

COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to CAP Journalism!

This year we will learn basic journalism skills in the following areas: editorials, news and feature writing, gathering and reporting news, interviewing techniques and copy editing. Students will study the ethics of reporting and the rights and responsibilities of the press. We will engage with the news, analyzing coverage and thinking critically about the role a free press plays in a democracy.

Students will manage a news website with supervision-- publishing real stories about Montgomery County and the DMV. They will peer-edit, manage social media platforms, utilize SEI (search engine optimization, dabble in web design and gain real hands-on experience in a digital newsroom.

Students will be encouraged to think outside of their political comfort zones and challenge existing mindsets as they learn about free speech within the uniquely varied American media landscape.

Assignments

All work is to be typed, double-spaced using 11 or 12 point classic fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, etc) **in AP Style**. In an effort to be as paperless a class as possible, the majority of work will be submitted digitally using Google Classroom or students' personal blogs. Assignments should be free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, particularly final drafts. 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 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. If a deadline is missed, it cannot be accepted for any credit. You are responsible for your success in this class. Computer or printer/ink problems are NOT valid excuses for late work.

In a real newsroom, a missed deadline means you're fired. As this class prepares students for work on one of Blair's distinguished and competitively-staffed publications, emphasis on meeting deadlines begins now.

Any work submitted after a deadline **will receive a grade of 0.**

Attendance

The most successful students have exemplary attendance records. You should make every effort to be in class every day, 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, make plans to have your work submitted in advance.

Academic Support

My email is helen_lyons@mcpsmd.org. If at any time you don't understand or need help, **please** ask. The fastest way to reach me outside of school hours is via twitter [@lyons_hallie](https://twitter.com/lyons_hallie).

Journalism is a profession that engenders passion, debate and criticism. Leave your Oxford commas behind but bring your opinions to class and share them openly, and honor your classmates' right to do the same-- regardless of whether or not your beliefs align.

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 for 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.
- Keep up with current events from both left-leaning and right-leaning news sources in addition to neutral ones. Understand where people get the information that forms their opinions. Know what that information is.
- Do your best and take pride in your work.
- Ask questions, no matter how stupid you think they are (they aren't).

Course Outline

Note: the following is a general surface-level outline. Depending on students' mastery of and interest in each unit, we may spend more or less time on a particular topic.

Unit 0: Introduction to Media Bias

Unit I: Editorials

- 1. Print**
- 2. Cartoon**
- 3. Broadcast**

Unit II: Code of Ethics

- 1. SPJ & AP Style**

Unit III: News

- 1. Print/online**
- 2. Photo**
- 3. Broadcast**
- 4. Radio/Podcast**

Unit IV: Features

- 4. Print**
- 5. Photo**
- 6. Broadcast**
- 7. Radio/Podcast**

Unit V: Public Information

- 1. MPIA**
- 2. FOIA**