

## **Current Issues in Journalism**

JOUR 4702/6702-01

Spring 2011

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## **COURSE-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Advanced study of recent, critical problems faced by mass media with exploration of complexities that cause them

### **PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4702/6702:**

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

### **PREREQUISITE:**

None

### **TEXTBOOK:**

Gorham J. (Ed.) (2010). Annual editions: Mass media 09/10 (15<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 978-0-07-812776-2

### **HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:**

#### **Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):**

- Students will learn to identify issues and analyze the manner in which issues impact journalistic disciplines.
- Student will be able to reach logically thought-out conclusions about how issues should be dealt with in specific settings.

- Students will critically examine, discuss and monitor the “how” and “why” behind the coverage of issues.

**Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):**

- Students will be assigned a current issue to monitor during the semester. Findings will be shared through an oral/written presentation to the class.
- Throughout the course students will participate in discussions involving issues that are covered in the media.
- Students will demonstrate their knowledge through successful completion of a series of quizzes over assigned readings materials.
- Working in small teams, students will take part in least one in-class debate on a controversial mass media issue.

**HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET FOR 4702/6702:**

This course is designed to acquaint you with contemporary issues in the journalism profession and expand your understanding of the dynamics changing the current news and information scene. This course will also examine external factors that have had an impact on how the media cover events, movements and causes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

You are required to read the assigned text, take a pop quiz, when given, for each set of assigned readings, and engage with guest speakers and other students during class periods on assigned reading material and other information presented by the instructor. You also will be assigned to write papers on various topics discussed in class. Assigned readings are listed at the bottom of this syllabus. It is also imperative that you attend class.

- Journalism is all about meeting deadlines. No late work will be accepted. If you do not complete an assignment, or exam, by the specified time, that assignment or exam will receive a zero.
- If you arrive late for class on the day quizzes are given, you will not be allowed to take the quiz and will receive a zero
- You should do the assignments in the following order:

1. Read the assignment
2. Be prepared to discuss in class
3. Take the quiz in class for that assignment

**GRADUATE STUDENTS**

You are required to write a paper, properly cited in APA format, on the State of Media ub 2011. The deadline for the paper is 3 p.m. Wednesday, April 20, 2011. The final paper will be no longer than 10 pages of text, double-spaced, in 12 pt Times New Roman font, plus the references list.

**GRADING:**

Quizzes and major exams = 75%;

Assigned writing and outside credit = 25%

For graduate students, the final paper is 30% of the final grade, with quizzes and forums comprising the other 70% in the same proportions as indicated above for undergraduates.

**ASSIGNED READINGS: (All from the Gorham text listed above)**

It is best to read these in order, and by the group assigned, as they generally relate to one another. It is also recommended that you read the set of articles, then study them over a bit. They will be discussed at length in class along with related issues from other sources.

**JOUR 4702/6702  
Class Schedule for Spring 2011**

| Date    | Topic/ Assignment  | Additional Info   |
|---------|--|---|
| Jan. 14 | Introductions, discussion of syllabus and topics to be covered                                 |   |
| Jan. 19 | Articles 1 through 4 with quiz   | Have the assigned textbook by today                                 |
| Jan. 21 | Continued discussion of Articles 1 through 4 plus discussion of recent issues in journalism    |   |
| Jan. 24 | Articles 5 and 6 with quiz   |   |
| Jan. 26 | Continued discussion of Articles 5 and 6 plus discussion of other recent issues in journalism. |   |
| Jan. 28 | Guest Speaker to be announced  | Be prepared to question speaker and engage in subsequent discussion |
| Jan. 31 | Articles 7 and 8 with quiz   |   |
| Feb. 2  | Continuation of discussion on Articles 7 and 8   |   |
| Feb. 4  | Articles 9 through 11 with quiz  |   |
| Feb. 7  | Further discussion of Articles 9 through 11  |   |
| Feb. 9  | Articles 12-13 with quiz   |   |
| Feb. 11 | Continued discussion of Articles 12-13 plus discussion of recent issues in journalism.         |   |
| Feb. 14 | Articles 14-15 with quiz   |   |
| Feb. 16 | Further discussion of Articles 14-15   |   |
| Feb. 18 | Articles 16-17 with quiz   |   |
| Feb. 21 | Continuation of discussion of Articles 16-17.  |   |
| Feb. 23 | Articles 18-19 with quiz   |   |
| Feb. 25 | Continued discussion of Articles 18-19   |   |
| Feb. 28 | Guest Speaker to be announced  | Be prepared to  |

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
|          |   | question speaker and engage in subsequent discussion                |
| March 2  | Articles 20-21 with quiz  |   |
| March 4  | Continued discussion of articles 20-21 plus other recent issues in journalism                             |   |
| March 7  | Spring Break  |   |
| March 14 | Articles 22-23 with quiz  |   |
| March 16 | Further discussion of Articles 22-23  |   |
| March 18 | Articles 24-25 with quiz  |   |
| March 21 | Continue discussion of Articles 22-23   |   |
| March 23 | Articles 24-25 with quiz  |   |
| March 25 | Further discussion of Articles 24-25  |   |
| March 28 | Guest Speaker to be announced   | Be prepared to question speaker and engage in subsequent discussion |
| March 30 | Articles 26 through 28 with quiz  |   |
| April 1  | Continued discussion of Articles 26 through 28  |   |
| April 4  | Articles 29 through 32 with quiz  |   |
| April 6  | Continued discussion of Articles 29 through 32 plus additional discussion of current issues in journalism |   |
| April 8  | Articles 33-34 with quiz  |   |
| April 11 | Continued discussion of Articles 33-34  |   |
| April 13 | Articles 35 through 37 with quiz  |   |
| April 15 | Continued discussion of Articles 35-37  |   |
| April 18 | Discussion of recent issues impacting journalism  |   |
| April 20 | Articles 38-39 with quiz. Grad students must turn in term paper by today                                  |   |
| April 22 | Continued discussion of Articles 38-39 and other issues in journalism                                     |   |
| April 25 | Final Guest Speaker to be announced   | Be prepared to question speaker                                     |

|          |                           |                                     |
|----------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|          |                           | and engage in subsequent discussion |
| April 27 | Discussion for final exam |                                     |
| April 29 | Final exam                |                                     |

## **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **EMAIL:**

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

### **CELLPHONES:**

You must turn them off during class.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

### **CHEATING:**

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

### **ONLINE SETEs:**

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**EXIT EXAM FOR ALL JOURNALISM MAJORS:**

All Journalism majors are required to take the Journalism Exit Exam their last semester before graduation. Please contact the Journalism office staff anytime during the semester to sign up. You may take the test anytime there are open lab hours during the semester. You will not be certified to graduate until you have completed the test.

**PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:**

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- Awareness: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- Understanding: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and

- ideas.
- Application: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.