



The University of Southern Queensland

Course specification

| Description: Public Affairs Reporting | | | | | | |
|--|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|-----------|
| Subject | Cat-nbr | Class | Term | Mode | Units | Campus |
| JRN | 2004 | 50930 | 1, 2006 | EXT | 1.00 | Toowoomba |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Academic group: | FOART |
| Academic org: | FOA004 |
| Student contribution band: | 1 |
| ASCED code: | 100703 |

STAFFING

Examiner: Dianne Jones
Moderator: Craig Burgess

REQUISITES

Pre-requisite: JRN2000

SYNOPSIS

Public Affairs Reporting is an advanced reporting course stressing the watchdog role of the press and utilising investigative techniques, including computer-assisted reporting and Internet searching. Students undertake in-depth analytical and practical assignments. They will develop their knowledge of specialist reporting, advance their skills in information gathering - including the conduct of in-depth interviews with appropriate sources - and communicate their findings to a general audience. Students will also reflect on their reporting practices and critical coverage of public affairs. Topics include the role of the press in society, systems of government, social institutions, and issues in public affairs reporting.

OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course students should be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of the theories behind the watchdog role of the press; (assessment items 1 & 3 refer)
2. demonstrate an understanding of public affairs, including systems of government, business and the economy, education, health, medicine, science, religion, cultural diversity, and the environment; (assessment items 2 & 3 refer)
3. demonstrate an ability to report in-depth on public affairs issues and events; (assessment items 2 & 3 refer)
4. apply computer-assisted research and reporting techniques as journalistic practice. (assessment items 2 & 3 refer)

TOPICS

| Description | Weighting (%) |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Theories of the role of the press in society | 20.00 |
| 2. Specialist journalism and research techniques | 15.00 |
| 3. Using computer-assisted reporting for public affairs | 15.00 |
| 4. Reporting government decisions | 20.00 |
| 5. Reporting other social institutions | 20.00 |
| 6. Issues in public affairs | 10.00 |

TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED

ALL textbooks and materials are available for purchase from USQ BOOKSHOP (unless otherwise stated). Orders may be placed via secure internet, free fax 1800642453, phone 07 46312742 (within Australia), or mail. Overseas students should fax +61 7 46311743, or phone +61 7 46312742. For costs, further details, and internet ordering, use the 'Textbook Search' facility at <http://bookshop.usq.edu.au> click 'Semester', then enter your 'Course Code' (no spaces).

Henningham, J ed 1999, *Institutions in Australian society*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Lockwood, K (ed) 2005, *Style: a guide for journalists*, News Limited, Sydney.
(Rev Edn)

Quinn, S 2001, *Newsgathering on the net: an internet guide for Australian journalists*, 2nd edn, MacMillan Education, Melbourne.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Pearson, M 2004, *The journalist's guide to media law*, 2nd edn, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS

| ACTIVITY | HOURS |
|----------------|-------|
| Assessment | 60.00 |
| Directed Study | 40.00 |
| Private Study | 60.00 |

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

| Description | Marks out of | Wtg(%) | Due date |
|-------------|--------------|--------|-------------|
| REPORT 1 | 100.00 | 25.00 | 05 Apr 2006 |
| REPORT 2 | 100.00 | 35.00 | 05 May 2006 |
| REPORT 3 | 100.00 | 40.00 | 09 Jun 2006 |

IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- 1 Attendance requirements:
There are no attendance requirements for this external course. However, it is the student's responsibility to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximise their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration.
- 2 Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:
To be assured of completing each assessment item satisfactorily a student must submit all of the items of summative assessment by the due date and achieve on each the minimum specified standards outlined in 4 (Requirements for a pass in the course).
- 3 Penalties for late submission of required work:
DEADLINES - EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GRANTED ON ANY GROUNDS.
In fully documented cases of extreme medical disability, other production assignments of equivalent value will be set, **ON CONDITION THAT** the student fully informs the Examiner of such a need at the earliest convenient time.
- 4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:
To be assured of a passing grade, students must demonstrate, via the summative assessment items, that they have achieved the required minimum standards in relation to the objectives of the course by obtaining at least 50% of the total weighted marks for all summative assessment.
- 5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:
The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the weighted aggregate of the marks (or grades) obtained for each of the summative assessment items in the course.
- 6 Examination information:
There is no exam for this course.
- 7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:
Given the details under (6) above, there are no deferred exams for this course. However, if any deferred/makeup work is granted, it would have to be submitted by a date set by the examiner.
- 8 University Regulations:
Students should read USQ Regulations 5.1 Definitions, 5.6. Assessment, and 5.10 Academic Misconduct for further information and to avoid actions which might contravene University Regulations. These regulations can be found at the URL <http://www.usq.edu.au/corporateservices/calendar/part5.htm> or in the current USQ Handbook.

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- 9 (a) The due date for an assignment is the date by which a student must despatch the assignment to the USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the despatch

date, if requested by the Examiner. (b) Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be despatched to USQ within 24 hours if requested by the Examiner. (c) In accordance with University's Assignment Extension Policy (Regulation 5.6.1), the examiner of a course may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances such as documented ill-health. (d) Students who have undertaken all of the required assessments in the course but who have failed to meet some of the specified objectives of the course within the normally prescribed time may be awarded the temporary grade: IM (Incomplete-Makeup). An IM grade will only be awarded when, in the opinion of the examiner, a student will be able to achieve the remaining objectives of the course after a period of non-directed personal study. (e) Students who, for medical, family/personal, or employment-related reasons, are unable to complete an assignment or sit for an examination at the scheduled time, may apply to defer an assessment in the course. Such a request must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. One of the following temporary grades may be awarded: IDS (Incomplete - Deferred Examination; IDM (Incomplete Deferred Make-up); IDB (Incomplete - Both Deferred Examination and Deferred Make-up).

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- 1 Correct English is essential in Journalism. Errors of spelling, grammar and punctuation will be penalised when assignments are marked. Severe deficiencies could mean failure in the course.
 - 2 Assignemnts in this course require the use of interviews. The conduct of interviews must meet the University's ethical requirements and the examiner must be satisfied that these requirements are met.
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