TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Honors Journalism and Media Studies 5-6 (JAM 5-6)**

**Overview Information**

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| Title of Course: **Honors Journalism Arts & Media 5-6 (JAM 5-6)** | |
| Course Author(s): **Erin Schneider** | Schools where the course will be taught: **Redwood** |
| Length of Course: **1 year** | Subject Area and Discipline: **Non-Dept.** |
| Grade Levels: **11-12** | Is this course an integrated course? **no** |
| Is this course being submitted for possible UC honors designation? **yes** | Are you seeking UC approval? If so, in what area (A-G)? **UC "G" elective** |
| Prerequisites (required or recommended): **Yes, earlier JAM 1-2 and JAM 3-4** | Co-requisites (required or recommended): **Yes, JAM 3-4 and JAM 5-6 co-exist in classes to diversify the program and allow for leadership** |
| If there are prerequisites for the course, please include a justification as to why they are in place: Journalism ethics and AP style writing are taught in first-year course; Advanced writing and editing are covered in the 2nd year course; The third year includes outside publishing opportunities and leading others in the student newsroom with positions of editor-in-chief, head copy editor and senior staff writer. | |
| Check all that apply:<br>☑ UC A-G course<br>❑ Graduation Requirement ( specify the requirement this course meets)<br>☑ Elective<br>☑ Honors/AP<br>☑ CTE | |

**Introduction to the Course**

Journalism and Media Studies Leadership 5-6 (JAM 5-6) is a CTE capstone course that marks students' successful completion of the pathway's introduction and concentrator courses alongside strong student interest to lead by example, manage the student publications, and facilitate publishing opportunities with community partners.

JAM 5-6 students take on roles such as Editor-in-Chief, Head Copy Editor, and Senior Staff Writer. By the end of this three-course sequence, students will have built a comprehensive portfolio that showcases their skills development in journalistic writing, publication, and production with a career

examination and preparation component to be submitted to the national "Journalist of the Year" (JOY) competition. Successful pathway completion is marked by CTE certification and graduation sash.

JAM 5-6 students make decisions regarding which content will be published online, on social media, and/or in print as well as in community partnerships such as The Marin IJ, PBS Student Reporting Labs & Marin Living. They also enjoy the freedom to work on a "senior staff project" that explores a topic relevant to them personally and their readers.

**Diversity and Representation:**
JAM courses integrate various elements that assure an inclusive, affirming environment while connecting to broader aspects of diversity, representation, and real-world relevance. Here's how the course addresses these aspects:

1. Assures an inclusive course:
    - The curriculum is designed to be inclusive by actively engaging students from diverse backgrounds in creating content that reflects their experiences and viewpoints. This is done starting with story planning, a process that encourages students to explore and represent diverse cultures, identities, and perspectives.
    - Feedback and discussion sessions are structured to be respectful and constructive, promoting an environment where all students feel valued and supported in expressing their views.
2. Allows for a variety of perspectives:
    - Students are encouraged to conduct interviews and research on a broad range of subjects, including underrepresented communities and topics. This not only helps bring multiple perspectives into classroom discussions but also to readers through publications.
    - The coverage audit assignment outlines gaps in coverage for certain demographics. (See semester 2)
3. Supports understanding of group identities:
    - Assignments often involve seeking out stories that explore and explain different group identities, such as cultural, racial, gender, or socioeconomic backgrounds. Hearing these stories from first-hand sources helps students develop a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of various identities.
4. Values collectivism:
    - The course emphasizes collaborative projects where students work together in teams to produce media pieces. This fosters a sense of community and purpose, as students must rely on and support each other to succeed.
5. Evolves with current trends:
    - Curriculum content is continuously updated to reflect current events and trends in media, ensuring that the material is relevant to today's societal context. This helps students see the direct connection between their learning and the world around them. The classroom serves as a space to process disturbing, exciting, or breaking news events.
6. Offers relevant activities:

- Projects and assignments are often centered around issues that directly affect students' communities or are of interest to their generation. This approach helps to ensure that the learning is not only academic but also personally significant.

