

Data Journalism

JRSM 7124-001, M50

Spring 2018

Thurs., 5:30-8:30PM

Meeman 202

Dr. Joe Hayden (MJ 304)

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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

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Advanced use of computer technology and investigative techniques to access, analyze and develop database information in combination with traditional news reporting.

PREREQUISITE:

Graduate status.

Students should already be familiar with basic methods of newswriting and reporting.

TEXTBOOKS:

Required

- Brant Houston, *Computer Assisted Reporting* 4th edition (2014) **ISBN: 0765642190**

Recommended

- Darrell Huff, *How to Lie With Statistics* (New York, Norton: 1954). **ISBN 978-0-393-31072-6**
- Kathleen Wickham, *Math Tools for Journalists* 2nd edition (Marion Street Press, 2003) **ISBN 0-966-517652**

CLASSROOM FORMAT:

The class will consist of both lecture and laboratory time to be determined by the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This is an advanced reporting course. In it you will augment the skills you already have in order to produce richer story ideas and to gather and analyze information efficiently. You will learn to use spreadsheets and database management software. You will also become familiar with the latest online newsgathering sources and techniques. As you will soon discover, these cool tools supplement—*they don't substitute for*—old-fashioned reporting, common sense, and the ability to ask good questions of real people.

Students will complete three stories analyzing data and telling a story about the numbers. Each should be at least 750 words long, in the form of either a hard-news or feature article, with at least three relevant sources. (Extra credit will be awarded for data sets you create yourself. And these sets don't have to be large, just yours—exclusive, in other words.) The topic must be approved in advance by the instructor. Include a source list, complete with contact info., at the end of your article. Students who get their articles published (or accepted for publication) in an approved venue during the semester will receive extra credit.

In addition, you will work on graded and ungraded lab assignments, which are designed to help you understand concepts and to give you lots of practice applying them. These exercises are crucial for you to learn, and they're a big part of what we'll do in class.

Of course, one of the most important aspects of a graduate course is your active participation in it. Your classmates and I expect you to make regular contributions to discussion.

Research Colloquium

Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers will count for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor. Students enrolled in more than one course may write multiple reflections of one research presentation as long as the topic is customized to the individual class

GRADING:

3 Stories:	60%
Assignments:	20% (includes Research Colloquium)
Attendance/participation:	20%

HYBRID CLASSROOM FORMAT

- Blue Jeans is a web-based video conferencing platform. Students in the M50 section will receive an invitation to join Blue Jeans from your instructor.
- This hybrid class, with students on campus and also online synchronously, operates in a seminar format.
- Online students must have a stable Internet connection, speakers and a microphone (or a headset with a built-in mic). Headsets can be purchased for approximately \$20. Students will need to be able to have video turned on for the entire class. Online students will not be permitted to attend class using a cellphone.
- Class time will primarily be spent in discussion of theories, issues, and applications. To that end, on campus and online students must complete the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss the night's topic. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part — even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably — will significantly affect your final grade.

OTHER ISSUES:

NUMBERS ARE YOUR FRIENDS

Making sense of large and sometimes complex data sets requires the ability to crunch numbers. Fortunately, through the miracle of computing science, you don't have to crunch them yourself. Computer software does it for you. But understanding a few basic principles of high school math will aid you in doing such work and can also help you avoid obvious mistakes. So, put your phobias about math aside. Numbers don't bite!

PROFESSIONALISM

In journalism, your name is everything. Whether you work for a Fortune 500 media company, freelance, or just blog, you're only as good as your reputation. How reliable are you? How professional are you? Start good habits now. I expect you to come to class on-time and regularly, to turn in assignments when they're due, to work hard and with enthusiasm, to be involved in class discussion and activities.

PROTECT YOUR WORK

Computers are great timesavers but sometimes fail, crash, or otherwise go haywire. Use common sense, and back up your work. Keep copies of your assignments on disks or thumb drives, and double that insurance by also saving a version on UMDrive. Always work from a copy!

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:

Date	Topic/ Assignment	Pages	Additional Info
Jan. 18	Introduction. Overview. All About Data. I.R.E.		
Jan. 25	Math Tools.		
Feb. 1	Math Tools.		
Feb. 8	Spreadsheets.		
Feb. 15	Spreadsheets.		
Feb. 22	Spreadsheets.		Story 1 due
March 1	Spreadsheets.		
March 5-11	SPRING BREAK		
March 15	Database Managers.		
March 22	Database Managers.		Story 2 due
March 29	Online Resources.		
April 5	Data Hunting.		
April 12	Creating Databases.		Story 3 due
April 19	Cleaning Databases.		
<i>April 26</i>			

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 JRSM 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.