COURSE OVERVIEW GUIDE

Below is a list of questions designed to help you draft your own course overview. Two sample overviews follow. They were written for a multi-level class including new and experienced staff members.

**Objectives**

* What, if any, objectives does your school district have for the course?
* What knowledge base must the students have before they can begin working on the yearbook?
* Will staffers and their parents be held liable for policies by signing contracts?

**Grading policies**

* How will students be graded?
* Will students receive credit for quality as well as completion?
* What is the late work policy?
* Can students earn extra credit? If so, how?
* What types of tasks will students be taught and tested on?

**After-school responsibilities**

* Will students be required to work on the yearbook outside of class time?
* Under what circumstances are students required to work on yearbook outside of class?
* If a student fails to work outside of class, what are the consequences?

**Advertising sales**

* Will students be required to sell business advertisements?
* How will they be graded on sales? By ads sold? By number of businesses approached?
* What is the staff’s goal for advertising revenue?
* What is each individual’s goal for advertising revenue?
* What happens if these revenue goals are not met?

**Use of photo equipment**

* What camera equipment will students be allowed to use?
* What is the procedure for checking the equipment in and out?
* What happens if the equipment is lost or damaged while in a student’s possession?

**Use of school computers and software**

* Which computers and software will the students be allowed to use?
* Where will students be required to save their work?
* What happens if students are surfing the web during yearbook class?
* What happens if students violate the school’s computer use policies during yearbook class?
* What happens if the equipment is lost or damaged while in a student’s possession?

**After book completion**

* Will students be required to complete other journalism assignments or projects after the book is finished? How will those assignments or projects be graded?

YEARBOOK JOURNALISM

**Adviser name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Adviser email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Objectives**

This course in yearbook journalism has two primary objectives: (1) To teach students the skills required to create the book and (2) to produce a book which reflects journalistic standards. To accomplish these objectives, the yearbook journalism students will devote their time to the following:

* Learning their rights and responsibilities as student journalists
* Gaining proficiency in desktop publishing with Adobe InDesign or Herff Jones eDesign
* Incorporating advanced design principles such as grid design and use of layered coverage into the yearbook
* Learning and using journalistic writing techniques
* Developing student leadership and decision-making skills
* Finding ways to include every student and staff member in the yearbook
* Creating and executing marketing plans to sell the yearbook and ads in the volume
* And most importantly, producing a yearbook the staff, the school and the community can enjoy

**Expectations**

There are four basic attitudes critical to the success of the yearbook staff.

* Timeliness:Students will be expected to meet all deadlines. Students will also be expected to be on time for class, meetings, photo shoots and interviews.
* Risk-taking:Yearbook staff members must be willing to take a risk and to try something new. Risk-taking may involve interviewing someone a student does not know or learning new software.
* Responsibility:When a student agrees to take on the responsibility of working on a student publication, the student must also assume responsibility for his/her actions. Whenever a student is out in the school or larger community fulfilling yearbook responsibilities, that student must act as a representative of the entire school.
* Attention to detail:Yearbook is a perfectionist’s business. Students must pay attention to details because details cost money.

**Grading**

At the beginning of each grading period, students will be given a list of possible activities for the grading period.

* Yearbook journalism 1 students: Earn a total of 150 points.
* Yearbook journalism 2, 3 and 4sStudents: Earn a total of 200 points.

**Materials**

Each staff member will need to purchase a steno pad for interviews. To complete theme assignments, staff members will occasionally need old magazines, scissors and rubber cement.

**After-school responsibilities**

Some assignments — particularly photo shoots and interviews — will be completed outside of class time. Students should plan transportation needs and homework schedules accordingly.

As a deadline approaches, each staff member will be required to stay after school to finish pages. Yearbook Journalism 1 students will be required to stay after at least once a month. Yearbook Journalism 2 students and editors will stay after school according to their job descriptions and deadline assignments.

This is mandatory for all yearbook staffers, failure to attend work nights will result in a lower grade.

**Ad sales**

All yearbook staff members are required to sell advertising. It is necessary to pay for the costs of yearbook production. In addition, the school system’s curriculum requires advertising sales as part of the journalism program because advertising helps us simulate the activities of a professional publication.

Each staff member is required to sell three advertisements and/or to approach at least 12 businesses. To facilitate this process, students will be placed in groups and will split up the sales areas. Students who fail to sell three advertisements and/or to approach at least 12 businesses cannot receive an A for the first grading period.

**Photo equipment use**

Students may use their own cameras or they may use staff equipment. All staff equipment must be signed out and returned within 24 hours. Students who do not follow the sign out and return policy will not be permitted to use school equipment. Students are responsible for damages to/loss of equipment checked out by them.

**Computer use**

All county and school policies for computer use are in effect. In addition, yearbook students have access to a network drive dedicated to storing all yearbook files. Students who misuse or abuse their access to the yearbook drive (Ex. Hiding personal files on the network drive) will lose their computer privileges. Disciplinary action will follow. Students are responsible for damages to/loss of equipment checked out by them.

