



The University of Southern Queensland

## Course specification

The current and official versions of the course specifications are available on the web at  
<<http://www.usq.edu.au/coursespecification/current>>.

Please consult the web for updates that may occur during the year.

### Description: Public Affairs Reporting

Subject	Cat-nbr	Class	Term	Mode	Units	Campus
JRN	2004	74748	1, 2008	EXT	1.00	Toowoomba

<b>Academic group:</b>	FOART
<b>Academic org:</b>	FOA003
<b>Student contribution band:</b>	1
<b>ASCED code:</b>	100703

### STAFFING

Examiner: Dianne Jones  
Moderator: Aidan Burke

### 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;
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;
3. demonstrate an ability to report in-depth on public affairs issues and events;
4. apply computer-assisted research and reporting techniques as journalistic practice.

### 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).

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

### **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 2007, *The journalist's guide to media law*, 3rd edn, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

### **STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS**

ACTIVITY	HOURS
Assessments	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	26 Mar 2008 (see note 1)
REPORT 2	100.00	35.00	23 Apr 2008 (see note 2)
REPORT 3	100.00	40.00	11 Jun 2008 (see note 3)

#### **NOTES**

1. This assessment is aligned with Objective 1.
2. This assessment is aligned with Objectives 2, 3 and 4.
3. This assessment is aligned with Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4.

## 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 successfully complete an individual assessment item, a student must achieve at least 50% of the marks or a grade of at least C-. This statement must be read in conjunction with Statement 4 below.
- 3 Penalties for late submission of required work:  
If students submit assignments after the due date without extenuating circumstances and without prior approval, then a penalty of a maximum of 5% of the assigned mark may apply for each working day late, up to a maximum of 10 working days, at which time a mark of zero can be recorded for that assignment.
- 4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:  
To be assured of receiving a passing grade, a student must achieve at least 50% of the total weighted marks available for the course.
- 5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:  
The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the aggregate of the weighted marks 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>

## 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) In the event that a due date for an assignment falls on a local public holiday in their area, such as a Show holiday, the due date for the assignment will be the next day. Students are to note on the assignment cover the date of the public holiday for the examiner's convenience. (e) Students who do not have regular access to postal services or who are otherwise disadvantaged by these regulations may be given special consideration. They should contact the examiner of the course to negotiate such special arrangements. (f) 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. (g) 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 The journalism course maintains high standards of spelling, punctuation, syntax and style. Faults in any of these could render a project or proposal unacceptable.
  - 2 If assignments in the course require the use of surveys, interviews, etc., students should be aware of the University and Faculty of Arts ethical requirements/guidelines. (The course syllabus distributed to students in the first week of teaching provides this information.)
  - 3 Students can expect that questions in assessment items in this course may draw upon knowledge and skills that they can reasonably be expected to have acquired before enrolling in the course. This includes knowledge contained in pre-requisite courses and appropriate communication, information literacy, analytical, critical thinking, problem solving or numeracy skills. Students who do not possess such knowledge and skills should not expect to achieve the same grades as those students who do possess them.
  - 4 Students will require access to email and have internet access to USQConnect for this course.
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