

## **Reporting Social Justice**

JOUR 4801/6801-001

Spring 2018

Tuesday/Thursday (2:20 to 3:45 p.m.)

Meeman 212

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Office hours: Tues. 4:00-6:00 p.m.; Thurs. 4:00-5:00 p.m.; or by appointment.

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Writing and reporting news and news feature stories on issues concerning social justice.

### **PREREQUISITE:**

HIST 4051

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

- Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).
- Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987).
- *The New York Times* available in campus newspaper boxes or by digital subscription.
- A camera or smart phone for taking digital photographs.
- A clip-on lavalier microphone for recording interviews for video and audio.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Students will complete three stories on a social-justice issue. Social justice is a broad term that can encompass matters ranging from race, religion, gender, sexuality, and disability to socioeconomic fairness and criminal justice.

One of the three stories must be based on an oral history interview conducted as part of the multimedia project *Once More at the River*, which examines the decades-long movement for racial equality in Memphis. These videotaped interviews will be archived in Memphis' National Civil Rights Museum, and excerpts will be used for a documentary to be completed in 2018.

Each student will conduct one such interview, researching the topic and the subject thoroughly, asking the questions, and transcribing the dialogue.

Although the bulk of the course primarily consists of practical reporting assignments, students will also take occasional quizzes and perform other activities during the semester.

In addition, graduate students must also write a 10-page essay based on three books, the two required for class and a third of their choosing.

### **GRADING FOR UNDERGRADUATES:**

- Story 1: 20 percent
- Story 2: 20 percent
- Oral history interview, with transcript: 20 percent
- Story 3 (based on oral history interview): 20 percent
- Quizzes, homework, assignments, and participation: 20 percent

### **GRADING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:**

- Story 1: 20 percent
- Story 2: 20 percent
- Oral history interview, with transcript: 20 percent
- Story 3 (based on oral history interview): 20 percent
- Paper: 10 percent
- Quizzes, homework, assignments, and participation: 10 percent

### **OTHER ISSUES:**

Discussion and debate are welcomed and encouraged in this course. At the same time, students must exercise courtesy and basic civility. That doesn't mean everyone has to agree; it does mean showing respect for others and exhibiting an open spirit of inquiry.

Telling someone's story brings with it a tremendous responsibility to get it right and to be fair. Accuracy is paramount, and ethical behavior is fundamental. Journalists are never perfect, but they must always strive to do excellent work. In this class, you will also be representing our department, our university, and our profession in the community, so please act accordingly. In other words, do the right thing.

### **TENTATIVE TIMETABLE**

*Week One:*     **Course introduction. Meet the team.**

Jan. 16

Jan. 18

*Week Two:*     **Understanding social justice.**

Jan. 23         Film excerpt: *Eyes on the Prize* (1987)

Jan. 25         Film: *Lives Worth Living* (2011)

*Week Three:*   **Writing and reporting basics.**

Jan. 30         Guest speaker: Wendi Thomas, MLK50

Feb. 1          Guest speaker: Wendi Thomas, MLK50

*Week Four:*    **Writing and reporting basics.**

Feb. 6          Guest speaker: Kathleen Fletcher, Teach for America

Feb. 8

*Week Five:*    **Storytelling tools.**

Feb. 13         Guest speaker: Megan Wilkinson, environmental activist

Feb. 15

*Week Six:* **Storytelling tools.**

Feb. 20

Feb. 22 STORY 1 due

*Week Seven:* **Audiences.**

Feb. 27

Mar. 1

*Week Eight:*

Mar. 6 *Spring Break (no class)*

Mar. 8 *Spring Break (no class)*

*Week Nine:* **History, journalism, and the art of the documentary**

Mar. 13

Mar. 15

*Week 10:* **Documentary issues and ethics**

Mar. 20

Mar. 22 STORY 2 due

*Week 11:* **Documentary issues and ethics**

Mar. 27

Mar. 29

*Week 12:* **Completion of projects**

Apr. 3

Apr. 5 Oral history interview to be completed

*Week 13:* **Completion of projects**

Apr. 10

Apr. 12

*Week 14:* **Completion of projects**

Apr. 17 STORY 3 due

Apr. 19

*Week 15:* **Completion of projects**

Apr. 24 Wrap up

## **DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:**

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSJ 3900 and contribute to it from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

#### **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.

#### **MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:**

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. 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 because of 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 and Strategic Media 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.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

“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 course. 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.

**DEADLINES:**

Remember there’s a reason “DEAD” makes up half the word “deadline.” All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

**AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:**

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don’t know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

**DISABILITY:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact your instructor 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.

**DIVERSITY:**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

**WEATHER POLICY:**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.