Each of you will be responsible for posting to our class blog, http://drakej70.wordpress.com/, three times this semester. Your posts must be related to newspapers, magazines, editing or journalism in some way. You could post something about news coverage, the magazine industry, grammar, law and ethics, multimedia, accuracy, useful sites, social media, career advice, etc. The topic – as long as it is journalism-related – is fairly broad. For examples, browse the class blog for posts from last fall and spring.

You should:

- have a point. Your main point should be interesting, timely and relevant to our class. The narrower the topic, the better.

- include your byline.

- write short. You are blogging, not writing an essay. "Write tight and be quick," writes Mark Briggs. "Get to your point immediately and get out of there."

- write well. Be engaging, compelling and conversational. Online readers want lively writing and a distinctive voice. Of course, your post must be mechanically sound, too: grammar, spelling, AP style, usage and punctuation matter.

- give your blog a dead-clear entry title. Resist the urge to be clever or flippant. Most people don't read online; they skim impatiently. If it isn't immediately clear from the title what you're writing about, readers won't linger. Think about how your headline will appear in an RSS feed, and how it competes for attention.

- be original. Don't copy and paste from another blog or website. That is plagiarism and will result in failing this class and in recommended expulsion from the SJMC. You may, of course, quote or use short excerpts from others, but you must make clear what material is quoted and who is speaking. Use quotes and excerpts sparingly, to help you make a larger point.

- advance your topic. Don't merely regurgitate what others are saying or assemble a list of links. Explore a topic, find out something new, form an opinion, take a stand. Add value for the reader. Nudge the conversation along. Do some research and analyze what you discover.

- write with keywords in mind. Use simple words and phrases, and repeat them. Put yourself in the mind of a Google searcher. What words might someone search for, if looking for information on your topic? Use those words early and often. Include them in your headline.

- open your post with "Posted by [your name]" using the Heading 5 format.

- include a "Read More" tag if your post runs longer than a few short paragraphs.

- be "skimmer friendly." People scan before they decide to read. Vary sentence length; favor shorter sentences and paragraphs; use bulleted or numbered lists; block quotes; and headings. Use one space, not two, between sentences. Double-space between paragraphs.

- include pictures. The Web is a highly visual medium. Use pictures, video and graphics in your posts. **Do not violate copyrights.** Merely giving credit is insufficient; you must have explicit permission to use copyrighted material. An alternative is to use royalty-free images or images licensed under Creative Commons. Images should link to originating sites.

- add tags and categorize your blog. Include your name as a tag so we can search for your posts easily. Also tag your blogs "blog 1," "blog 2," etc. Select the "Student Posts" category.

- include links. They must be meaningful, credible and relevant. But don't litter your post with too many. Use good judgment. Use relevant phrases for links; avoid using "click here" or "can be found here" as in-text links. Use short links, not long strands of words.

- include a departure point for reader comments and discussion. Ask a provocative question, ask for help, or solicit opinions. "What do you think?" is **not** a good springboard.

- keep the conversation going. A blog is not one-way or even two-way communication. It's a circular conversation. Respond to comments and moderate the give-and-take. Give readers a sense of participation. If the conversation becomes dominated by the audience rather than by you, you've succeeded.

- post by 6 p.m. on your day. **Any post that misses deadline will receive 0 points.** You may post early.

- promote your post. Use Twitter (using the #J70 hashtag), Digg, Delicious, Facebook and other social media to drive traffic. Don't tweet "Check out my blog post!" Rather, give your followers an idea of what your post is about. Example: "Why can't MSNBC find a black journalist?"

- make sure your post portrays you as intelligent, thoughtful and competent. A future employer might read it. Make that a good thing.

- turn in a hard copy printout of your post to me during the class that follows your deadline.

- **Read your classmates' posts.** Partake in the conversation. Comment, link, respond, inquire. No one likes to shout into the wind. Part of your course grade is determined by the level of your engagement with the blog.

You should not:

- plagiarize. Limited excerpts, fully credited and linked to the originating site, are fine. Never, ever represent someone else's writing as your own, even accidentally. If in doubt, overattribute.

- violate copyright

- miss your deadline or ask for an extension. You have the deadline schedule in late January for a reason.

- post on a topic someone has already posted about. Read and comment on the blog regularly; know what your classmates have written about.

Each blog post will be worth 25 points, based on the above criteria.

The grading rubric and the posting schedule follow.