

Newspaper Journalism
Fall 2010
Mr. Martin

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Room B134

Welcome to (or back to) *The Cavalier*! I am looking forward to quite an exciting and productive year!

Our primary goal this year should be to improve the overall coverage of events in the newspaper, specifically the writing. The overall content of the paper has improved significantly. It is because of YOUR hard work that this paper has improved, and I'd like to see that commitment to excellence continue this semester.

Students are expected to become familiar with the Associated Press style of writing, as well as some preferences that the staff has developed for effective use of quotations, attributing sources, titles, etc. **You will be accountable for using AP format and style in your writing.** (There is a desktop reference manual available for you to use.)

Classroom Expectations:

- **Do whatever you do in the best interest of the paper – not yourself.**
- **Give your absolute attention to the adviser or senior editor when a staff discussion is called to order.**
- Be respectful to the adviser and other staff members.
- **Be responsible for your assigned work (stories, art, etc.). Begin working on assigned stories/layout the day after the assignment is given. Do not wait until the day before “notes day” to begin researching or conducting interviews.** If you are not ‘working’ your story the day after storyboard, expect a conference with the adviser. Excessive misuse of classroom time will result in a parent conference and possible dismissal from the staff.
- **Be on time.** The newspaper cannot (and will not) function properly when staff members are late for class, or when assignments are turned in late. *Consult handbook for tardy policy.
- Participate in discussions about sample stories and layouts with the adviser or staff members.
- Perform necessary tasks needed by the adviser and editor: file/sort papers, set calendar dates, run errands, take “on-the-spot” photos, edit copy, etc.
- Help with distribution of papers after school as needed and take pictures of after-school activities.
- Get permission from the adviser (Mr. Martin) when you leave the classroom for interviews or researching stories. Have an attached staff ID with you (**and visible**) at all times when on assignment.
- Use time wisely – do not procrastinate! Waiting until the last minute leads to shoddy production.
- Have and regularly check a valid email address for updates/memos from the adviser and editors.
- Participate in and contribute to storyboard discussions.
- Work with the adviser/editor upon request on special projects when you are not on deadline (practice new layouts, experiment in Photoshop, etc.).
- Bring materials (memo pad, style manual, pencil/pen) to class every day.
- **Become familiar with the software the staff uses: QuarkXpress, Photoshop, and Illustrator. Use any down time to practice working with these programs.**
- Use computers for school-related work only (see class computer policy).
- Have FUN!!
- Most importantly, always **DO YOUR BEST WORK!!**
Not sure about the right word to use? Use a thesaurus.
Does your layout need that little something else to make it reader friendly? Add it.
Need a better headline to fit in a box? Devise one.
Is there one more quote that would make the story more interesting? Ask until you get it.
Does your story need more key information? Find it.
****Never settle when you can do better.**** Expect only the best!!!

Discipline Policy:

First offense: recorded and discussed after class.

Second offense: recorded and parents contacted.

Third offense: after school detention and parents contacted.

Fourth offense: referral to assistant principal.

Grading: Generally, the weight is as follows:

Stories	40 percent
Layout	30 percent
Evaluation (one per nine weeks)*	20 percent
Notes**/storyboard/quizzes	10 percent

Lateness policy: Assignments are due by 1:16 p.m. (the end of class) the day of deadline. Stories and layout assignments will be deducted **15 points** for each day late; second offense -- parent conference will be scheduled and possible demotion; third offense – alternate journalism history project will be assigned for a grade in place of work and possible dismissal from staff.

Grading system: All stories will be graded using a holistic grading scale, which I will use to score stories based on a 1-5 point scale. (See posted grading scale). Note: opinion articles will follow a similar format – all opinion articles must include information from one reputable outside source.

***Evaluation:** The evaluation is a periodic assessment of each student's work and performance produced in each issue. Students will be evaluated based on their individual responsibilities as described in the evaluation sheet. A copy of each member's evaluation sheet will be given on the first day of class and should remain in his/her box in class.

****Notes:** Staffers are required to keep all notes for their stories. Notes must contain (in writing) a general angle for the story, established contact from at least two sources, including information from at least one outside source if applicable.

Each student will turn in a minimum of three story ideas (at least two news or features) on a story assignment sheet **at the beginning of class** on storyboard day. Late ideas are not accepted. Grade is either 100 or 0.