7. Addresses current issues:
    - Students engage with current issues through media analysis, reporting, and content creation. This includes examining how different media outlets cover the same events or topics, which builds critical thinking and media literacy skills. Students also build on these news pegs to craft relevant pieces with a Redwood angle.
8. Connects teaching and the student:
    - Adviser(s) draw connections between the content taught and the students' personal experiences. This personalized approach helps to deepen students' engagement and understanding of the material.
9. Links college and career readiness and the grad profile:
    - The course prepares students for both higher education and careers in journalism and related fields by developing essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and ethical reasoning. It also includes direct interactions with professionals and real-world media practices to enhance college and career readiness. Finally, it offers summer program opportunities (free and paid) for students who wish to continue to practice in their free time.

**UC Approval**

UC's A-G subject requirements are fulfilled in this course as students refine their media literacy skills through rigorous engagement with both data journalism and advanced media production while adding a leadership competent of teaching others. They learn to identify the purpose, audience, and underlying arguments in diverse media formats, crucial for creating impactful journalistic content. Additionally, they are composing sustained arguments based on detailed textual analysis: pre-writing, drafting, revising; expressing complex and interrelated ideas with clarity and a mature, sophisticated style; showcase work in a variety of technological platforms.

**Semester 1**

**Summary:**

In the first semester, students step into key leadership roles within the program, such as Editor-in-Chief and Head Copy Editor, and are tasked with welcoming and supporting the JAM 1 students as "Cubbies."(This is an industry term for young journalists still being trained.) This semester focuses on the development of leadership skills necessary for managing a student news organization effectively. Students are responsible for making editorial decisions, overseeing the publication process, and ensuring the quality of both online and print media. They learn advanced journalistic ethics and law, refine their skills in writing editorial policies, and handle real-world challenges in media management.

The real-world connections present themselves as collaborations with community partners like The Marin IJ, PBS Student Reporting Labs, and Marin Living, providing students with practical experience in professional publishing environments.

**Outcomes:**
Students will demonstrate their ability to mentor incoming students, manage teams, and lead by example in a dynamic newsroom environment; they will make informed editorial decisions that shape the content and direction of both online and print media; and they will engage in meaningful collaborations with community partners such as The Marin IJ, PBS Student Reporting Labs, and Marin Living.

They will also pitch a process change or addition to the program, which will be voted on in a democratic process and implemented during the year. This likely happens after a conference or other industry learning experience, where the class is introduced to journalism concepts, such as beat reporting or recent layout trends.

**Semester 1 Standards:**
**CTE Anchor Standards**
2.2 Staffers are expected to learn, practice, and master industry language throughout the course.

2.5 Examine the importance of establishing a professional social media presence for the purpose of career-related networking.

1.4 Apply principles of art, design, and composition to page design for print (i.e., contrast, movement, color theory, scale, visual hierarchy, symmetry, anatomy, perspective, form, positive and negative space, etc.)[1]

2.1 Understand how to effectively code-switch between interviewees/ professionals and students, (shy and confident interviewees as well,) communicate information- clearly communicating the rights of the interviewee to them and how the interview process will go along with the story angle, and clearly articulate ideas in different types of professional and educational environments.

2.4 Speak extemporaneously and professionally when interviewing and/or presenting creative work.

4.1 Practice internet safety, identify malicious activity (i.e., phishing, malware, etc.), discern, and avoid misinformation and keep personal information private.

4.2 Use standard business software to create documents and presentations, share files, and connect with collaborators and clients.

4.7 Explore applications, implications, and ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in creative industries. Use AI responsibly to generate story ideas; perform initial background research (to be fact-checked) and synonyms for headlines.

5.1 Use inductive and deductive reasoning to solve problems and make informed decisions when story planning and balancing multiple stories, interviewing, and adapting an angle.

6.6 Build a workplace culture that mitigates discriminatory practices through regular adviser debriefing, editor meetings, and mediaation with peers after conflict.

7.3. Demonstrate independent initiative and work ethic through interviewing, writing, reporting, and editing.

8.5 Understand how individual and collective biases influence decision-making.

9.3 Respond thoughtfully to diverse and/or divergent perspectives.

[1] Course is designed to expand on arts education and support career-readiness for students interested in pursuing careers in related fields (rather than replace arts courses.)

10.4 Collaborate with industry experts for specific technical knowledge and skills.

DC.17.3 Write outlines, scripts, and interview questions to develop a program and prepare to interview guests about topics of interest.

**CTE Pathway Standards**
A1.6 Compare and analyze artwork done using electronic media with those done with materials traditionally used in the visual arts.

B9.2 Demonstrate effective knowledge and skills with the audiovisual equipment and technology used in professional performance.

C7.6 Demonstrate understanding of the distribution component of both live and media-based production including Web, print, radio, television, and communication-based options.

