



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# COURSE OUTLINE

**Course Number**  
**ENG 131**

**Course Title**  
**Journalism I**

**Credits**  
**3**

**Hours**

3 Lecture / 0 Lab / 0 Studio

**Co-requisite:**

ENG 101 with a minimum C grade

**Implementation:**

Spring 2022

**Catalog description:**

Introduction to the news media with particular emphasis on newspaper, newswriting, the history of the press, and controversial issues facing the press. Active participation with the student paper, The College Voice, is integral.

**General Education Category:**

**Goal 1: Written and Oral**

**Communication**

**Goal 4: Technology or Info Literacy**

**Course coordinator:**

Dr. Matthew J. Kochis, [kochism@mccc.edu](mailto:kochism@mccc.edu), (609) – 570 – 3852

**Required texts & Other materials:**

**Required:** Rachel Kanigel, *The Student Newspaper Survival Guide*, 2nd Edition ISBN-13: 978-1444332384

**Recommended:** *The Associated Press Stylebook: 2022-2024* (56th edition). ISBN-13: 978-1541601659

**Additional Resources:** *The College Voice*, daily newspapers (local, national, and international), and library databases ([Nexis](#), [New York Times - current](#), [ProQuest Newspaper](#), and [Wall Street Journal](#)).

**Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

***Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***

1. Identify and explain the basic components of journalism. This includes the following:
  - 9 elements of newsworthiness.
  - 5 main article types.
  - Reporting techniques and strategies (this includes preliminary research and conducting interviews).
  - AP Style.
  - Photojournalism.
  - Newspaper layout and design.
  - [SLO #1 supports ILG #4, 10, 11; PLO # 1, 3, 4]
2. Write news stories in the basic 5 categories: (Hard News, Feature, Review, Sports, and Op/Ed). This includes editing copy using AP style.
  - [SLO #2 supports ILG #1, 10, 11; PLO #1, 2, 3, 4]
3. Analyze and explain the historical significance of a free press and evaluate press criticism.
  - [SLO #3 supports ILG #1, 9, 10, 11; PLO #1, 2, 3]
4. Recognize both the positive and negative influences of mass media on society.
  - [SLO #4 supports ILG #1, 9, 10, 11; PLO #1, 2, 3]
5. Identify and explain laws and cases that directly impact, influence, and/or undermine the field of journalism (such as libel and privacy laws).
  - [SLO 5 supports ILG #1, 9, 10, 11; PLO #1, 2, 3]

**Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

- **Institutional Learning Goal 1: Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
- **Institutional Learning Goal 4: Technology.** Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
- **Institutional Learning Goal 9: Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.
- **Institutional Learning Goal 10: Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.
- **Institutional Learning Goal 11: Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

## **Program Learning Outcomes for Liberal Arts Program (PLO)**

1. **Concept Knowledge:** Understand the vocabulary, methods, and major concepts presented in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.
2. **Communication:** Articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Perform a series of thinking tasks including speculation, analysis, and synthesis (i.e., abstract reasoning).
4. **Research Methods:** Utilize research materials and methodologies.

## **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

### **Unit I**      **Journalism Basics** [Supports Course SLO #1, #2, #3, #4]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- Define what the 4<sup>th</sup> estate is.
- Explain the two important aspects of any news story: facts and narrative.
- List and explain the 9 elements of newsworthiness.
- List and explain the 5 main article types in news.
- Research using public documents, the internet, Nexis, and other computer tools to gather preliminary information to help guide their reporting.
- Develop interview techniques so that they can conduct an interview to gather information for their article.
- Craft an appropriate lead and structure a narrative based on the article type that they have chosen to write.
- Write a news article in the format of one of the five basic categories using AP style.

### **Unit II**      **Article Types** [Supports Course SLOs # 1 & #2]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- Identify and explain the key features that distinguish each article type: Hard News, Feature, Sports, Review, Op/Ed. This includes not only the narrative structure of each article type but also identifying which types may include bias / opinion.
- Craft a skeleton as a preliminary rough draft for their news article. The purpose of the skeleton is to help set up the narrative structure of their article and locate any holes in their reporting to better answer the reader's questions.
- Master the basics of AP style.
- Use concise, grammatical sentences and paragraphs.
- Improve storytelling techniques.
- Write a news article in the format of one of the five basic categories using AP style.

### **Unit III**      **Photojournalism & Newspaper Layout** [Supports Course SLOs #1, #2, #3, #4]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- Identify the key purpose of photojournalism and explain the key criteria that establishes good photojournalism from bad photojournalism.
- Define the key parts of a newspaper (flag, headline, deck, banner, etc.).
- Explain the differences in layout between a well designed and a poorly designed news page while using the correct terminology to identify issues.
- Write a news article in the format of one of the five basic categories using AP style.

### **Unit IV**      **Journalism in Depth** [Supports Course SLOs #1, #2, #3, #4]

#### **Learning Objectives**

##### ***The student will be able to:***

- List the various roles that make up a newspaper staff as well as explain their duties and responsibilities.
- Discuss key historical figures and events that have directly influenced the evolution of journalism up to and including present day.
- Explain the key elements of investigative reporting that separates it from other news article types. In addition, students will be able to identify the historical relevance of investigative reporting and its impact on society.
- Write a news article in the format of one of the five basic categories using AP style.

## **Unit V      **Laws and Ethics** [Supports Course SLOs #2, #5]**

### **Learning Objectives**

#### ***The student will be able to:***

- Become familiar with libel and privacy laws.
- Identify and analyze journalistic ethical dilemmas.
- Analyze critiques of the press from a range of perspectives.
- Consider the significance of a free press and explain the specific cases that constrain it.
- Define what a PIO is and explain what the police can and cannot tell reporters while an investigation is being conducted.
- Write a news article in the format of one of the five basic categories using AP style.

### **Evaluation of student learning:**

**News Articles:** Students will write in the style of each of the 5 main news article types (hard news, feature, review, sports, Op/Ed). Final drafts of the articles must be between 400-600 words in length, formatted in AP style, identify at least 4 sources interviewed, and include a photograph or infographic. Students will participate in copy editing in the form of peer review to help produce the final draft.

**-This assignment will evaluate the student's achievement of SLO#2**

**Mid-term Exam / Final Exam:** Both exams will function as a comprehensive evaluation of the student's understanding and retention of course concepts, terms, and historical learning. The exams will comprise of the following four sections:

**Section 1: Multiple Choice and Fill in the Blanks** – Students will be tested generally on course content.

**Section 2: Short Answer Essays** – Students will critically discuss the legal, ethical, and historical issues associated with journalism.

**Section 3: Identification & Evaluation of a News Article** – Students will be provided a sample article and be asked to identify the article type, discuss in detail the narrative structure that the article follows, and identify issues both in terms of writing and reporting that appear within the article.

**Section 4: Crafting a Lead** – Students will be provided what appears to be a reporter's notes on an unwritten article. Students will have to critically assess what facts are relevant to the topic and not only answer the key questions but also determine the correct order in which to present those facts. Finally, students will then craft a lead free of bias and libel that should be between 35-50 words in length.

**-These assignments will evaluate the student's achievement of SLO # , 3, 4, 5**

**Quizzes:** Each quiz will be focused on the content presented within each specific unit. They should be in the format of 10 questions with a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer responses.

**-These assignments will evaluate the student's achievement of SLO #1-5.**

**Participation:** Participation in *The College Voice*, from story idea generation to copy editing to layout to distribution, is expected. Participation also includes attendance, classroom discussions, and presentations.

**-This activity will assist students in understanding SLO #1-5.**