

The Ursuline School Model United Nations Conference

PRESS CORPS

Background Guide

Hello delegates!

Welcome to TUSMUNC III! I know that like many things recently, this year's conference will look a little on the unusual side, but I'm so excited to get the chance to meet you all and run out our press corps simulation -- whether in person or otherwise. For some returning delegates, you may remember that last November was TUSMUNC's first year providing a press corps committee (the format for committee I personally hold closest to my heart). This year, while the set-up will be slightly different in order to adapt to our new conference environment, the main goals remain the same: to uncover the power of writing in affecting large-scale change, to harness the skills needed to affect such change, and to decide for yourselves where exactly this immense power needs applying. In this writing intensive committee, you will receive feedback on various rhetorical pieces, learn to prepare drafts and final copies of work in a quick-paced environment, be assisted in adapting to written assignments where information is oftentimes limited and rapidly evolving, and understand how to captivate audiences both large and small. If that sounds a little daunting, know that we'll be pretty good at multitasking in Press Corps, and that you'll always have assistance at the ready if you find yourself needing any help understanding or executing an assignment. It should also be noted that the press corps committee at TUSMUNC **does not** require the submission of written position papers. Research on your individual reporting committee, however, is still strongly encouraged.

Again, please feel free to reach out for help if you are ever at a loss or struggling to complete an assignment, whether that be on the day of the conference or even in these next few weeks, while you're preparing research. Myself and the rest of the staff would love to help out, especially since being a high schooler is honestly not as cool as people make it out to be, and hearing from you guys is such a highlight for us in our pre-conference preparation. I've found that JMUN kids in general have such a special energy about them, and I hope you all use this smaller, more skill-honing committee arrangement to come out of your shells a little bit and embrace some aspects you love about MUN that aren't as emphasized in typical committee format. Good luck with preparation--can't wait to see you all so soon!

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What is journalism?

Journalism is the lynchpin of a democratic society. Journalists aid with the gathering, analyzing, and dispersing of factual information. When the rest of society is able to digest this information, they're given the chance to react, either positively or negatively. Thus, journalists have always been instrumental in effecting change over the course of history, with countless revolts and wars being started over news reports and the information they contain.

Around the world, journalists are faced with different challenges due to the social and political climates they are reporting in. In many places, the safety of journalists is threatened, purely because they release sensitive information to the public. In America, journalists are privileged with freedom of the press, meaning that the government is unable to place restrictions upon or forcefully edit news releases. However, this isn't a universal phenomenon: a 2017 study showed that only thirteen percent of the countries internationally actually have a free press. These unjust situations continue to threaten the wellbeing of both the journalists and the public: journalists get killed for spreading information while citizens are forced into oblivion by their oppressive governments.

For the purpose of the committee, every delegate will operate as if they are working under a free press, keeping in mind the unique responsibility a free press organization operates under.

Goals of Committee

Delegates in Press Corps will have two major agenda throughout the course of the conference: to advance their respective news organization and to affect palpable change in other committees. These should go hand-in-hand – when delegates publish well-written and relevant material, they will instantly increase the popularity of their organization. The more linguistically savvy and pertinent to committee a piece is, the more likely it is to be distributed to members of other committees. Once in circulation, pieces have the power to change minds, reveal truths, and alter the course of the receiving-committee. It should also be noted that the popularity of newspapers will be determined by a few factors, including the overall quality of the piece, relevance of the content being discussed, and how loyal the work is to the delegate's position (factors here include writing for your target audience, adhering to your organization's stylistic preferences, backing the established political positions of your newspaper, etc.). Delegates should aim to publish at least one cover story per committee session, time-permitting.

