

August 22, 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Journalistic Writing I. I am looking forward to working with you and your student throughout the semester as he/she grows as a writer, thinker, and person.

This year, to keep you up-to-the-minute on what is happening in J1, I will employ a class website. On this site, I will post many assignments and several of our readings. This will help us save paper, as not everything we read needs to be printed, and it also allows students who lose assignment sheets to access another one from home. If you are reading this right now, chances are you found your way to the website, but as a review, our site is located on iTunesU, with easy access for both students and parents.

As a way to acknowledge that you and your student have read through the entire syllabus that follows this letter and understand its contents, please print and sign the final sheet of the syllabus, and have your student return it to me tomorrow.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at jason.block@d214.org or 718-5376 any time and I will get back to you promptly.

Sincerely,

Jason Block
English/Journalism Teacher
Prospect High School

iPad ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

The main purposes of using iPads in our Journalistic Writing classroom are to *increase academic engagement* and to *enhance learning*. The iPads bring a large amount of responsibility to each student. It is a privilege to possess an iPad and keyboard. The following list highlights my classroom expectations for the use of the iPad (and Bluetooth keyboard) in my class. This is a pilot program, so modifications to the expectations and use of the iPads and keyboards may evolve as the year progresses. Please take a few minutes to review the classroom expectations.

EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Be prepared.** Students *must* bring their iPads and keyboards with them to class on a **DAILY** basis. This includes having a fully charged battery. PLEASE NOTE: If a student attends class without the iPad and keyboard or with low batteries for either, the student will not be allowed to access the notes, applications, lessons, or documents related to the lesson taught that day.
- 2. Stay on task.** Students are expected to follow along with the notes, applications, resources, etc. that I use during class. Using games, Internet, or other applications unrelated to what is being taught is not permitted. (See 3 Strikes Policy.)
- 3. Be responsible.** Make sure you know where your iPad and keyboard are at all times. Take care of your iPad and keyboard. Keep them clean. Do not allow others to use them. **You** are responsible for these expensive pieces of equipment, so make good decisions regarding your iPad.

3 STRIKES POLICY

As stated above, iPads are intended to enhance student engagement and learning. Although I do not anticipate the aforementioned issues, any student who is unprepared or off task will be issued a “strike” and I will document it in my records. If a student receives a 2nd “strike”, I will notify parents/guardians and document it in my records. If a student receives a 3rd “strike”, I will suspend student use of the iPad for a period of time at my discretion/the discretion of Rudy Gomez, Technology Supervisor. Misuse of the iPad will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Cut at the line and return the portion below to Jason Block. Keep the above portion for your information.

I have read the expectations above, and agree to the terms stated.

Student name (printed)
(printed)

Parent/Guardian name

Student signature

Parent/Guardian signature

Journalistic Writing 1
2013-14 Course Syllabus
Instructor: Mr. Block
e-mail: jason.block@d214.org

My mission

To introduce you to the basics of journalism, including interviewing, writing, editing, and design.

Your mission

To give 100 percent effort on every assignment, activity, and discussion, while showing respect for me and your classmates at all times.

The rules of the game

While I don't have very many rules, the few I do have must be followed if you want to survive J1.

1. Be on time.
2. No talking while someone else (including Mr. Block) is talking.
3. Absolutely no eating will be allowed, and you may drink only water.
4. Respect everyone at all times.
5. No packing up until one minute before the bell.
 - This rule is a biggie because there is nothing more rude than shuffling around your books while we're still involved in an activity.
 - The way this rule works is this:

--> for every minute a student begins to pack up before the assigned time, **the entire class will stay after for two minutes**. No passes will be given, so best of luck getting to your next class (or bus) on time.

The tools for the job

Because we will be using iPads in this class, you will not need a binder, but always have a notebook and pen/pencil with you, as it is always a good idea to have a backup in case technological problems arise.

You will also want to have **ear buds** with you every day, as there will be a number of videos you will be watching on your iPad.

Late work: better late than never? Well, sort of

If you fail to complete an assignment, they drop one full letter grade for each day they are late and will not be accepted after one week past the original due date. However, you are encouraged to still turn it in so you learn from the assignment and show me you do care.

I feel like I'm coming down with something ...

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to pick up any assignments and/or notes you may have missed. Any worksheets or assignment sheets handed out during your absence will be filed under the date of your absence in the "absent binder" in front of the room. You will then have "x+1" days to make up the work, with "x" being the number of days you were absent.

Cheaters never prosper, and I did say "never"

This may be the most important section of the entire syllabus, as cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in my class. This applies to homework, quizzes, tests, and articles. Any cheating will result in an automatic zero on the assignment, a referral to the dean, and a call home. In addition to the usual "keep your eyes on your own paper," the most common type of cheating in an English class is plagiarism, which means using someone else's thoughts or ideas and claiming them to be your own. In addition to plagiarizing the Internet, the most blatant type of cheating in this class is attributing a quote to someone who did not say it, or misquoting a source. Simply

stated, don't do it, because I will find out, and you will have a very difficult time passing the course and you will no longer have the opportunity to be on the staff of the school newspaper, the Prospector. If you are ever concerned that what you are doing might be considered plagiarism, ask and we can discuss it.

When you type an assignment ...

All of your writing assignments done out of class will need to be typed and follow all of the following rules. If any of these are not followed, the assignment will be immediately handed back to you, and you must fix the problem and turn it back in for late credit.

1. Must be double spaced
2. Must be 12-point Times font
3. Must have 1-inch margins
4. Must have a double-spaced full heading in the upper left hand corner
 - a full heading includes your name, the name of the class ("J1"), my last name, and the date
5. Must skip one line, then type an original headline in the same size and font as the rest of the story. The headline should be centered.
6. Must skip one line, then start the story
7. No skipping lines between paragraphs; just hit "return" at the end of a paragraph, then indent the next line and keep going
8. No homonym errors on anything that is typed (their/there/they're, two/too/to, you're/your, whose/who's, whether/weather)

The all important grade

In general, your final grade will consist of the following elements:

- written articles and other homework (80%)
- weekly current events quizzes (10%)
- final project (10%)

Parents and Students

Print this page and return it to me tomorrow to indicate your awareness of the class policies and procedures.

My son/daughter _____ and I have reviewed the course outline for Journalistic Writing I. We understand the requirements of the course and the habits of work that are expected.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print clearly) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Student Name (please print clearly) _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Student ID# _____ Class Period _____

Is there any information you would like to share with me that could help me teach this student more effectively? (Notes from both parents and students are welcome.)

Please do not hesitate to e-mail or telephone me with questions or concerns. I will do my best to return your message within 24 hours.