

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Welcome to CAP Journalism! This year we will learn basic journalism skills in the following areas: opinion/editorial, news and feature writing, grammar/spelling/punctuation, gathering and reporting news, interviewing techniques, analysis and critical thinking, and copy editing. We will also incorporate social media into our reporting whenever possible. Students will also be introduced to rights and responsibilities of the press, including how to avoid libel and censorship. We will also address the First Amendment, the impact of the political blogosphere in presidential campaigns and the ethics of reporting, and discuss at length the Watergate and Valerie Plame scandals, including the inherent dangers of using anonymous sources.

On a lighter note, we will learn methods of photojournalism, page layout and design, and learn why cartoons are an important part of journalism. Various guest speakers and a field trip to the Newseum and/or *The Washington Post* are planned.

### **Assignments**

All work is to be typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins using 12 point Times New Roman. To ensure anonymity and the highest degree of objectivity in grading, only your student ID number and class period should be single spaced in the upper right corner. Assignments should be free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, particularly final drafts. Careless mistakes are costly and WILL affect your grade. Specific criteria will be outlined on each assignment's rubric.

### **Grading**

All assignments are important and should be taken seriously, regardless of their point value. Expectations for individual assignments will be explained in class, and all points issued are **final**. Learning how to handle constructive criticism from me and your peers is an important step in becoming a good writer.

Grading key:

A=publishable quality

B=publishable with editing

C=substantial editing needed

D=marginal quality

E=unacceptable

## Rules and Guidelines

*Students must meet ALL deadlines.* Students are welcome to turn in work early, but if a deadline is missed, it cannot be accepted for credit. You are responsible for your success in this class.

Come to class ready to submit work. Computer or printer/ink problems are NOT valid excuses for late work. Passes to the Media Center will not be issued to print out assignments, nor will the classroom computer be available to print work. Late is late.

Extensions will not be granted except for *extreme* emergencies (e.g. death in the family, hospitalization), and **extra credit is not an option.**

## Attendance

The most successful students have exemplary attendance records. You should make every effort to be in class every day. I also expect students to arrive on time and ready to learn.

You are responsible for meeting deadlines *regardless of absences*. If you know you will be absent on a due date or deadline, you should email me an electronic copy. Emailed work is only acceptable when you are absent, not when you forget to bring your work to school.

Tests or quizzes are to be made up the day you return, not the next class period. When you are absent for a test or major deadline, it does not go unnoticed by your CAP teachers.

## Academic Support

My email is [anne.w.cullen@mcpsmd.net](mailto:anne.w.cullen@mcpsmd.net) OR [Anne\\_W\\_Cullen@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Anne_W_Cullen@mcpsmd.org). I can also meet with you before/after school in the English department (141), or during lunch by appointment only.

If at any time you don't understand or need help, **please** ask. Make every effort to hand work in to me personally, but please do not interrupt another class to do so. If I am absent, you should submit work to another CAP 10 teacher or to the substitute teacher for that day. Journalism is a profession that engenders passion, debate, criticism. Bring your opinions to class and share them openly. Feel free to suggest topics for discussion and to voice your opinions and ask questions.

## **The Fine Print**

- Remember you are here to learn. CAP is hard, but you earned your placement in the program and you are an important part of this community.
- Accept that you will make mistakes, and hold yourself accountable when you make them.
- Trust, but verify. When a classmate tells you something about an assignment, make sure they are giving you the right information before moving forward.
- Complaining won't change anything. Attitude is everything.
- Keep up with current events, and have an opinion about them.
- Do your best and take pride in your work.
- Ask questions, no matter how stupid you think they are. (They aren't).

## **First Quarter assignments include but are not limited to:**

- Letter to the editor
- Blog entries
- Social media comment analysis
- syndicated columnist analysis\*
- editorial review
- mini editorials (creative)
- grammar packet
- first draft original editorial
- final draft editorial\*
- headline writing project

## **Second Quarter assignments include but are not limited to:**

- Interview skills packet
- news analysis\*
- Feature story analysis
- lead writing exercises
- profile of student
- sights and sounds exercise
- use of quotations
- feature outline
- feature draft
- final draft\*

\*indicates a portfolio-worthy assignment (Category: Media & Communications or Social Awareness).