending press conferences/meetings, and using public records, electronic databases and the Internet/library. Writing enterprise, trend, feature, profile and investigative stories.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CLO1.** Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications.
- CLO2.** Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively and independently.
- CLO3.** Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- CLO4.** Demonstrate the ability to use tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.
- CLO5.** Demonstrate knowledge of professional ethical principles and the ability to work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy and fairness.

Required Texts/Readings

Chip Scanlan and Richard Craig, *News Writing and Reporting: The Complete Guide for Today's Journalist* (2nd Edition).

ISBN-10: 0195188322 | ISBN-13: 978-0195188325

Kelly McBride and Tom Rosenstiel, *The New Ethics of Journalism: Principles for the 21st Century*.

ISBN-10: 1604265612 | ISBN-13: 978-1604265613

Textbooks are available from the Spartan Bookstore and numerous online outlets. Other required online readings will be posted on the class home page throughout the semester. You will receive advance notice for all additional readings.

Assignments and Grading Policy

This course will be driven by current events and in-class exercises, as well as discussion and lab instruction. Lectures are designed to provide students with information and material useful in the reporting work throughout the course. Lectures may occasionally be conducted by guest speakers.

You will be responsible for following the news daily to keep up on current events. At the very least, you must:

- Read the *Spartan Daily* regularly and follow other campus media to keep up on campus goings-on.
- Read one or more major Bay Area news outlets regularly, preferably either the *San Jose Mercury News* or the *San Francisco Chronicle (SF Gate)*. You can read them online or on paper.

Feel free to supplement this with news from any other sources you desire. Exposure to different outlets gives you a broader base of information, which in turn broadens the horizons of the whole class during discussions.

Exercises. I will assign many in-class exercises throughout the semester. These are designed to get you up to speed at gathering information for publication both quickly and accurately. These will sometimes be assigned by the instructor in class and other times via e-mail and/or on the class Web page.

Quizzes. As noted above, since this class relies heavily on current events, you will be expected to follow the news closely to stay informed of local, national and international news. I will give four current events quizzes during the semester to see how closely you are following the news.

Exams. There will be a midterm and a final exam during the semester. Each will involve finding and reporting information on subjects revealed at the beginning of the exam. I will provide more information on these exams as the dates approach.

Investigative Reporting Project:

Your largest writing assignment this semester will be an investigative reporting project to be submitted near the end of the semester. You will choose a topic that you believe merits investigation, and submit a one-page proposal on March 10. More details regarding this assignment will be discussed in class, and the assignment sheet will be handed out in class the week of February 17.

Writing:

While this is first and foremost a class on information gathering, it's also an upper-division journalism class, and you should expect your writing to be graded accordingly. You will be expected to keep minor style errors and typos to a minimum. Mechanical errors – style, spelling, punctuation, minor grammar errors, copy preparation – will hurt your grade on writing assignments. This includes the same error made more than once.

Misspelling the name of a person, an institution or position in your stories is a major error and will result in a failing grade on the assignment. This is not meant to scare you, just to make sure you get your information in order before you write. Stories with any other factual errors will also receive a failing grade.

Stories submitted after deadline will not be accepted and will receive a failing grade.
Any student who fabricates a story will receive a failing grade in the course.
Any student who plagiarizes a story will receive a failing grade in the course.

Please note that I'm not in the business of giving failing grades – as long as you understand and adhere to these rules, I won't have any problem with you. Above all, if you have questions about any of these rules and how they might apply to a given story, please contact me before the due date.

See syllabus supplement for information on attendance, deadlines, academic honesty and other issues not covered here.

Assignments are weighted as follows:

- Quizzes: 20 percent (CLO3, 4)
- Midterm exam: 15 percent (CLO1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Final exam: 15 percent (CLO1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Investigative reporting project: 20 percent (CLO1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- In-class exercises: 20 percent (CLO1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Class participation: 10 percent (CLO1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Diversity and Controversial Issues

Throughout the semester, we will discuss matters relating to differences in race, culture, social class, sexuality and many other issues. In the beginning, this may seem uncomfortable, but my goal is to create an environment where we can talk about such matters thoughtfully, frankly and with respect and empathy.

Likewise, we will deal with matters involving social standards of what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable by media audiences and society in general. The objective is to enlighten, not offend, but we will talk about why certain types of content might upset certain audiences and not others. The aim is to create an atmosphere of respectful discussion, where all can express their opinions. The class works best when we all feel free to contribute.

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Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change; any changes will be announced a minimum of one week in advance, with students notified via e-mail. *Readings are in bold italics.*

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan. 27-29	Journalistic curiosity; the reporter's mindset <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 1</i>
2	Feb. 3-5	Gathering information online (and off) Web searching and resources <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 5, 7</i>
3	Feb. 10-12	Approaching investigative reporting Generating story ideas <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 2</i> THURSDAY, FEB. 12: CURRENT EVENTS QUIZ 1
4	Feb. 17-19	TUESDAY, FEB. 17 – INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING PROJECT ASSIGNED Accuracy vs. speed; Deadlines <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 4</i>
5	Feb. 24-26	Interviewing <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 6</i>
6	Mar. 3-5	Finding info for different types of stories <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 17</i> THURSDAY, MARCH 5: LIBRARY VISIT
7	Mar. 10-12	TUESDAY, MARCH 10: CURRENT EVENTS QUIZ 2 Approaches to writing <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 8, 10</i> THURSDAY, MARCH 12 – INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE
8	Mar. 17-19	Structuring effective stories <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 11</i> THURSDAY, MARCH 19 – MIDTERM EXAM
9	Mar. 24-26	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
10	Mar. 31-Apr. 2	TUESDAY, MARCH 31 – CESAR CHAVEZ DAY – NO CLASS Specifics of producing online content <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 13</i>
11	Apr. 7-9	Numbers; Online facts-and-figures resources <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 9</i>
12	Apr. 14-16	Ethics; Legal issues <i>Scanlan/Craig, Chapter 16</i>

Week	Dates	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<i>McBride/Rosenstiel, Part I</i>
13	Apr. 21-23	Transparency: How much do you reveal? <i>McBride/Rosenstiel, Part II</i> THURSDAY, APRIL 23: CURRENT EVENTS QUIZ 3
14	Apr. 28-30	Community <i>McBride/Rosenstiel, Part III</i>
15	May 5-7	TUESDAY, MAY 5 – CURRENT EVENTS QUIZ 4 Work on investigative project (no readings) THURSDAY, MAY 7 – INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING PROJECT DUE
16	May 12	Prep for final exam
Final Exam	May 20	10:30 to 11:45 a.m. in regular classroom.