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Course Outline JOU3100 - DIGITAL JOURNALISM I

Winter 2019
Thursday, 8:30-11:20 a.m.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Instructor: Jean-Sébastien Marier, M.J.

Office Hours: In person on Monday, 10:00 a.m.-noon, Desmarais 11111
Via Google Hangouts by appointment

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OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

Introduction to digital tools, modes of narration, spreadsheets, audiovisual software, journalistic use of social media, digital content production, use of databases, etc.

COURSE CONTENT

Like "traditional" journalists, digital reporters must first master the basics of journalism, such as lead-writing, storytelling and fact-checking. As such, we will dedicate our first meetings to honing our writing skills. We will also learn to use Content Management Systems (CMS). The second part of this course will focus on the journalistic use of social media, together with the research and validation of information online. Lastly, we will tackle multimedia production. We will learn about photography, audio storytelling and video-making.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

Practical

This course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the tools and practices of digital journalism, and give them the skills and knowledge necessary to produce news stories which meet the standards of a modern newsroom. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Write journalistic articles;
2. Publish articles and other journalistic contents online;
3. Find people and information online, and fact-check said information;
4. Use social media in a professional setting;
5. Verify user-generated content (UGC);
6. Take and edit photos;
7. Record and edit audio elements;
8. Record and edit video elements.

Theoretical

This course also aims to foster discussions and reflections on the work of digital journalists. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Understand and apply “best practices” pertaining to digital journalism;
2. Defend their editorial decisions from both an ethical and a technical standpoint;
3. Discuss the main issues faced by digital journalism;
4. Critically analyze digital news stories.

TEACHING METHODS

In order to address your different learning styles, this course will employ a variety of teaching methods. We will alternate between “formal” presentations from my part, group discussions and hands-on workshops. I will also invite you to present your news stories to the rest of the class. Lastly, I will try to set up guest lectures by people in the industry, so that they can share their expertise with you.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

You must bring your laptop to each of our meetings, since we will be doing practical exercises in class. We will be using Google tools and Virtual Campus, which are already linked to your University of Ottawa account. When possible, I will recommend free and/or open source software to you.

This term, you will also need access to photo, audio and video production equipment. You can borrow voice recorders, microphones, photo cameras, camcorders and tripods from the Multimedia Distribution Service, which is located in the basement of Morisset Hall.

REQUIRED TEXTS

This semester, we will make good use of *The Canadian Press Stylebook* 18th edition (ISBN 9780920009543) and *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling* 21st edition (ISBN 9780920009529). I encourage you to get a hard copy of each book or to subscribe to the [web-based searchable versions](#). These books will prove useful throughout your journalistic career. I have also put copies in the course reserve at the Morisset Library.

We will also read a few chapters from *The Canadian reporter: news writing and reporting* 3rd edition (9780176407018), by McKercher, C., Cumming, C. & Thompson, A. (2011). It is not mandatory but encouraged to buy this book. I have also put a copy in the course reserve at the Morisset Library.

Here are the bibliographical references for the above-mentioned books:

McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: A guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, Ontario: The Canadian Press.

McCarten, J. (2015). *The Canadian Press caps and spelling*. Toronto, Ontario: The Canadian Press.

McKercher, C., Cumming, C., Thompson, A., & Cumming, C. (2011). *The Canadian reporter: News writing and reporting*. Toronto, Ontario: Nelson Education.

The United States' National Public Radio (NPR) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) offer free online resources through [NPR Training](#) and [BBC Academy](#). If you are left with an appetite for more after completing your mandatory readings, satisfy your craving by browsing those two websites!

I encourage you to consume without restraint the contents produced by leading digital journalism organizations such as [La Presse+](#), [Le Devoir](#), [BBC News](#), [CBC News](#), [NPR](#), [Radio-Canada](#), [The New York Times](#) and [The Washington Post](#).