Format of Committee

Committee will take place in a different fashion than the expected format for a crisis or GA committee, with more delegate freedoms and a larger need for initiative than in typical committee format. Delegates will have workstations set up inside of the central press corps headquarters where they will work on papers and hold conferences with members of other committees. Delegates will also have the option to attend unmoderated caucuses, debates, and trials for the committees they've been assigned to report on. The two-delegate arrangement for press organizations will also allow for one member of your newspaper to attend any ongoing sessions you would like to report on, while the other can keep working on articles, interviewing witnesses, etc. Delegates can filter in and out of press HQ as frequently as necessary, granted that they have been given permission or are accompanied by a member of the Press Corps Staff. It is up to individual delegate parties to decide what information needs to be collected, which delegates need to be interviewed, what topics would be appealing to readers, and which events need to be shared with the general public. So as long as a clear initiative is shown, the delegates of the Press Corps have permission to go basically anywhere and meet with anyone.

Delegates of crisis committees will be given notecards that will allow them to arrange meetings and request articles from the Press Corps. You can choose to accept or deny a meeting/assignment, but we do recommend an initial meet-up with delegates before rejecting an alliance or commission offer.

Crisis updates will serve as press conferences, and since delegates are the representatives of their news organizations, attendance at these updates is mandatory. However, only one representative from each paper needs to be in attendance for each update, so if the news organization you are a part of needs to be working on another assignment at the same time, one

delegate may stay behind at headquarters while the other attends the announcement. Delegates will also always be informed when unmoderated caucuses are taking place, so they can interview and make any additional announcements, but attendance during unmods is not a requirement.

Delegates may also sit in on moderated caucus **if given permission by committee chair**.

Photos will not be a part of this Press Corps committee. Drawings, however, are strongly encouraged to provide a visual representation for your piece, and will be greatly appreciated by the chairs. Some things you can in fact do in committee (although you are not limited to this list) are written below. Once again, pretty much anything goes, but here are a few good starters and suggestions for the committee:

- Find the most scandalous, exclusive, or exciting information about committee that can possibly propel public interest in your newspaper
- Write intensive, well-organized articles that showcase your skills. These above-average articles will be published and delivered to committee, which will give you extra credit in the literary world due to the exposure distributing your work to crisis delegates grants in the real world.
- Privately interviewing delegates and prominent figures in committee to get “dirt”
- Publicly interviewing (or interrogating) delegates and prominent figures for the sake of publishing these transcripts in your newspaper.

Guidelines for Newspapers

Press releases can take three general forms: short Tweets, medium-length articles, and cover stories. Tweets are short and direct, making them a good way to quickly update the public on events occurring in the committee. Tweets are the best at giving your news organization a quick but less broad scoping popularity burst. Medium-length articles are more in-depth pieces that center around a specific issue. While they do briefly cover the context of the issue, the primary focus remains the current issue. Cover stories explain and analyze a topic, including the background of an issue, the key players, and the predicted outcome of the situation. Thus, the difference between medium-length articles and cover stories is primarily how in-depth each delves.

Keep in mind that for more modern committees, the format of your press organization will look a little different and provide separate information than delegate positions in fantasy or historical simulations, like “The First Wizarding War” or “America After the Revolution”. These modern simulations will test your accuracy in what you report on and how well you can stick to the style of your news organization, as well as what interest level and influentiality you can generate with each piece. Fantasy and historical committee-reporters must pay attention to their audiences and constantly keep in mind the different and unusual circumstances of the committee. Interest level and influentiality is important to these committees as well, while maintaining the reporting/political style of your news position is less so.

Positions

Aftermath of the First Wizarding War

The Daily Prophet

From its inception as a hieroglyphic news tablet in the earliest Wizarding days, the Daily Prophet has provided the general Wizarding population with a steady stream of information, advice, and entertainment for centuries. Today, it provides almost every magical household in the United Kingdom with a large range of topics that is both thorough and far-reaching. Sports, gossip columns, charts of the Gringotts Stock Exchange, and general Ministry updates are among the many features one issue of the Profit might contain, but it should be noted that in times of war, the main focus of the Profit will turn to political discourses and current events. This should not limit the way in which a writer of the Profit organizes their piece, however--the versatility of the DP is what allows it to have such a wide-reaching effect, so incorporating other elements of daily Wizarding life into articles is more than welcome. Article lengths vary, but tend to gravitate towards short or intermediately-sized segments with the type of bold, attention-capturing statements that appeal to a mass audience. When it comes to the Prophet, any subject goes.

