

Current Issues in Journalism

JOUR 4702 - M50

Spring 2011

Instructor: Dr. Redmond

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Office: Online only

Office hours: By appointment

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:

- 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.) (2011). Annual editions: Mass media 10/11 (16th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN 978-0-07-805061-9

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 at least one in-class debate on a controversial mass media issue.

COURSE WEBSITE ADDRESS: (The course page will be open from January 13th to April 27th)

- Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
- Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu
- Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
- Click on the "ecampus resources" tab.
- In the center column of the page, click on the blue UoM eCourseware link
- Down on that page, in the spring 2010 course list available to you click on the link for JOUR 4702 M50 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page.

OBJECTIVE OF COURSE:

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 is an online, self-paced course where you will be able to complete assignments and exams 24/7 during the spring 2011 semester (January 13 – April 27).

First reading assignment and quiz must be completed before February 1, 2011, or you will be dropped from the course for nonattendance.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The basic requirements for this course include these elements:

- Complete assigned readings from the text book as indicated at the end of this syllabus;
- Complete the quiz for each assigned reading;
- Post comments on the discussion board “topic” for each reading;
- Complete a 500 word essay of your reflections on the *State of the Media 2010* report posted on the course website. This can be submitted to the course website “drop box” any time up until 11:59 p.m. March 31, 2011. See further instructions on this essay on the course home page.

No late work will be accepted. Because this is a self-paced course, you have from January 13, 2011 to April 27, 2011 to do all the work as best fits your personal schedule. If you do not work on the course every week, and fall behind, that will be your problem of time mismanagement. There is a deadline for submission of the essay described in number 4 above. Any late submissions will be refused, and anything not completed on time and by the closing date of the course will receive a zero grade. This is a senior level course for aspiring professional journalists. Thus, deadlines are sacred here just as they are in the journalism business. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines. Because you are an adult your instructor will not badger you about keeping up with your work. Manage your time.

You should do the assignments in the following order:

1. Read the assignment
2. Post comments in the discussion forum for that assignment
3. Take the quiz for that assignment

Quizzes are timed to insure you cannot look up individual answers, but will have to rely on your comprehension of the readings. Typically, you will have from 30 seconds to 1 minute to answer each question. Thus, you should read thoroughly and study each assignment before taking the quiz. You will be allowed only one attempt at each quiz. If you run out of time on a quiz, it will be recorded as a zero. Generally, there are 5-6 questions for each reading. So if you have four readings, as is the case with the first assignment, Articles 1-4, the quiz may have up to 24 questions. Watch the clock when you take each quiz, and make sure you save each answer when you select it. That way, if you run out of time you'll still have all the questions you have completed count. If you do not hit the save button, no grade will be recorded. There is one attempt allowed for each quiz, and no make-ups. All quizzes have the questions extracted from a large database for each unique user, and all answer options shuffled for each person who takes a quiz, to insure exam security and potential for cheating. Thus, it is a waste of your time to try to cheat, and anyone caught cheating will be prosecuted to the full extent possible within the UM Student Handbook to include potential dismissal from the university, as noted previously in this syllabus.

It is highly recommended you work each week on your course, doing the assignments in order. If you take a few weeks off and allow the assignments to back up you will undoubtedly have lower quiz grades and fail to adequately engage with the discussion forums. It is your responsibility to determine how fast or slow you complete the course. If you get behind, and cannot complete the required work by April 27th, there will be no additional time provided and you will fail the course. It is paramount you be self-disciplined in this course.

Forum comments must be relative to the topic being discussed. Any postings deemed irrelevant by your professor will be deleted. Students should post comments for each assigned group of readings.

GRADING:

Quizzes = 60%;

Forums (discussion board) participation = 20%

State of the Media essay = 20%.

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, and then study them over a bit. After that, go post comments in the topic for that set, and then take the quiz for that set of articles. You will have one attempt to take each quiz, with approximately 30 seconds to read and answer each question. The number of questions in a readings quiz will vary, depending on the number articles included in that reading.

Articles 1-4	Articles 5-6	Articles 7-9
Articles 10-12	Articles 13-14	Articles 15-16
Articles 17-18	Articles 19-20	Articles 22-22
Articles 23-24	Articles 25-26	Articles 27-28
Articles 29-30	Articles 31-33	Articles 34-36
Articles 37-39		

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

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- 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.