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

This course will be taught in English. Please note that the [Regulation on Bilingualism at the University of Ottawa](#) does not apply to the journalism program. As such, you must complete your assignments in English.

If you need help writing your assignments, please do not hesitate to visit the [Academic Writing Help Centre](#) (AWHC). I also encourage you to use the Antidote software (installed on the computers in the Morisset Library) or the web-based Grammarly service to spell check your articles.

ASSIGNMENTS, PARTICIPATION & PROFESSIONALISM

You must submit your assignments on Virtual Campus **before 23:59 on the due date**. I will give you detailed guidelines ahead of time.

Description	Date	Value
News Item 1: Web Story on a Local Issue	February 28	20%
News Item 2: Live Social Media Reporting Assignment	March 21	20%
Oral Presentation on an Issue Faced by Digital Journalism	See schedule	15%
Analysis of a News Website or Mobile News App	April 26	35%
Active Participation & Professionalism	Throughout	10%

News Item 1: Web Story on a Local Issue

Snow removal, water and sewer infrastructure, parks and recreation, emergency services, etc. Municipal governments deal with issues which have direct consequences on our daily lives. This means that journalists should strive to keep local elected officials accountable to the people they represent. This 450 to 500-word article should focus on a municipal issue in Ottawa or Gatineau. Your piece must include quotes from at least three sources: 1) a citizen directly affected by your issue, 2) a city councillor or city official knowledgeable about said issue and 3) another stakeholder of your choosing. You will also need to include photos, hyperlinks, pull quotes, etc.

News Item 2: Live Social Media Reporting Assignment

Live reporting is a skill that should be mastered by all reporters. There's one key difference though: digital reporters do not report on TV or radio, but online. For this assignment, you must cover an event in real time on social media. For example, you could live-tweet during a city council meeting or do a Facebook Live interview during a protest.

Oral Presentation on an Issue Faced by Digital Journalism

During the course of the semester, each of you will have to prepare and deliver an oral presentation on an issue facing digital journalism. For example, you could talk about the ethical implications of photo editing in a journalistic context, the hurdles encountered by journalists who try to separate their private and professional lives on social media, etc. Your presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes (timed). You will then need to lead a short group discussion. Thus, make sure to prepare two or three discussion questions. Your presentation date will be randomly assigned.

Analysis of a News Website or Mobile News App

This assignment will consist of a 12-page analysis of a news website or mobile news app of your choosing. You must monitor this site or app during a full week, and discuss its strengths and weaknesses in your paper. Your arguments must be supported by concrete examples and scholarly sources.

Active Participation & Professionalism

I believe that your participation mark should not be a simple attendance mark, especially since this is a third-year course. As such, you must actively contribute to your own learning and the learning of your peers. Amongst other things, I expect you to do the mandatory readings and to participate in our in-class group discussions. Please send me a self-evaluation (about 250 words) before the end of the exam period.

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Whether there is a power outage, a flood or a winter blizzard, journalists ought to show up for work on time to keep the public informed. As such, I am expecting you to be in class on time. Also, you would not stay home without telling your editor. Thus, send me an email BEFORE class if you are unable to attend. You will be allowed to justify your first missed class using the honour system – that is: a short email will be enough. Starting with your second no-show, I will require a medical certificate. Any unjustified absence will warrant you a 0 for your active participation and professionalism mark.

A QUICK REMINDER OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A NEWS STORY

Do not forget that a good news story goes beyond writing the “minutes” of an event or meeting. A university-type essay on a social problem/issue is not, in itself, a news story either. Instead, your assignments must be fact-based storytelling endeavours tackling an issue of interest to your target audience. You must captivate your readers, listeners or viewers by telling them a story. Remember our senses: hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. Make us “experience” your story. Also, don’t forget to answer the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? And since we will be dealing with data journalism this term, we will add a seventh question: How much/many?

