Syllabus for Photo Journalism
2013-14 Levels 2 - 4

General information:

Photo Journalism (focus mainly photography but includes on-line production) is divided into three levels – PJ 2 - 4. All are taught at the same time. The PJ II students begin with a more advanced camera than they used in Journalism I. According to the quality of their work, they progress to the level of a SLR camera (Canon Rebel), which requires individual settings – not automatic. The first nine weeks PJ II students will review the basic aspects of quality photography but on a more complex level. Your work is the proof of your mastery. The class is focused on recording events and activities at Westwood High School along with video. You will be asked to go as a photo/video team or as an individual to record both.

Weekly critique sessions allow you to evaluate your progress. The need for improvement in any area can result in specific assignments like *Depth of Field*. Students are taking photos for the use in the yearbook, the newspaper, the Hall TV, photos for the hall frames, and the web page. More like broadcast than the other convergence areas, photographers must work to take and produce photos on a weekly basis. Our goal in this area is to organize the thousands of photos this year (to that end I have developed a very specific way to upload photos). Students will be held accountable to follow the instructions on that page or be penalized if they do not.

Basic philosophy: Convergence is the trend of merging communication technologies that were previously separate as media boundaries lessen with the rise of the digitization of information. Journalism is the production of information based on a set of ethical principles and information the public wants to know that is going on in the community – be it local, state, national or international. The broadcast – news or sports, photo journalism, and on-line production divisions of convergence media play a unique role in this production mainly focused at informing the school community of activities and events going on in the school, but also the responsibility of bring issues to their attention as well. Following the Code of Ethics established nationally for all journalists, students report the news through video, photographs and the web on a daily basis. Because of the time restrains given to these publications after a basic foundation of skills are established, *teach through production becomes the overriding theme*. This means constantly evaluating weaknesses and looking for ways to improve our photographs.

Description of Course Objectives: photojournalism students by the end of the course will develop and understand the following basic objectives -
- **Knowledge of the camera** – important idea: "the more you know about your camera – the more you will be able to do with the camera," students need to read and study the manuals.

- **Convergence** – understand the terms and how it is applied.
- **Ethics** – knowledge of the copyright laws, know what is meant by plagiarism, and understand the ethics of journalism, especially related to doctoring photos.
- **General skills in photography -** understand the importance of deadlines and timeliness, quality production, and dedication to a final product (after using Photoshop). Also understand the purpose of constructive criticism, building leadership skills, and learn to work on group projects and as an individual.
- **Development of technical skills** – understand and apply the rules of photo composition (Rule of Thirds, angles, POV), focus, framing, and lighting. Avoid common camera mistakes (see handout). Learn and use PhotoShop to crop and adjust photos.
- **Photo Storytelling** - Understand and apply the concept of the photojournalist as a storyteller, use the idea of visual journaling in some of your work and learn to think like a reporter and a photographer at the same time.
- **Writing** – learn to write for the web combining your photographs with a brief story of an event or activity PAGES docs for the web).
- **Use of Photoshop or other editing software for photographs** – basic instruction in Bridge for downloading and either Preview or Photoshop for editing. There are strict guidelines for downloading, saving to the server and editing to follow.

Outline of Content – *The information below is presented to students the first nine weeks* and after that as needed (either individually or in a group). *Students are expected to incorporate this information in their photography. The information is reviewed as needed during the year. Again as the students produce, the work is evaluated and adjustments for improvement are made.* Photography is different than video in that once it is shot – you usually cannot go back. You must learn from mistakes and apply changes in the next activity shoot.
- Understanding the organization of the photojournalism program and its role in the Convergence Media Program by producing high quality photographs for multiple uses.
- Understand the terminology used in photography and PhotoShop production
- Understand the importance of ethical production
- Understand the various types of cameras and how each operates
- Analyze real world photographs as examples for production techniques and apply that information to your photographs
- Understand how to correctly light a shoot
- Understand and apply the elements of quality media production while shooting to your actual photographs
- Understand visual storytelling and apply that concept to shooting assignments
- Understand the elements of PhotoShop and use those elements to improve the quality of your photographs by cropping and using the enhancements
- Understand the organization and purpose of the PhotoShop interface
- Understand how to plan a photo shoot and carryout those plans

- Apply all the skills in planning, producing and photo editing to complete a quality photo production
- Evaluate your own work, take constructive criticism to improve your photographs using the techniques involved in photo composition and PhotoShop
- Avoid common mistakes in photography
- Look for new ideas to improve the quality of your shots.
- Understand the elements of writing a web story.
- Complete one page News Flash as assigned

Required Text or documents:

There is no text available for this course; so I have developed documents from a variety of sources to create information for students (See listed below) as well as books and magazines for supplementary material. In addition, we use photographs from a variety of sources to view and evaluate. We also create *How To* sheets when needed.