**After book completion**

Once the yearbook is finished, students will be expected to participate in all classroom activities and to complete all assignments as requested by the teacher. While the assignments may not be directly related to the yearbook or its supplement, they will be journalistic in nature and focused on improving students’ journalism skills.

Please read this course overview. When you have done so, sign and date it. Please have your parents read, sign and date this document. Should you or your parents have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

**Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

PHOTOJOURNALISM SYLLABUS

**Adviser name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Adviser email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Welcome to photojournalism! This is a class where students design and produce the school yearbook — a memory book, a history book and a publication submitted to scholastic journalism organizations for critique. In this class, students will learn the importance of working as a team to complete tasks successfully and on time.

**Course description**

Attached is the county’s course description with objectives and performance standards.

This class will follow these guidelines.

**Grading system**

I will grade assignments each quarter on a point system, which translates into a letter grade. At the end of the quarter, the total points will determine the grade, unless a student misses a deadline. A student who misses a deadline will lose half of the possible points for the assignment. It is very important that every student keeps up with his/her assignments and asks for help when he/she falls behind. The more jobs a student does, the more points he/she can receive. The county’s grading scale determines the student’s final letter grade.

**Attendance**

Since deadlines are involved, attendance is critical to each student’s success. For grading purposes, this class will follow the county’s attendance policy which states that three unexcused absences equals an F for the quarter and two unexcused tardies equals one unexcused absence.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

**Copy**

The adviser, co-editors or section editor assign writing assignments. This is a story written by a student that includes the subject of a section’s page. For example, if the student life section has a page on after-school jobs, the copy could be about types of jobs and the students who work at them. Each copy assignment will include specific directions for the type of information needed. Copy submissions are typed, double-spaced and saved in the student’s folder in the yearbook drive. Edit and proof each draft before you submit it for a grade. This copy is worth 10 points.

**Final copy**

This is the final draft of the copy. Make and turn in corrections on time. Students can earn up to 20 points for this assignment.

**Quotes**

Each spread requires one or more quotes obtained from students outside the yearbook class. Depending on the number of quotes and the variety of the student population polled, these will be worth up to 10 points.

**Headlines**

Each spread is required to have at least one dominant headline package (mods may have others). They are worth five points per spread.

**Captions**

Students are responsible for writing the captions for photographs on their assigned pages. Every picture needs a caption, which must meet stylistic guidelines set by the co-editors. Captions for a two-page spread are worth up to 20 points.

**Photo assignments**

Students are responsible for making assignments for photographers to take pictures they wish to use on their pages. If a photographer is not available for the assignment, the student must take the pictures, following the photography guidelines set by the teacher. Assignments for other photographers are worth five points. Taking photos to use on a spread is worth 15 points.

**Selling yearbooks**

Each student is responsible for participating in the sale and distribution of the yearbook. Selling yearbooks during lunch earns five points. Selling at after-school functions is worth 10 points. Distribution of the book is worth 20 points.

**Cleaning**

The classroom, supply closet and office tend to get disorganized during deadline work. Since deadlines are close together, in order for everyone to find things easily, the co-editors will assign a couple of people to clean the rooms. Each student can earn up to 10 points.

**Selling ads**

Each student must sell one business ad. This is worth 40 points.

**Computer use**

Each student is responsible for learning to use the InDesign or eDesign program and using it to prepare assigned pages for deadline. Completion of a two-page spread is worth up to 30 points.

**Miscellaneous assignments**

These include any assignments the teacher gives that lead up to the successful completion of assigned pages or that lead to further understanding of photojournalism. For example, students are expected to know the definitions of various publication terms and will be quizzed on them. Students must also master the basics of yearbook design, so assignments teaching technique will be given. These will vary in point value from 10 to 50 points, depending on the work involved.

**Meeting deadlines**

Students are expected to complete all assignments for deadlines themselves, but if that cannot be done, they are to seek assistance from other staff members. Any portion of a deadline that is not completed by the assigned staffer will result in deducted points at the end of the quarter. For example, if a staffer does not complete the copy for his assigned pages, then he will have 10 points (Half the total points he could have earned) deducted from his total points earned.

**Final exam**

Photojournalism 1 students will take a written exam on design and terminology. Photojournalism 2 students will complete a theme packet assignment. Photojournalism 3 students (and seniors in PJ2) will complete a photo essay assignment. The final exam for all levels is worth 1/9 of the final grade.

**After school**

To complete all assignments some students will need to stay after school, come in during lunch, work on Saturdays or holiday breaks just to meet the deadline. This is very important and required. Out-of-school assignments and work days will be scheduled as far ahead as possible.

**Camps and workshops**

Throughout the school year there will be many learning opportunities. The cost for each of these will be paid for with yearbook funds, but students may be requested to pay for transportation, lodging and food on these trips.

***I have read and understand the course syllabus for photojournalism.***

**Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**