

Journalism

Mr. Lawson
 slawson@mansfieldschool.net
 417-924-3236 ext. 309
 misterlawson.weebly.com
 @ScottLawso



Course Description

Journalism focuses on writing news, sports, and feature stories, editorials, columns, and captions, using Associated Press style. Modern news magazine design is taught, and students learn career skills through advertising sales. Skills learned are applied to produce the *El Leon* and other publications. Photojournalism and video journalism are practiced as well. Students produce a 144-page yearbook that is evaluated in competition and are expected to possess good work habits, to be conscientious, and to meet deadlines. Staff members will spend time working on publications after school and possibly during lunches and on weekends.

Prerequisite

A or B in English and teacher approval

Objectives

1. The student will be able to comprehend and interpret texts. (MLS RIT 1, SMS CA 3, Goal 1)
2. The student will be able to analyze craft and structure in texts. (MLS RIT 2, SMS CA 3, Goals 1, 2)
3. The student will be able to synthesize meanings from multiple texts. (MLS RIT3, SMS CA 3, 6, Goals 1, 2, 3)
4. The student will be able to conduct research. (MLS W1, SMS CA 3, 4, 6, Goal 1, 2, 3)
5. The student will be able to follow a writing

What's in this syllabus?

Texts and required materials –	page 2
Grading –	page 2
Plagiarism –	page 2
Making up work –	page 3
Classroom procedures –	page 3
Ten ways to impress your teacher –	page 3
Approach to teaching –	page 4

process. (MLS W2, SMS CA 1, 4, 6, Goals 1, 2, 3)

6. The student will be able to review, revise, and edit texts. (MLS W3, SMS CA 1, 3, 6, Goals 1, 2, 3)

Computers and Equipment

Windows systems running a variety of design software.

Cameras: digital, 35mm SLRs and iPads

Texts and required materials

- Publications manual
- Rolnicki, Tom E., C. Dow Tate, and Sherri A. Taylor. *Scholastic Journalism*. 11th ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 2007.
- Folder with pockets and brads or rings
- Paper and writing tools

Students are responsible for coming to class fully prepared every day. The school does not provide free paper or writing tools. Students or their parents/guardians need to buy appropriate supplies as necessary. Students who come to class unprepared can expect lower grades.

Grading

Grades are assigned according to a percentage of total points possible for the class according to the school's standard grading scale. Points are assigned using a variety of scoring methods as appropriate to assignments. Participation is also worth points on some assignments. Not all activities are assignments though. Some activities in class are for practice and will not be graded.

Students who show evidence of effort or improvement may receive verbal praise and encouragement. Such praise is not a guarantee of a particular grade.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is turning in someone else's work as all or part of one's own. It is a very serious issue in academics. Every instance of plagiarism will be subject to the consequences described in the student handbook.

Making up work

All students are responsible for all in-class and out-of-class assignments as well as in-class participation. All work must be turned in on time. *Work is considered late when students who were present turn it in after the time it is collected by the teacher.* To wit:

- If it is turned in later during that class period, it is late.
- If it is turned in later that day, it is late.
- If students cannot find work in a disorganized folder, bag, or locker and turn it in later than the rest of the class does, it is late.

Participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged, but is not an excuse for turning in work late.

Students who have not turned in work due to absences are covered by the policy for late work stated in the student handbook.

Students who need extra help or computer time should schedule appointments with me during advisory time, before school, or after school.

Classroom Procedures

Students must be in the classroom when the tardy bell rings. Students in the hall without written permission from a teacher or administrator will be counted tardy/absent. Students should take their seats as soon as possible and begin working on the activity displayed on the board. Talking and passing notes are not allowed while the teacher is taking roll or at any other times during class without specific permission from the teacher. Students with excused absence slips should raise their hands after roll and ask for makeup work if they do not already have it.

Students should not open the door for anyone. If someone is tardy and (consequently) stuck in the hall, wave at them in a friendly fashion and wait for the teacher to open the door.

Good attendance is a vital component of academic success. Students who are present for lectures, discussions, and in-class help will perform better than those who are not present.