D7.7 Evaluate game journalism and professional reviews in terms of bias.

D9.1 Demonstrate personal and interpersonal skills appropriate for the workplace, such as responsibility, dependability, punctuality, positive attitude, initiative, respect for self and others, and professional dress.

See all standards for the full JAM 1-6 program here.

**Sample Assignments:**
Media Literacy Example: mini- lesson
Change Project: presentation
Students identify a problem within their student newsroom and design a research-based, actionable plan to address it. Each student (or pair) presents a written proposal and slideshow outlining their solution, including steps for implementation. This project supports standards through critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, formal writing, oral presentation, and real-world application of communication skills.

**Sample Unit Assessment:**
Matrix of assignments and positions

**Semester 2**

**Semester Summary:**
In the second semester, students may choose to continue with the regularly scheduled 4 news cycles or to work on a "senior staff project," which allows them to explore a journalism topic of personal and public interest deeply. This project is designed to synthesize their journalistic skills and personal viewpoints, contributing significantly to their professional portfolio. At the final exam, students give a dissertation of their project and showcase the visuals to their peers.

As in semester 1, the real-world connections of this semester are strengthened through ongoing collaborations with community partners like The Marin IJ, PBS Student Reporting Labs, and Marin Living, providing students with practical experience in professional publishing environments. This semester sets the stage for a culmination of their journalistic education, aiming to refine their abilities to lead, publish, and impact their community critically.

A final "Journalist of the year" portfolio, judged by the Journalism Education Association (JEA) is submitted

along with other contest entries for the national and local competitions.

**Outcomes:**
Students will have the option to engage with the standard news cycle or to select a "senior staff project" that allows them to deeply explore a journalism topic of personal and public interest. (For those choosing the senior staff project, students will synthesize their accumulated journalistic skills with personal viewpoints to create comprehensive, in-depth journalistic works. Students will prepare and deliver a dissertation-style presentation of their projects, which includes showcasing associated visuals.) Seniors in JAM 3 will also lead a group feature, including voting on an important topic, creating guiding questions, and assigning each student to their chosen contribution. Topics could range from Marin County's farmers' markets and surfer culture to gun control or a current war. (See example in sample assignments below.)

Students will continue to collaborate with community partners such as The Marin IJ, PBS Student Reporting Labs, and Marin Living.

By leading projects and making editorial decisions, students will demonstrate their ability to influence and shape public discourse through media. This includes managing projects that potentially impact community perspectives, such as reports on Board decisions and ballot outcomes, and contributing to local and wider media landscapes.

**Semester 2 Standards:**
**CTE Anchor Standards**
1.0 Analyze and apply appropriate academic standards required for successful industry sector pathway completion leading to postsecondary education and employment.
2.2 Staffers are expected to learn, practice, and master industry language throughout the course.

2.5 Examine the importance of establishing a professional social media presence for career-related networking.

1.4 Apply principles of art, design, and composition to page design for print (i.e., contrast, movement, color theory, scale, visual hierarchy, symmetry, anatomy, perspective, form, positive and negative space, etc.)[2]

2.1 Understand how to effectively code-switch between interviewees/ professionals and students, (shy and confident interviewees as well,) communicate information- clearly communicating the rights of the interviewee to them and how the interview process will go along with the story angle, and articulate ideas in different types of professional and educational environments.

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6.6 Build a workplace culture that mitigates discriminatory practices through regular adviser debriefing, editor meetings, and mediation with peers after conflict.

7.3. Demonstrate independent initiative and work ethic through interviewing, writing, reporting and editing.

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**Sample Assignments:**

Group Feature on voted topic: Gun Control Example; Final Product
Senior Staff Project: folder

**Sample Assessment:**
EIC reflection
Senior Staff Feedback
Head Copy reflection
Matrix of rubrics by position or story

**Recommended Texts and Resources:**

The New York Times
The SF Chronicle
The Marin Independent Journal
The Atlantic
San Quentin News
Motivos- bilingual magazine, student written
TUHSD student publications: The Pitch, Tam News
League of Denial
The Upshot
Nonfiction Academy Award-nominated short documentaries
TUHSD Board Minutes
CA Healthy Kids data
Pew Research
GlobalIssues.org
NABJ
SPLC

**Board Approval Date:1/14/2025**
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**UC (a,b,c,d,e,f) Approval Date: 3/27/25**