



Decatur News Network – Communication Arts Expectations and Syllabus

Welcome to the Decatur News Network!!! Throughout this semester, instruction will be based on objectives of the Maryland College and Career- Ready Standards. In addition, students in Communication Arts will have a final assessment at the end of the semester.

The class was restructured and rebranded in Fall of 2017 with a new focus primarily on Broadcast Journalism. Due to this new restructure, there are three levels to the course with each level focusing on different aspects of television and film. The levels are as follows:

- **Level 1:** Semester long, students in Level 1 will learn about television news and broadcast journalism. Students will be exposed to the history of Broadcast Journalism while focusing on the innerworkings of a television studio. They will learn how to create News Packages as seen on news networks both locally and nationally. In addition to this, students will learn video editing software, fair use guidelines, broadcast equipment use, and more. After a full semester and approval from the News Director, students will move on to Level 2.
- **Level 2:** Semester long, students in Level 2 will expand on what they learned in Level 1 while focusing on the various techniques used in television and film for a specific purpose. Students will cover a Human-Interest Story, create original Public Service Announcements, and Commercials, while also looking into more creative projects such as a music video. After a semester and approval from the News Director, students will move on to Level 3.
- **Level 3:** Semester long, once students have successfully completed both Level 1 and 2 of Communication Arts, students will move on to the art of film and television. During this time, students will analyze both television shows and movies, with their final project being a 30 to 60-minute feature film (can either be from a script or documentary); a mini-series made for television or streaming platform, or a weekly talk show. Students will be responsible for writing, directing, and producing their final works.

A student's placement in a certain level is based on several factors. All new students to DNN are placed in Level 1 and will only move on to the next level once permitted by the News Director, Mr. Thompson.

General Class Procedures:

- You will need something to write with AND your iPad every day.
- You are required to **attend all zoom classes and answer the daily warm-up question**. Both will be used for attendance purposes as well as daily participation points.
- We will be holding zoom classes multiple times a week, but there will also be some asynchronous days where the zoom class will be optional. This gives everyone a chance to work on assignments while providing time to conference individually if needed.
- DO NOT enter the office area unless you are invited to do so. The Editing Room is strictly off-limits.
- A "Morning Meeting" will take place at the beginning of class, directly after the morning announcements. During this time, announcements will be discussed and graded, a lesson will be taught, a survey of progression will be conducted, and story ideas will be "pitched" to the teacher and students.
- You will be charged a fee for materials not returned or damaged.

Overall Expectations for the Semester:

Studio Rules –

- Food and Drinks are not permitted by the computers or video equipment.
- Cell phones are not to be out or in use unless it pertains to an assignment and you are given permission.
- You are expected to be working. At times, you will be expected to go out into the school building and into the community to complete assignments in a timely manner. Evidence of completed work will be expected upon your return to class. **Make positive choices when leaving the classroom. If you cannot be trusted, you will do work from a textbook, and will not leave the room.**
- No student has permission to leave school unless prior permission is granted. It is a privilege, not a right.
- Attendance is extremely important for the completion of projects, and excessive lateness will impact your grade significantly.
- Respect is required from all persons. Learning new skills requires risk taking. Please be tolerant of supportive as we all learn and practice our Broadcast Journalism skills together.

Announcements – In a typical year, it is our responsibility to report the announcements each and every school day unless otherwise noted. However, due to various reasons, we will not be holding announcements during class this semester. There might be a chance that students are able to pre-record the announcements, but that will be discussed later on.

Process/Procedure –

- Normally, students would be working in groups of 2 or 3 on certain assignments, but due to the hybrid model and current COVID protocol, work will be completed individually.
- You will be expected to complete multiple news packages throughout the semester along with additional videos pertaining to specific themes. You will be working on these each and every day. This is very much a student-led class, with the teacher offering assistance and knowledge as needed. Make sure your work is clean, clear, and creative.
- You must “sign out” the equipment each time you use it. Use the chalk to write your name and date on the back of the camera cubby door. ***While virtual, you will be using your iPads to capture footage and edit footage.***
- You **MUST** sign out and back in each time you leave the room (once permission is granted) using the book by the door. Failure to do so will result in loss of privileges.
- You must return to class at least 10 minutes prior to the bell. Failure to do so will result in a referral.

Professionalism –

- Behavior problems while on assignment for DNN or other discipline issues may be cause for loss of privileges. If this happens, you will work from a textbook.
- Do not make plans to miss class to do something for another class or teacher without prior approval from me.
- Please be on time for class and for scheduled interviews and events. Being punctual = Being professional.
- It is imperative that you know and understand how to act in a professional manner. When you are out in the school and community, you are representing the class, the school, and the county. I want you to think of this class as an internship; this is not simply a class but a job that you have signed up for. As a representative of the school, you will be watched, critiqued, and evaluated on your behavior and appearance.
- You are expected to dress in a professional manner each day you are going out in the community and into the school.
 - **For Men:** Khakis and ties **are not** mandatory, but a nice polo or button-down shirt is. You should always wear clean and presentable clothing.
 - **For Women:** Do not rush out and buy a pants suit, this is not necessary. You should however dress in a conservative manner, a nice top and presentable jeans or shorts
 - If you wish to keep a nice shirt or two in the room, please see me. If you are not dressed appropriately, you will not leave the school.