Ten ways to impress your teacher

1. Show up. You can't win if you don't play.
2. If you miss, show up in class with a slip from Janet. You know you need one, and I shouldn't have to remind you or waste class time waiting for you to get one. (We will wait for you like one pig waits for another, which is to say not at all.)
3. Show up on time. Tardy students waste everyone else's time. Being tardy breaks all three rules of thumb on page five.
4. Turn off your tech (especially your phone) unless I tell you to use it. Playing with electronic toys during class is not working hard.
5. Communicate with me in a mature fashion. Don't whine, scold, pretend you know more about the subject matter than I do, or make accusations when what you really want is help. Grownups have emotions too, and if you irritate them they will treat you like an irritant.
6. Help me out. If I'm moving desks, lend a hand. If I'm handing out papers, volunteer to help. (I can't let you hand back graded work.) If your classmates are off task, get them back on task. Remember though, don't open the door for anyone.
7. Deal with any problems with your grade before the last minute. I have too many students to check every assignment for a quarter on the last day of the quarter for everybody.
8. Follow directions. Different teachers have different procedures and requirements for good reasons. Don't expect assignments or standards to change to suit your whims.
9. Make a personal contribution to the class. Actually try to answer discussion questions. Encourage other students during group activities. Help those who are struggling with the material. I can't help everyone at once and neither can you. But we can both help someone.
10. Remember that you aren't better than anybody else. If you think you are, you've missed something. Everybody in this class has something to contribute, and everybody will need help from time to time. Do your part.

Students should not sharpen their pencils, borrow necessary materials, or roam the classroom looking for necessary materials while the teacher is talking. He is the most educated person in the room, and he knows what will be on the test. If words are coming out of his mouth, you should be writing them down to memorize later. If you are not taking notes, you are not likely to succeed.

Class time is not an appropriate time for students' pursuit of their social lives. Discussion should be appropriately timed and limited to appropriate topics. Distracted or distracting talk and behavior will harm student performance and is a disciplinary issue.

Students are expected to do their own work unless they have been specifically instructed to work in groups (see the plagiarism section above).

Approach to teaching

I am here to teach you journalism because people's stories matter. So do facts. The purpose of journalism is to record those stories in a factual manner and share them with the world. Journalism is about giving a voice to those who do not have one. It is about printing the truth. It is about standing up to power. This class is your chance to make the world a better place. And it needs to be. Don't waste this opportunity.

Journalism is an unusual class. It includes a high level of academic rigor, but also opportunities to have fun. The class structure is loose, and you will have to be self-monitoring, self-directed, and self-motivated. Most days, especially after first quarter, everyone in the class will be working on something different at the same time. I will not be able to hold anyone's hand. If you need help, you will have to ask for it from your peers, your editors, or from me. A newsroom is a chaotic environment, and this is a newsroom during seventh period. To thrive here, you will need to be emotionally mature and goal-driven.

In this class, I will be introducing new concepts and skills, especially during first semester, while also pushing you to work at a higher level with the skills you already have. It. Will. Be. Hard. Expect to work a lot. Expect to work every day. Expect to work outside of class. Expect to work outside of school. You will have to cover events that you are reporting on, including taking photos or video. Being at those events is part of the homework for this class. If you do not cover your assigned events, you will have nothing to write about, and your grade will suffer as a result. MHS student media is student-produced, and you cannot expect your teacher to do your homework for you.

School is a lot easier if we all get along. Consequently, I expect you to follow the rules in the student handbook and to behave like decent human beings. Many social expectations are unwritten, but they can be summarized by three rules of thumb:

1. Be kind.
2. Be trustworthy.
3. Work hard.

Follow these rules. I will be following them myself. I will be as kind to you as you let me be. If you mistake kindness for weakness or for an opportunity to play me or your classmates, then (as much as it will break my heart) I will have to stop being kind. At that point, you will be involved in a disciplinary process regardless of whether or not it reaches your parents/guardians (alien captors/robot overlords/whatevers).

You may earn whatever grade you want in this class. If you want an A, all you have to do is earn it. If you want to slide by with something less, then you are not following rule three (work hard), and you can expect me to devote my considerable ability at annoying people (ask my wife some time) to encouraging you to make a better choice. (Seriously. It's like a super power.) To that end, I expect you to be checking your grade regularly on Lumen's parent portal. You are old enough to do this yourself. Do not ask me to check your grades during class. I will not do it, even if you think we aren't doing anything (see paragraph two of this section). If you cannot check your own grade on your own time, see me during advisory, before school, or after school. I will check your grade with your at those times if I am not otherwise committed.

We are all in this together. Let's help each other out.