

JOURNALISM I

Mountain Vista H.S. ~ 2016-2017 (Semester 1-Fall)

Mr. Mark Newton, MJE ~ mark.newton@dcsdk12.org

<http://www.vistanow.org/journalism-i/>

Course Description — (1 semester, 0.5 elective credit):

This 21st century literacy course addresses the purpose, legal and ethical issues, style, and content of journalism. Students study professional mass media models and will practice producing content for high school media. The First Amendment, reporting and writing, photojournalism, graphic journalism, design and advertising are also covered. Although this course is suitable for anyone interested in journalism, mass communications and media literacy, it is geared toward those who wish to be well prepared for assuming roles on student media (broadcast, newspaper, online, yearbook) staffs. As with all Language Arts courses, speaking/listening, reading and writing standards will be emphasized.

Course Overview/Topics/Objectives

The content includes an introduction to media literacy/mass media and communications, media law and ethics, including student press law, defining news, gathering news and writing news. (See content outline on the website.)

At the completion of the course, students will be able to understand and apply: (1) the role of the media in a democracy; (2) the legal restrictions of media law; (3) ethical decision-making skills; (4) news; (5) gathering; and (6) basic news writing, specialized journalistic writing (feature, sports, opinion); (7) basic design, including photojournalism, graphics and cartooning; (8) advertising; and (9) an exploration of journalism-related careers.

Book and Materials

Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism (2nd ed.) by Tim Harrower. McGraw Hill. (©2009).

Additional textbooks may include: *Journalism Today* by Donald L. Ferguson, Jim Patten and Bradley Wilson; *The Radical Write* (Bobby Hawthorne); and *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

Bring all the appropriate materials, including a class notebook or binder, every day to class.

Mountain Vista Media: <http://www.vistanow.org/about-us/mvm-staff/>

Movies

Absence of Malice. Columbia Pictures, ©1981. Rating: PG

All the President's Men. Warner Brothers, Inc., ©1976. Rating: PG

Shattered Glass. Lions Gate Home Entertainment, ©2003. Rating: PG-13.

The Truman Show. Paramount Pictures. ©1998. Rating: PG.

Other journalism-related videos/presentations may be shown in accordance with DCSD/MVHS policy.

Assessment for Learning

You will have several opportunities to show your knowledge and demonstrate your skills. I firmly believe that you can set the agenda on how you reach the educational objectives set for you by the school district and the standards set for you by the State of Colorado. I must be sure that you are proficient in the class. When you can satisfactorily demonstrate that you can meet a significant number of the course objectives and standards, you will be proficient.

You must remember that you can learn, that success breeds success and that I can control the conditions of success (in other words, my job it to see that you are successful, or, as indicated above, proficient).

I must be sure that you are proficient in the class. (As the newspaper and yearbook advise, I am genuinely concerned that you are proficient. After all, why would I want staff members who are not

proficient?) All assignments can be re-done until you achieve the highest proficiency level you are capable of or until the final deadline assigned to each assignment.

You will be assessed with a variety of methods in the following areas:

(1) **ACTIVITIES** — Throughout each unit of learning, activities (for example: projects, presentations, assignments, workbook exercises, web exercises) will be selected by you and/or assigned by me and turned in for evaluation. These may be in-class or homework. The majority of your grade will be from this area.

(2) **TESTS/QUIZZES** — Tests will be announced at least three days in advance. Tests are usually over one unit or chapter, but may be more than one chapter. Quizzes will be short, yet powerful. Quizzes usually cover assigned readings and/or previous activities, readings, etc.

(3) **DISCUSSION/SOCRATIC SEMINARS** — Because journalism is such an interesting aspect of our daily lives and learning about journalism requires more thinking than memorization, discussion and seminars are very important parts of this class. The more you think out loud in class and the more you voice your opinion in informal class discussions and formal Socratic Seminars, the better you will perform in the class.

(4) **CURRENT EVENTS** — Every day the mass media informs us of the many things we are not aware of. For those of us in journalism, we can approach the media in a different perspective than most people. Read and watch the news

(4A) **REACTION ARTICLE** — Every Friday, you will turn in a **current events Reaction Article** that deals with the First Amendment. The article must be about one of the five First Amendment freedoms. Articles may be found in newspapers, magazines and appropriate websites. I encourage you to use social media, like Twitter, to find relevant articles. If you have questions about whether an article meets the requirements, please see me before turning it in for credit.

(5) **CRITICAL THINKING** — This is a very important part of the overall assessment of your public speaking and listening skills. Because the nature of communication in the world is demanding, this class, therefore, is demanding. Thinking and reacting critically is a must. Those of you who consistently demonstrate outstanding critical thinking and a mastery of the skills being taught will be rewarded with knowledge — nothing else is as important in your life. Those of you failing to achieve these expectations will be supported until you do.

Your success is my job, so please see me for additional support. If you need something to be successful, please let me know.

Assessment is cumulative (total points weighted by importance of assessment). Grading scale: 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; 59% and lower = F.

Some late work will be accepted at a 10 percent penalty for teach day late. Please see me in person regarding missed deadlines and/or extended time. No extra credit is available.

Assignments not completed will be entered into the gradebook as a "0" until they are completed and evaluated. Grades will be entered weekly — typically on Thursday — on Infinite Campus. Using Infinite Campus is the best way for you (and your parents) to evaluate and me to alert you of your current performance in the class.

Make-Up

Make-up will be allowed for excused absences *only*. Generally, you will be given one day for each day absent, plus one additional day, to make-up any missed classwork.

If you know you will be absent (vacations, appointments, activities, for example), you must see me for your assignments *before* your excused absence. You must ask me when you return for your make-up assignments. If you fail to do so, you may jeopardize your chances of making-up the work for full credit.

Speeches must be given on the assigned day. Students with an excused absence on the day of their assigned speech are expected to present on the day they return to class, unless arrangements are made. A student with unexcused absence on the day of his/her scheduled speech will lose 10 percent of the presentation grade for each day the speech is late.

Policy (absences and tardies)

One cannot be successful in school unless he/she is present, on time, and ready to learn. Attendance and punctuality, therefore, are of the utmost importance.

Please review the policies in your MVHS Student Handbook. They will be followed in this class *exactly* as written. Please note the following in your handbook: attendance and student behavior expectations/responsibilities, including cell phones, insubordination, personal items, unacceptable language, food/drink and tardies.

According to district and school policy, any student with excessive absences (excused or unexcused) may lose credit for that class.

Be on time to class. Class begins promptly, so it is critical you are seated and ready to listen and participate.

Unexcused tardies (all tardies are “unexcused” unless the student presents a note from a teacher or the office) will be dealt with on an individual basis. According to school policy, a student who arrives to class more than 10 minutes late is absent (not tardy). Three unexcused tardies results in an unexcused absence, according to school policy.

Academic Integrity

Please review the disruptive behavior and cheating and/or plagiarism policies in your MVHS Student Handbook. They will be followed in this class as written.

Emergency Procedures

Evacuation maps and procedures are posted in the classroom. In case of emergency, follow all verbal instructions of the teacher.

Personally Owned Device

Students at MVHS are strongly encouraged to have a personally owned device (like a Chromebook or laptop) to supplement what we have available at school.

Suggestions for Success

- Every day check (1) our Google classroom; (2-3) VistaNow.org — <http://www.vistanow.org/about-us/mvm-staff/> and <http://www.vistanow.org/journalism-i/>; and (4) the news.
- Class notebook— I highly recommend you organize your class work in a three-ring notebook with dividers or a pocket folder. That notebook/folder should become a comprehensive learning tool for not only this year, but for subsequent years (newspaper, yearbook, website, television, college, etc.). The notebook/folder is a tool for you to save your class notes, handouts and class assignments to help you be better prepared for quizzes and tests.
- Complete all assignments and meet all deadlines— Journalists must deliver content on time all the time. That’s what we do. Check the class website at least once a week.
- Ask critical thinking questions— Think critically and ask the most important question in journalism: “Why?”

Contact

Please contact me via e-mail (the best way to get in contact with me) at mark.newton@dcsdk12.org.

I am available for student support before school, during SOAR, after school and during my planning periods (2nd, 7th) in U328 (Mac computer lab), the MV Media Editor office (U332) or the English Department office. ***Please see me if you need anything.***