FORMATTING & STYLE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Your assignments must follow the instructions published on Virtual Campus. They must also be formatted according to the guidelines highlighted in *The Canadian Press stylebook: A guide for writers and editors* and *The Canadian Press caps and spelling*.

OFFICIAL GRADING SYSTEM

Grades are assigned using the official University of Ottawa grade scale:

A+	90-100%	B+	75-79%	C	60-64%	E	40-49%
A	85-89%	B	70-74%	D+	55-59%	F	0-39%
A-	80-84%	C+	65-69%	D	50-54%		

ABS Absent

EIN Failure/Incomplete

NNR Grade not available or not submitted because of an ongoing investigation over alleged academic fraud

See also [Academic regulation I-10 - Grading system](#).

LATE PENALTY

As future journalists, you must learn the utmost importance of deadlines. As such, assignments must be handed in by the deadline specified in this syllabus. If you do not hand in your assignment by the due date, I will deduct 10% from your grade for said assignment per day, unless you can produce the proper justification, as outlined in Article 9.5 of [Academic regulation I-9 - Evaluation of student learning](#).

ACADEMIC FRAUD

Although academics and journalists don't always see eye to eye, we do have one thing in common: we do not tolerate plagiarism. This includes using sentences, quotes and ideas that are not yours without properly attributing them. In short: don't pass someone else's work off as your own.

In the specific case of your final project, it would be fraudulent to invent quotes or stats, to pretend that you witnessed a situation when you did not, to use images and sound captured by another person without giving proper credit.

It is also prohibited to plagiarise yourself. Don't hand in an assignment that was already submitted in another course, for an internship application, for your job, etc. When in doubt, ask me first.

If you need more information about plagiarism, please read the ["Academic Fraud" section of the University of Ottawa's website](#).

CLASS CALENDAR

#	Date	Themes and Topics	Readings
1	January 10	First Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the syllabus • House rules • Examples of successful digital news stories • Your learning objectives 	None
2	January 17	The Modern Digital Newsroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital workflows and tools • Content Management Systems (CMS) • Creating and customizing a website 	<i>The Canadian reporter: News writing and reporting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 • Chapter 11
3	January 24	Field Trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC/Radio-Canada • Ottawa City Hall 	<i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working journalist: Interviewing • The working journalist: Politics • The working journalist: Reporting
4	January 31	Writing for the Web - Part A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News writing 101 • Storytelling • Story structure 	<i>The Canadian reporter: News writing and reporting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 • Chapter 9 • Chapter 10
5	February 7	Writing for the Web - Part B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation from last week • CP-Style Jeopardy game 	<i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working journalist: Writing for print • Legal

6	February 14	Using Social Media as Storytelling Tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live reporting • Bringing a story to life on social media • Ethical issues 	Readings TBA
February 17-23 - Reading Week			
7	February 28	Finding People and Information on the Internet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding people on social media • Using online registries, databases and spreadsheets to find people and information • Verifying and fact-checking User Generated Content (UGC) 	<u><i>Verification Handbook</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 • Chapter 4 • Chapter 5
8	March 7	Multimedia Reporting 101: Photojournalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera settings and composition • IPTC metadata, captions and alternative text • Post-processing 	<i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working journalist: Pictures Other reading material TBA
9	March 14	Multimedia Reporting 101: Audio Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basics of audio storytelling • Microphone positioning • "Cutting" clips • Multitrack editing 	<i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working journalist: Audio • The working journalist: Reading the news NPR Training tutorials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List TBA

10	March 21	<p>Multimedia Reporting 101: Video Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using images and audio together • Equipment • Multitrack editing 	<p><i>The Canadian Press Stylebook</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The working journalist: writing for broadcast • The working journalist: video <p>BBC Academy tutorials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List TBA
11	March 28	In-class Newswriting Simulation	None
12	April 4	<p>Tying it Together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick recap of the semester • Questions about the final assignment • What comes next? 	None

**Final assignment due before 23:59
on Friday, April 26!**