When it comes to public opinion, the Prophet is not only the main method of news for most households--it's also the most controversial. A government entity, the news provided is heavily screened and is almost always infringed on by intra-governmental biases. One of the largest proponents of this government-media tie is the later Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge, who, while not serving in office at the time of the First Wizarding War, should provide you with an idea of the sort of schemes playing out between the Ministry and the Prophet. If you are looking for fast cash, the most exclusive access to scandals, or a contact in a notable political

position, a deal can almost always be struck between your organization and a member of MoM. When taking advantage of this opportunity, however, you should remember that a favor will always be asked in return for a little extra insight or popularity...

The Quibbler

Alternative news-sourcing at its finest, the Quibbler has established a reputation that precedes itself as the most wacky, creative, and eccentric media organization in the Magical Realm of Great Britain. Run by the ambitious young Xenophilius Lovegood, the Quibbler aims at exposing the antics of the most secretive (alternatively known as non-existent) members of Wizarding society. From the playful nature of Nargles to detailing the hostile disposition of Crumple Horned Snorkacks, the Quibbler provides exclusive information on a range of mythical creatures is sure to please any audience who would love to learn more about the undocumented unhabitants of the Magical World. While much of the content published is viewed as unrealistic and lacking evidence, the Quibbler still holds a steady place in many newscarts and bookstores. Statistically, the popularity of the Quibbler is just as prominent as that of the Daily Prophet, possibly because readers and fans of Lovegood's work are invested as they come. The article length of the Quibbler tends to steer towards short to intermediately sized segments. Topics related often include conspiracy theories, uncommon explanations for current wizarding world events, and details about fantastical beasts from around the world.

As radical and completely bizarre as many wizards hold Lovegood's ideas, The Quibbler does retain a certain journalistic integrity that the Prophet cannot frequently attest to. The journal cares very little about the opinions of non-readers, and publishes facts based on personal values rather than popular thought. This applies both to odd theories as well as to uncomfortable

but integral facts about the wizarding world's leaders and current events. Politics begin to pop up in issues of the Quibbler whenever tensions increase or a strong need for unbiased factoids and information arises, most notably during periods of mounting conflict and eventually, during war. While the magazine definitely maintains a less high profile list of informants than largely political news sources like the Prophet or CotG, it has the unequivocal advantage of being aided by supporters of the newspaper rather than politicians simply seeking favors or an increase in PR. These contacts, loyal to the point of confidement regardless of pay or returned favors, are some of the most valuable resources around. Supporters of the Quibbler in notable positions include Rubeus Hagrid and Emmeline Vance. It should also be noted that Alabaster Moody, otherwise known as Mad Eye Moody, has reached a point of such paranoia following the First Wizarding War that the only news resources he holds as fact are the assertions of the Quibbler.

The Cry of the Gargoyle

Originally a French current events pamphlet, the Cry of the Gargoyle has decided to extend its scope following the First Wizarding War to include coverage on multiple European entities, most recently being the Wizarding Realm of Great Britain. The purpose behind this movement is unknown to most readers and competitors of the CotG, but is accepted to be a harmless government-pedaled movement by the French Wizarding Media to keep better tabs on its English neighbors after the climactic and still resounding war against He Who Shall Not Be Named. The unreliable nature of British Wizards under the influence of Dark Magic was a traumatic experience for many of its neighbouring countries. The nature of the Cry of the Gargoyle is largely similar to that of the Daily Prophet, except with less immediate political intell due to a lack of established intragovernmental connections between the CotG and Ministry

of Magic. However, due to the international ownership of the CotG, they are granted with a world more of independence than the Daily Prophet and have the ability to publish unscreened facts as often as they please. The content focused on includes political rivalries and current events, as well as oftentimes includes big-picture connections, such as how these events are affecting or are the result of other countries' actions. The global network of the CotG is always something that can be utilized by a member of its conglomerate.