Required text and/or readings:
Useful Books and magazines
Popular Photography (magazine)
Top 100 Simplified Digital Photography Ideas
Digital Photo Madness/ Thom Gaines
KISS Guide to Digital Photography / Tom Ang
50 Fast Digital Camera Techniques / Gregory Georges, Larry Berman and Chris Maher
Scenic Photography 101 / Kerry Drager
Eyewitness Books – *Photography* / Alan Buckingham
Photography: An Illustrated History / Martin Sandler
Eye on Art – *Photography* / Stuart Kallen
Learn Digital Photgraphy in a Day / Arnie Abrams
The Yearbook Suite – Photographers / Walsworth Yearbooks
Handouts
Digital Photography Tips
Directions for Uploading & Working in Cavplex Server
Elements of Digital Photography
History of Photography
Kitten Photo Tips
MM General Information
MM Writing for the Web
Photographic Composition
Words You Need to Know for Photography

Course Requirements (specific projects): All students need to maintain a C average in the Convergence Media Program. Since photojournalism is a production class, students are required to produce photo projects on a weekly basis or as assigned. This means that you must sign-up for a camera and a specific shoot, take the photographs, follow the directions for uploading correctly, edit the photographs in their file, crop and

adjust your top picks and place those photos in the assignment folder for that week by Friday. Friday and weekend shoots have Monday for Friday shoots and Tuesday for weekend shoots to complete their work. *Most shooting assignments are activity orientated and require students to shoot after school*.

You must closely follow the directions for uploading – failure to do so will result in a warning the first time, 25% reduction in grade the second time and 50% reduction after that (see handout). Photojournalist's work is used in a variety of other CM productions, so following these directions is crucial.

The quality of your photos and your expertise with camera will determine when you will move from using the non-SLR camera to the SLR camera. You must have achieved "B" level work consistently on your weekly assignment to learn the SLR camera because it entails manually settings on the camera. Some photojournalists could remain with the non-SLR all year. You must learn the complexities of a SLR camera (single-lens reflex) to maximize the potential of this camera. You are also required to evaluate your work regularly and evaluate the work of others – professional photographers and/or amateurs. These assignments will be on a regular basis for all students. Photojournalists will be required to work on the web to produce photos and stories for the school webpage.

Many of the weekly assignments will require the students to create a PAGES doc with a short story and photos for support. These docs are uploaded as Westwood Flashes on the school's main webpage.

Materials needed: Students are furnished cameras to complete all assignments. Students and parents must sign a permission sheet to allow you to checkout cameras during school, after school or on the weekends. You keep your photos on the server in the photo file under your specific name.

Assignments, projects, quizzes, tests, and exams (values and frequency):
Since photography is the main focus of the course, students will continually take photos, evaluate those photos, and learn for the next week's assignment. Continual evaluation will demand a need to go over a skill or look for better ways of shooting.

- Evaluate photographs in magazines and books weekly first 9 weeks or as needed for a particular focus **(25 – 50 points per assignment)**
- Complete quizzes and/or tests related to basic information on photography **(start of school / 2 – 3 quizzes and a final test / 5- quiz to 1 test / quizzes 50 – 75 points, major – 200 points)**
- **Shoot and edit weekly photo shoots (100 pts), major portion of your grade**
- Shoot and edit special photo assignments **(100 pts)**
- Help with additional projects as needed (entire project or an aspect)
- Evaluate your work and establish goals for improvement
- Complete photography/web assignment (PAGES docs as needed)
- First Semester Exam – students prepare their Best 25 Photos in a Keynote presentation with music, an oral presentation and a written evaluation of your

semester's work – how their work has progressed and where they need to focus their photographic development second semester.
- Develop their own portfolio for the year (final exam – all students)

Grading Scale:
Process & Product
There is a degree of process and product in photography although product is most important. However, if you do not have a quality photo to work with, the product is not going to be outstanding. The process refers to the actual shooting assignment and the product refers to the final photographs. Process is the raw photos before editing in PhotoShop. The final product should be edited – cropped and adjusted for the best quality possible. Students that do not edit their photographs will receive a point deduction, especially if the photo could be improved through editing.

Evaluation
An evaluation rubric is used for weekly shoots. Each weekly shoot is worth 100 points. Special shoots to practice a certain skill could be from 100 – 200 points. These photos will be evaluated using the sheet but in addition, reflect on the concept - did the student understand and produce quality photos related to the specific assignment (ex. – depth of field).

Deadlines
Part of this grade is deadlines – did you keep to the deadlines established above. You must learn to plan so at the end of the week, you are not missing that week's assignment.

Student Portfolio
You should be building a portfolio with the Best of your photos in their folder under the Photo file on the server. Students must develop a 25 photo project for their exam on Keynote.

Additional Information:
Convergence Media classes are an academic elective. **Students need to maintain a C average in the program.** CM follows the State Grading Scale.

Grading Scale:
A	93-100
B	85-92
C	76-84
D	70-77
F	69 & below

Richland District II and Convergence Media Policies:
All students will be held accountable to the Academic Integrity Policy of Richland
District II. Students are also accountable for the district's Acceptable Use Policy for
computers. Students and parents must also give permission for students to use
Convergence Media equipment.

Teacher: Lynn Washington
General school number: 691-4049
Email: lwashing@richland2.org

Please sign below and return the detached portion to Mrs. Washington –

_____

I have read and understand the above information:

Parent's name:

Student's Name:

Date: