



Journalism/Yearbook I Honors

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Welcome to Honors Journalism/Yearbook I! Your decision to engage in this elective shows me that you are already near the “top of your game” as students, writers and thinkers. The journalism curriculum is designed for those who *love* to read, write and think; if you have a hearty appetite for such things, we’re all in for a feast.

Whether this is your first or second year at ECG, I know that you will be ready you to scale new heights this year. You’ll get more independence – which will make this class more difficult but exponentially more fun. Also, unlike your required English class, this course allows you to experience photography, design, editing and business in real-world terms. It is an environment that welcomes visionary thinkers, writers and risk takers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course will require a strong in-class work ethic, possibly including some after-school deadline crunches and out-of-school time for interviews and reporting. We will all work smart, though, and celebrate our successes.

Ultimately, I hope this course will help you to...

- Write effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes and occasions.
- Develop speaking, listening, viewing and critical thinking skills.
- Use current technology to enhance learning.
- Produce a quality, award-winning edition of the school yearbook
- Produce a quality, award-winning print edition of the literary magazine.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

1. **Respect** all around. Caring and consideration is essential in building an environment in which we feel safe to learn, speak honestly and be ourselves.
2. **Have a positive attitude.** This class functions greatly on *intrinsic* motivation, and you must be willing to work.
3. **You must meet deadlines.** For each deadline missed (articles, photographs, graphics and layout), your grade will be penalized.
4. **Don’t rely solely on interviews from friends.** We need to branch out and reach *all* students, faculty and staff—perhaps even branching out into the Guilford College community at-large.
5. **Complete the assignment as given.** Sometimes people are difficult to find for interviews. However, you must do everything in your power to fulfill the terms of the assignment. Journalists actively seek stories; they do not expect them to fall in their lap.
6. **Make your corrections.** Any corrections I make to your writing must be evident in the final draft.
7. **This is not a time to handle another class’s business.** Please do not work on other classwork unless you have asked if there is anything that needs to be done first.

SUPPLIES

You will need to the following items for this class:

- Your laptop each day to log into TreeRing
- Recommended, but not required: A copy of the *Associated Press Style Book*. Most professional journalism organizations adhere to this style book when determining correct spelling, grammar, abbreviation and capitalization.

REPORTING AND WRITING

It should go without saying that you like to write or else you would not have signed up for this class! However, writing is only a part of journalism; reporting (the gathering of information through interviews, research, observation, etc.) is just as important. For high school students, reporting is often more challenging than writing because it involves dealing with unfamiliar people. Nonetheless, to write a good story, one must have good information; reporting is how one gets that information.

Reporting is a learned skill. The more you do it, the better you will become. **Some journalists have the bad habit of getting just enough information to “float” a story. Avoid that. Get far more information than you need from MULTIPLE SOURCES.** The more information you have, the better you will understand what you’re covering. Ask lots of questions and keep an ear out for good quotations. At a minimum, include three quality quotations in a story.

Tips on Article Writing (more will be forthcoming): A typical story should be about 500 words long. Keep most of your sentences fairly short, but throw in a few long ones for variety. Unlike your regular English class, most journalistic paragraphs are two to three sentences long (to fit into columns). Often an appropriate quote is the best ending to an article.

**Plagiarism will be dealt with severely, as will any falsified material (e.g. “made up” quotes from interviews that never occurred).
Truth is our highest goal.**

GRADES

The grading system in this class is different from any other you will likely encounter in high school or college. You will not receive grades for individual articles and other assignments, although you will get lots of feedback. You are simply expected to complete the work assigned and fully participate in all aspects of the class (see below). If you do, you will receive an “A” for the quarter. If I notice that you are not performing like an “A” student, I will tell you.

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is SO crucial for any publication to function. If you miss a deadline, you inconvenience me and all the editors and you jeopardize the timely layout of the issue.

Participation: This includes maintaining a team-spirit attitude, willingness to help with auxiliary tasks, attendance to any extra events, help with copy-editing, yearbook distribution, etc.

PARENT/STUDENT CONTRACT

I am very excited to have your child in Journalism Yearbook I. Your child will gain skills in interviewing; features, sports and news writing; photography; page design and editing throughout this course. This class is hands-on and rigorous as we aim to produce two publications by the end of the year: the school yearbook and a print edition of the literary magazine, “Sweet Gum.”

While this course is extremely rewarding and offers your child a wide variety of skills, MEETING DEADLINES, SELLING ADS, and MAINTAINING A TEAM ATTITUDE are absolutely necessary.

Students must be able to answer yes to each of the following expectations:

The Contract:

- ✓ *Student name* will work hard at learning all aspects of yearbook publication.
- ✓ *Student name* will cover events or complete tasks related to the yearbook that may require time outside of the school day.
- ✓ *Student name* will be responsible for computer equipment and other materials. This includes being accountable if anything is lost, stolen or misused.

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Email: _____

Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

“Journalism is the first rough draft of history.”

Donald Graham, Chairman of the Washington Post

Are you ready to become a part of ECG’s history?