Computer usage policy: Computers are to be used for educational-related work only. Newspaper assignments take priority over other classwork. Editors typically have priority over other staff members when it comes time to use computers; occasionally the adviser may have to deem otherwise if circumstances determine as such.

Editorships policy: Students are selected by the adviser for editor positions based on experience, workload, skill, and class schedules. If you are interested in writing about a particular topic, please see the adviser.

Discussion and scoring of model stories: Occasionally, when staffers are not on deadline, the staff will have group discussions and readings of other stories/layouts. Borrowing ideas from other writers and papers is one of the best ways to make our work better. Students are expected to participate and contribute; Part of each member's evaluation will be based on these discussions.

Boxes: Each staff member is expected to keep all copies of notes, returned stories, interview questions and note pads in his or her folder. These folders will be kept in your assigned box. Periodically, usually after the completion of an issue, I will ask you to throw away items (notes, interview forms, etc.) that you don't need any more.

Do **NOT** leave stray notes, sports statistics, interview notes, or any information (important or otherwise) around the workstations. If you don't want to clean up your area, we can find you a desk, pen and paper to use instead of the computer, pen and paper to use instead of the computer. Use your folder and keep it neat—that's why it's there.

Please note that the adviser reserves the right to make changes to the class as needed, but this will only be done to help the staff. I will contact parents immediately if such changes arise. The expectations for this class are high to ensure that students stay focused on our no. 1 goal: to make *The Cavalier* the best student newspaper it can be!
Thank you – and I look forward to a wonderful semester!!!!

Parents should keep the other sheets and return only this attachment.

I have read the parent letter with attachments and am clear about the expectations for this course.

Parent signature _____

Parent email (optional, but encouraged): _____

Student signature (required) _____

Student email (required) _____

Newspaper Journalism

Grading rubric for news, feature, and sports stories

5 – (93-100) – Story contains an abundance of information for the reader, few questions are unanswered; several sources are included, with at least two of these being sources outside the school; quotes are lively, add voice to the story, and are relevant beyond the point of just providing information. Lead is carefully crafted to draw the reader into the story and maintain interest; story is organized effectively; paragraphs are spaced appropriately. Subject matter is chosen to appeal to a significant part of the school population. Errors in AP style, phrasing, grammar, punctuation and syntax are minimal.

4 – (85-92) – Story contains an adequate amount of information for the reader, but there may be some unanswered questions; multiple (at least three) sources are included with at least one as an outside source; quotes add some voice to the story, but may state obvious facts; paragraph spacing is sound; Lead and story may follow traditional inverted pyramid format; organization is sound; story may lack the imaginative spirit and narrative ambition of the 5. Some mechanical and style errors may surface but do not inhibit reading of the story.

3 – (76-84) – Story contains less than adequate amount of information for the reader and leaves many questions unanswered; three or few sources are used, but inadequately; quotes are “placed” instead of integrated with the story and flow awkwardly; paragraphs are not spaced effectively; lead is unimaginative and does not hold reader interest. Mechanical and syntactical errors permeate the story; time has not been taken to properly edit and organize information; some parts of story appear to have been copied and pasted; no regard for AP style.

2 – (68-75) – Story contains scattershot amount of information for the reader; fewer than three sources are used inadequately; quotes, if used, are poorly integrated; little or no paragraph spacing; mechanical errors make reading difficult; no adherence to AP style.

1 – (0-68) – little resemblance of written narrative; unsubstantiated notes; no quotes or sources are used; no narrative flow or paragraph spacing; mechanical errors impair reading.

Grading for page layout

An individual grade will be given for each page assignment (1, 2&3, 10&11, etc.). For each flaw in layout (extra white space, typo, incomplete box alignment, missing frame), three points will be deducted from the total grade (100 pts.) Students are welcome to consult with the adviser for help and suggestions during the layout process. General guidelines for layout will be posted in the room. Extra points may be awarded for creative design and detailed work.

Journalism staff member evaluation

(scale of 1-5, with 5 being the best)

Quality of work (writing and layout)	1	2	3	4	5
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Commitment to improving (includes knowing software)	1	2	3	4	5
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Dependability	1	2	3	4	5
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Need for supervision	1	2	3	4	5
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Ability to get along with others	1	2	3	4	5
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Initiative in taking responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
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Storyboard participation	1	2	3	4	5
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Timeliness of work	1	2	3	4	5
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Total points _____ x 2.5 = _____
(evaluation grade)

Comments: