

Reporting

JOUR 3120-001

Spring 2020

Class Meeting: Monday/Wednesday 2:20-3:45 p.m., MJ 208

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Writing and reporting news and news feature stories using both traditional and new media techniques with an emphasis on developing sources and advanced skills.

Prerequisites

JRSM 2121

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- “The Associated Press Stylebook 2019” ISBN: 978-0-917360-67-1. Students should have this book from 2121. Earlier editions (2016 and 2017) are acceptable.
- A smart phone and access to a laptop or a desktop computer. Students cannot rely on using university computer labs. Journalists today need to be in constant contact with the Internet and social media, so make sure you have the devices to make that happen.
- A camera or smart phone for taking digital photographs.
- A clip-on Lavalier microphone for recording interviews for video and audio.
- The New York Times. Digital subscription available to students. See online instructions.
- The Commercial Appeal. Digital access available through University of Memphis McWherter Library. [Click here for access.](#)

Recommended materials:

- Kessler, Lauren and McDonald Duncan *When Words Collide: A Media Writer’s Guide to Grammar and Style* (Thomson-Wadsworth, 2001). Students may have this from Media Writing. No need to buy an updated version.

Classroom format

Reporting 3120 develops the skills learned in media writing with increased emphasis on expert sources and alternative story telling. Reporters today need to work in different ways on multiple platforms, so this class integrates more traditional reporting and writing with photography, multi-media, social media and headline writing.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>

2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JOUR 3120-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

- Assignments will be completed both in and outside the classroom, so attendance and participation in class are vital. Class time is also valuable for discussions about news and upcoming assignments, so please be on time. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet if you arrive late to class.
- Here's how attendance works: I'm not interested in hearing excuses. You get **three free passes** during the semester. After you cash in the passes, missed classes are reflected in your final grade. **For example, if you miss one additional class, your final grade drops a letter grade. If you miss two more classes, your grade drops again. So, if you miss six classes, your final grade drops two letters.**
- Be sure to join our class Facebook page because if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what is due. Do not count on me to answer texts, emails or Facebook posts about missed work. Consult a classmate or ecourseware instead.
- If you are unsure about deadlines, check the ecourseware dropbox dates. Do not rely on assignment dates printed on the syllabus.
- There are no exams in reporting, but quizzes may be given on assigned readings, classroom discussions, current events, and AP style.
- In addition to written and multi-media assignments, students update online portfolios built in JRSM 3900 to showcase their work and to facilitate internship placement. Portfolios include clips, design work, resumes and social media contacts. For this semester, think of your portfolio as an online news site for stories with headlines, hyperlinks, captions and multi-media.
- You must stay informed about the news and about newsmakers. It is impossible to be a good reporter unless you are informed about local, national and international news, as well as the media industry. Throughout the semester, we will focus on specific news sites, such as The New York Times, The Daily Memphian, The Commercial Appeal, CNN, NPR, and so forth. Expect weekly news quizzes on news content.
- Students who need additional help with writing mechanics will be required to attend mandatory sessions at the university's Writing Center.
- All assignments must be filed to the ecourseware drop box by midnight (11:59 p.m.) on the day they are due. **Late assignments will NOT be accepted. Do not send late assignments to my email.** It is extremely important that you recognize the importance of deadlines in news and learn to file assignments on time.
- All assignments must be written in third person in a structure that conforms to standard media writing guidelines. Assignments will be graded on content, sources, writing, story structure, word count, grammar, punctuation and AP style. **One point may be deducted from story grades for every mistake in AP style, spelling, punctuation and grammar, so edit your work carefully.**
- **Additionally, 10 points will be deducted for factual errors, such as misspelled names and incorrect dates. Get your facts straight!**
- Rewrites that do not include the additional reporting discussed in editing notes will receive lower grades than the original stories.

- Reporters may publish class stories in the Daily Helmsman, but only **AFTER** they are graded and rewritten for class.
- Additionally, all assignments must conform to these specifications: Stories must be filed in a word document, double-spaced with indented paragraphs, 11 point Verdana type. All documents must be identified with a date, a byline and a headline. **If assignments don't meet these specifications, they will not be graded, and students will receive a zero.**
- And finally, assignments for 3120 may involve several components, such as a written story and a multi-media sidebar. You must complete all parts of the assignment to receive a grade. **Instructors do not grade incomplete assignments, and students receive a zero for incomplete work.**

Grading

Class assignments: 80 percent (includes online portfolio)
 Quizzes, homework, and in-class work: 20 percent

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%
 B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%
 C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%
 D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%
 F 0-59.4%

Other issues

More specific reporting and writing goals for this class include:

- Writing with ease, accuracy, and speed
- Developing sources
- Developing storytelling skills with words and photographs
- Polishing writing mechanics and AP style
- Reporting with social media
- Writing for digital media (headlines, captions, hyperlinks)
- Publishing stories in print and/or online
- Building professional online portfolios and media literacy

COURSE SCHEDULE

A flexible syllabus is necessary so we can respond to news events as they occur in real time. Deadlines for assignments may change, so check due dates regularly in the ecourseware drop box.

Part One: Developing sources and story ideas

Week 1, Jan. 22: Course introduction and media literacy

Week 2, Jan. 27, Jan. 29: Sources, data and story ideas

Extra credit: "Updates from German Public Broadcast," 5:30-7:30 p.m. (MJ room 100)

Feb. 1: JRSM scholarship deadline. [See scholarship manager here.](#)

Week 3, Feb. 3, Feb. 5: Review: Story structure, nut graphs, leads, setting up direct quotes

Assignment One (news story) due Feb. 5.

Week 4, Feb. 10, Feb. 12: Rewriting, headlines and hyperlinks

Week 5, Feb. 17, Feb. 19: Live tweeting and Wakelet stories

Post updated news story on portfolio Feb. 17. (Headlines and hyperlinks)

City Council meeting Feb. 18

Assignment Two (Wakelet story) due Feb. 21

Part Two: Issue Stories

Week 6, Feb. 24, Feb. 26: Issue stories and anecdotal leads

Issue story ideas due with focus sentence Feb. 26.

Week 7, March 2, March 4: Issue stories and data

Post updated Wakelet story on portfolio March 2. (Headlines and hyperlinks)

Super Tuesday: March 3 (Mandatory attendance)

Second Wakelet story (part of assignment two) due March 6.

Week 8, March 9, March 11: Spring Break (March 9-13):

Week 9, March 16, 18:

Assignment Three (issue story) due March 18.

Extra credit: Norm Brewer lecture with New York Times columnist Frank Bruni: March 19 @UC ballroom)

Part Three: Multi-media Projects and Portfolios

Week 10, March 23, 25: Multi-media projects: Premiere

Week 11, March 30, April 1: Multi-media projects: Premiere

Post updated issue story and second Wakelet on portfolio March 30. (Headlines and hyperlinks)

Week 12, April 6, April 8: Multi-media projects: Premiere

Assignment Four (multi-media slideshow) due April 8.

Week 13, April 13, 15: Multi-media projects: Premiere

Assignment Five (multi-media story) due April 15.

Week 14, April 20, April 22

Portfolios due for in-class critique April 22. Post on class Facebook page.

Post updated multi-media projects on portfolios April 22 by class time. (Headlines and hyperlinks)

Week 15, April 27, April 29: Final portfolios

April 30: Study Day.

Assignment Seven (Updated portfolios) due: April 30. Post link on class Facebook page.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Five Pillars in JOUR 3120

- *Critical Thinking:* Students work independently and as a team to develop story ideas and to target stories for publication. They write more complex stories, learning to organize multiple sources and research into both multimedia and traditional print formats.
- *Media Literacy:* Students stay informed about news and the media with social media, phone apps, and local and national newspapers available on campus. Media experts from print, broadcast, and online publications also guest lecture to share professional experiences and opportunities with students.
- *Multimedia:* Although students write traditional news stories throughout the semester, they also learn alternative storytelling techniques using photography, video, smart phone apps, and social media. All assignments include a multimedia component to bring added value to written work.
- *Professionalism:* Students learn the skills required to work in media today by practicing more advanced applications of the basics: ethics, deadlines, information gathering, and writing news stories and features. Increasingly, work is evaluated on professional standards. Students learn how to pitch story ideas and how to publish stories in print and online.
- *Writing:* Students work on writing mechanics and AP style, but they write more complex stories, learning to integrate national sources, descriptive writing, and statistical data into their work. Students also are introduced to headline writing and caption writing.

Professional Values and Competencies in JOUR 3120

- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientations and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communication.
- 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 current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Develop and improve writing and reporting skills
- Present more meaningful context in stories through various forms of research and reporting
- Learn the nuances of interviewing expert national sources;
- Give stories more meaningful context through various forms of research
- Balance views in stories to achieve fairness and accuracy
- Study alternative story-telling techniques
- Stay informed about local, national and world events
- Understand the role of media in maintaining a democratic form of government

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Write complex multi-sourced stories with the use of nationally recognized experts for targeted publications
- Improve grammar, punctuation, word usage, vocabulary and AP style knowledge
- Develop story ideas for print and multimedia
- Develop more confidence and expertise for interviewing sources
- Report and write stories using social media, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
- Start to learn multimedia storytelling techniques using digital media, including photography and video
- Write headlines and photo captions for stories and photo packages
- Meet deadlines
- Understand importance of verification, attribution and accuracy in all completed projects
- Stay informed about local, national, and international news
- Stay informed about developments in the media industry

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Develop awareness of news vocabulary through weekly quizzes.

Understanding

- Understand newsworthiness

Application

- Report and write stories about events and lectures
- Report and write trend stories and issue stories with both local and national sources
- Include relevant data in all stories
- Include photography and/or info graphics with all stories
- Include captions and headlines with all projects
- Develop detailed pitches for both written and multimedia stories
- Submit rewrites for all story projects
- Include captions and headlines with all projects
- Publish stories in campus and citywide publications
- Update professional portfolios with course work for end-of-the-semester grading

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA 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 graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they 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 lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

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 writing 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

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class 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). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

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 students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media 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 rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the 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 must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

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. Media 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.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.