Grading:

Participation: 10 points per day / 50 points per full week

Homework: Weekly assignments and School Events (Various amounts)

Classwork and Projects: Varying Amounts

Quizzes and Tests: Varying Amounts

Final Exam: TBA

If at any time you have questions about your grade in class, I will be happy to discuss them with you. It is important to keep all papers and materials that are graded so that if there is a dispute, you will have proof of your grade.

Homework: Students will be expected to complete assignments outside of the classroom, but these assignments will be kept to a minimum. Students will have a weekly broadcast assignment where they watch and analyze a full 30-minute broadcast. Students will be notified when these are due.

Remind: We do have a class remind that you are expected to sign up for. Information for the remind can be found on Schoology. I will use the class remind to push out information regarding announcements and assignments, while also using it to reach out to check in individually. You are expected to use Remind to message me if you are running late to school, have questions about assignments, and to contact me if needed.

Absence: Students may be absent from class for illness or emergencies. It is expected that *students will be responsible for getting and completing all of their missed assignments*. County policy mandates deadlines for absent work unless other arrangements are made with the teacher. Please refer to your agenda if you are unclear of the policies sent in place. Note: Students will be working in groups throughout the semester, missed classes can negatively impact your work and the work of your group.

Communication: Parents and Guardians are always welcome to phone or email the teacher. Students are also encouraged to arrange to speak with the teacher before or after school for individual conferences and assistance. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 410-632-2968 (direct line to DNN Studio) or by email at DJThompson@worcesterk12.org.

Classroom Protocol

1. Be Present!

Arrive at or before your designated report time as stated above. Attendance is vital any missed class results in a loss of these points, even if excused.

Turn off and turn in your cell phones. Place phones face down on the table in front of you during lessons and activities.

Tune in and tune out other work. Work on assignments for my class; do not work on class assignments during lessons and activities.

2. Be Prepared!

Bring all materials to class that you will need to complete your assignments.
Take care of all water and bathroom needs prior to the start of class.

3. Be Respectful!

Respect yourself, your peers, your teacher, and the studio. Only one person speaks at a time.
Use appropriate language – no foul language, slang, or derogatory statements.

4. Be Awesome!

Do not limit yourself!

Participate in the class – no sleeping, lethargy, or whining.

Follow school rules outlined in the agenda.

Respect the classroom environment, as I strive to keep the room comfortable. I would appreciate it if you leave it as you found it, or better.

General Information:

Cell Phones: There is a countywide and school wide cell phone policy. This policy states that cell phones are not to be used as a communication device between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:40 p.m. As stated in the classroom protocols, all cellphones must be placed face down on the table during instruction and activities. Any student who uses his/her phone during instructional times will have their phone confiscated and locked away until the end of the day, and will receive an office referral for non-compliance. There will be times that cell phones can be used for instructor-approved classwork, and you will be informed of these times.

Students Making Up Work Missed: We live by deadlines in this class, and work time is calculated for each assignment. You are expected to make each deadline, yet communication is key. If you find that you need more time on a certain assignment, you **MUST** reach out to me and formally ask for an extension, at least 24 hours before the due date. Late work will be accepted up to two weeks past the due date, with a deduction of points taking place each day it is late. Any assignment turned in after the two weeks will be marked as a 50%, while assignments not turned in at all will be given a score of 0%.

Additional Notes: Again, I want you to think of this course as an Internship, but that also means you need to think of this course as a job. You can be fired from DNN if you are not representing the class properly or producing the quality of work expected by Mr. Thompson and the school. This is an elective course, you do not have to take it, so it is a privilege that you are here. There is a lot expected from you. This is a News Network, so we will report stories that relate to our audience. We will **not** be covering political stories unless they directly relate to the school.

It is important to remember that **“we do not make the news, we report the news”**.



After reading the syllabus, **please sign and submit to Mr. Thompson by Tuesday, February 9, 2021.** It is suggested and recommended that the syllabus be kept in a binder or safe place so that you can refer to it as needed throughout the semester.

I have read the above syllabus, expectations, and procedures and I understand what is expected of me this semester in my Communication Arts Class and as part of the Decatur News Network.

(Student Name – Print)

(Student Signature)

(Date)

I have read the above syllabus, expectations, and procedures and I understand what is expected of my student in his/her Communication Arts Class and as part of the Decatur News Network.

(Parent/Guardian Name – Print)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)