

Newspaper Reporting Project for *The Soloist*: draft rev. 4/22/09

***The Soloist*: Projected Course Outcomes:**

Students will become familiar with *The Soloist* by being newspaper reporters and covering various aspects of mental health issues and themes related to the book.

1. Understand new journalism and technology as it relates to today's demise of the newspaper print industry
2. Skills in planning and conducting face-to-face interviews
3. Develop skills in critical thinking
4. Write from a journalistic perspective. Students will draft, revise, edit, and publish different types of newspaper articles related to *The Soloist*
5. Publish and design a web-based newspaper and for a small distribution at freshman celebration fall '09
6. Knowledge of major mental health issues

Possible interviews: (all articles will be peer reviewed and class members will weigh in on interview questions and strategies)

NOTE: The faculty member should make initial contact with potential persons/organizations to be interviewed over the summer break.

- a. National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) San Fernando Valley: 818.994.6747
- b. Office of State Assembly member---Cindy Montanez: 818. 838.3939
- c. Office of State Senator----Richard Alarcon: 818.901.5588
- d. Daniel's Place: Mental Health Program for teens and young adults (Santa Monica, CA)
- e. CSUN Department of Music (focus on CSUN student studying classical music)
- f. Art Heals-- Step-Up-On-Second---a mission to assist individuals living with mental illness through art: 310.394.6889
- g. Dr. Elyn Saks, USC Dean , law professor, and author of memoir: *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness* (professor has severe mental illness disorder) 213.740.7572
- h. CSUN Counseling Center
- i. CSUN Department of Cinema and Television Arts (focus on student film major)

Possible formats for completed newspaper article/project:

- a. Opinion article
- b. Editorial article
- c. *The Soloist*: Film critique
- d. *The Soloist*: Book review
- e. CSUN *Daily Sundial* (focus on student journalism major)

- f. Photography: Beethoven statue, Music Center, downtown L.A. Skid row area , the Lamp program, Third St. Tunnel, U100 group picture

***The Soloist*: Focused Course Themes**

- Explore the following building blocks of character: trust, compassion, and friendship
- Understand the dynamics of social exclusion

Collaborative panel presentations:

Present a collaborative group discussion emphasizing themes from *The Soloist*. Suggested panel discussions will include some of the following topics:

- a. Should people who have a severe mental illness be allowed to determine if they need to be hospitalized?
- b. Is society doing enough for citizens with mental illness?
- c. Why does Los Angeles have the largest population of homeless and mentally disabled people in the United States?
- d. Can the arts help mentally ill people?
- e. Criminalization of the mentally ill
- f. Can mentally ill people lead successful lives?
- g. Treatment of mentally ill in another country/or culture
- h. How can society protect itself against violent mentally disturbed people?
- i. Why is there a seeming upsurge of violent crimes committed by mentally ill people?
- j. Eliminating the stigma of mental illness
- k. Celebrities and mental disorders
- l. Children and mental disorders
- m. Exercise and mental disorders
- n. Society's responsibility to the mentally ill
- o. The elderly and mental illness
- p. The US as a compassionate/uncompassionate society
- q. New strategies for treating mental illness
- r. Substance abuse and the mentally ill
- s. The Second Amendment
- t. Dynamics of social exclusion
- u. Elements of character as they relate to *The Soloist*

Project groups of three to four students will be formed during the second week of classes.