

COURSE INFORMATION SHEET

Course Title: **Digital Communications II (Talon)**

CTE Pathway Sequence: **Arts, Media and Entertainment**

School: **LAHS**

UC/CSU requirement: **yes / yes (G/G)**

MVLA Graduation Requirement: **Practical Art**

Textbook and/or other learning resources: **various articles and other media, as assigned.**

Student Learning Outcomes:

Though students enrolled in Journalism serve the paper in a variety of roles, all students will further their understanding of journalistic methods, principles and ethics, as well as the importance of the press in a democratic society. The production component of the course is student-led, and students are as responsible to their peers as they are to the instructor.

No matter their position, all students will help collect and brainstorm future stories, and serve as a liaison between *The Talon* and the Los Altos community.

Depending on individual interests and their position on the staff, students will:

- Write in a variety of journalistic modes
- Conduct interviews and research
- Edit stories for publication
- Produce artwork, either by hand or using desktop publishing tools
- Produce a newspaper using desktop publishing technology
- Take photos for the newspaper
- Manage the newspaper's business operations

Course Outline/Units of Study/**CTE Industry Standards:**

Because of the production nature of this course, it does not follow curricular units as one might expect in many other courses on campus, including Digital Comm 1 / Intro to Journalism. Instead, students can expect to cycle through various aspects of a professional journalist's professional life, including:

- Reporting and photographing breaking stories (Standard 1.0)
- Writing to deadline (Standard 2.0)
- Managing source relationships (Standard 7.0)
- Editing their own and others' work (Standard 2.0)
- Managing deadlines for themselves and their peers (Standard 2.0)
- Writing editorials (Standard 7.0, 8.0, 9.0)
- Laying out print editions (Standard 4.0)
- Editing video for online publication (Standard 4.0)

As students get repeated practice at these skills, their work will improve and they will begin to take on more advanced assignments.

Assessment and Grading ([BP 5121](#) / [AR 5121](#)): To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning, the course instructors implement aligned grading practices and common assessments with the same frequency.

1. Grading categories and their percentage weights:

This course does not use weighted categories. Grades will be based on teacher assessment of students' work each time it is published. Students are required to publish eight times per semester. Accommodations are frequently made for students working on longer form products, or serving in editor capacities. See instructor for details.

2. Achievement evidence collected within each grading category:

Students will be informed of the aligned quantity, weight, and due dates of assignment/assessments in each grading category as much in advance as possible.

3. Grading scales:

A+	99-100	A	93-98	A-	90-92		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82		
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72		
D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62	F	0-59

In the case of borderline grades, teacher discretion (based on major assignments, general trends of improvement or contributions to classroom environment) will apply.

4. Homework/outside of class practices ([AR 6154](#)):

The majority of a student's work on their assignments will happen outside of class. Assignments for both the production of the paper and the class itself are expected to be completed before class the deadline set when the assignment is made. Missing deadlines will result in a lower grade, and habitually missing deadlines will result in a student being dismissed from the class and from the staff of *The Talon*.

5. Excused absence make up practices ([Education Code 48205\(b\)](#)):

Attendance may affect a student's grade. Do not cut class. You cannot make up work missed for unexcused absences, including quizzes and presentations. If you have an excused absence, check with your editors for what you missed. It is your responsibility to find out about make up work.

Because *The Talon* faces real print deadlines, extensions cannot always be granted, even for excused absences. If a student misses a print deadline because of an excused absence, their grade will not be penalized as long as they have communicated with the appropriate parties about their absence and the status of their assignments.

When a student's absence from school is excused, the student's teacher shall determine identical or reasonably equivalent assignments and tests to those missed during the absence which the student shall be permitted to complete for full credit within a reasonable amount of time. (Education Code 48205(b), 48225.5)

Per MVLA AR 5121: "Make-up work and late assignments are accepted within a reasonable time frame established at the course level to ensure students' equal educational opportunity."

The following absences do not require the instructor to provide make-up work:

- Unverified Unexcused (U)
- Verified Unexcused (X)
- Tardy (T)
- Tardy Truant (Y)

However, students with excessive absences will be supported to the extent possible to limit the impact of absences on the student's grades.

6. Academic integrity violation practices ([LAHS Academic Integrity Policy](#)):

Honesty, trust and integrity are vital components of the education process. The Governing Board believes that academic honesty and personal integrity are fundamental components of a student's education and character development. The Board expects that students will not cheat, lie, plagiarize or commit other acts of academic dishonesty. Students and families should understand and act upon the values of academic integrity and should encourage the highest standards of academic behavior from themselves and their peers. It is expected that all work completed for a class is original work created for that class, for a specific assignment.

Because this is a journalism program whose reputation is built on its ability to be trustworthy, violations of Academic Integrity will be dealt with in a manner stricter than the standard MVLA-LAHS Academic Integrity Policy. We have a zero-tolerance policy for such integrity violations. Students will

be dismissed from class immediately after a violation of academic or journalistic integrity. Students are reminded that any use of Artificial Intelligence (Chat GPT and others) without specific permission from the adviser and an editor is a violation of the academic integrity policy.

7. Late work practices:

Because of the production aspect of the class, late work will be graded down significantly, and work not turned in by its publication deadline will receive no credit. If a student is having problems meeting deadlines, he or she will receive one warning from the adviser. If problems continue, a meeting will be scheduled between the adviser, the student, and the student's parents to discuss the issue. If problems still persist, the student will be dismissed from staff and removed from the class.

8. Revision practices:

There are no opportunities for revision, though *The Talon's* editorial board will correct mistakes made according to standard journalist practices.

9. Extra credit practices:

Extra credit is not offered in Journalism.

10. Additional grading practices:

No additional grading practices apply to this course.

11. LMS Used:

The instructor will post some information like this CIS to Canvas, but most information students need will be available through the staff Google Drive and through the article management system on Coda.

Other Information:

Students should also refer to the *Talon Staff Manual* for more information about policies, specifically those that relate to the production of *The Talon*.

Instructor's email address:

Michael Moul

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This class is taught by Career Technical Education certified teachers in Arts, Media and Entertainment.