As previously mentioned, connections between the Ministry of Magic and the CotG are limited largely in part to the Ministry's wariness of a foreign presence becoming so abruptly interested in British media. While this concern may or may not be taken with validity by most, it severely limits the contacts that you hold in important places. Luckily for you, two men in particular who have taken interest in your stock have decided to help you out as confidantes, hoping their generosity will increase your flow of revenue and therefore raise the profit of the stock for all of its shareholders. Contact Lucious Malfoy and Goyle Sr. for information regarding more discrete subjects.

Yemen Crisis

BBC News Network

BBC has expanded from the main source of factual, unabridged news in Great Britain to one of the premiere centrist media stations in the world. As a result, it should be no surprise that the current crisis in Yemen has taken top priority in their most recent outputs, nor that their articles remain as unbiased and without rhetoric as it gets in today's highly political landscape. The key element to BBC's steady reader base is their accurate and uninfluenced sourcing, their

writers consistently producing stories that cover the more pressing issues in the world today without inserting the agendas that sometimes deter more guarded audiences.

It should be noted that while BBC does turn revenue, compete with other organizations, and dole out shares of their profit to stockholders as a regular press organization would, part of their funding comes from the British government, which gives BBC a unique and almost paradoxical existence. Our image of media in the United States often reflects instances such as the Nixon incident, where the media was a necessary tool in defending civil liberties and acting as an impartial informant to the American public. While nowadays, electoral lean and party biases have altered this concept slightly, even in the case of such politically opinionated organizations such as Fox News or the Times the separation of government and press is taken seriously and with utmost respect. BBC, on the other hand, is a taxpayer service, receiving not only its funds but oftentimes orders and corporate decisions through the British Parliament. Because of this added level of administrative influence, reporters working under the BBC organization should expect sudden and occasionally less than desirable orders from their higher uppers, including specific article assignments or investigative restrictions. Due to their high-profile sponsor, however, journalists can also expect unique privileges and exclusive access only achievable through partnership with one of the United Nation's most influential participants. The United Kingdom is a relatively free country with an abundance of civil liberties protected by its rulers and by its passionate people. However, it is always pertinent to note that unlike the United States Constitution, no one said anything in the Magna Carte about inviolable freedom of the press.

MSNBC News

MSNBC is an enigma to most Americans not because of its political stance or sources for funding, but because of its acronym—before going any further, we believe that it's important to clear up the meaning behind this informative name. NBC is a popular news station known for its centrist leaning towards left wing perspective on politics, originally operating from beneath GE (the General Electric Company). However, in 1996, a transaction between the original parent company and the technological up and comer Microsoft Co. transferred control of the entity to Bill Gates and the rest of the staff at MS, hence resulting in the final title, MSNBC (a fascinating progression, we know). The transfer in ownership, however, highlights some of the immense differences between MSNBC and its competitor, BBC News of the United Kingdom. MSNBC, while no longer a current member of the Microsoft franchise, is clearly the result of capitalism and competitive journalism to the very core, making the distinction between government and press more than distinctive. While the company may receive government sanctioned subsidies in order to assist in the staffing of the program, the rest of the corporation is independent and completely removed from federal control—something that reflects without doubt the importance of a free press to citizens of the United States. Their inability to completely rely on federal agencies does result in a higher stakes perspective of their written output, especially since popularity and therefore funding comes as a result of public interest in MSNBC's coverage. People don't like the news being reported or the style in which it's delivered, the company suffers, and staffers get eliminated. In order to prevent this, reporters can find themselves at a crossroads that questions the integrity of their journalistic oath: should the media you report be pure, without bias, and devoid of unethical conduct, or, in the case that the best of both worlds cannot be attained, should it be whatever will keep you and your company around long enough to provide the public with an important and Constitutional service? Even more tricky, in the case

of reporting factual news, what lengths are you willing to go in order to provide the people of the world with accurate information on Yemen and the political leaders involved? When information is a Constitutional right, it is difficult to know when the laws of the press override the laws of society. When commission and jobs are at stake, the line becomes even hazier.

If desired, additional information about each committee can be found on the corresponding committee's webpage and background guide. The link for each background guide is included in its committee's webpage.