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Course Outline JOU4100 - DIGITAL JOURNALISM II

Fall 2017
Tuesday 8:30-11:30

USEFUL INFORMATION

Instructor: Jean-Sébastien Marier
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** Please write "JOU4100" in the subject line of your message.

OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

Production of advanced digital contents, introduction to coding, use of geolocation software and computer graphics, design and data visualization.

COURSE CONTENT

A good digital reporter ought to understand the basic inner workings of the Internet. In this context, we will first learn to code in HTML & CSS. Then, we will turn our attention to the production of advanced digital contents, which will be a great opportunity to learn new storytelling methods, such as 360 videos, Facebook Live, virtual reality and infographics. Half of our in-class sessions will be dedicated to data journalism, which we will divide into three sub-topics: a) finding data, b) cleaning and analyzing data, and c) visualizing data. Lastly, we will have a few hours discussing best practices in the field of digital journalism.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

Practical: This course aims to help you perfect the knowledge and core competences acquired in JOU3100. By the end of the term, you should be able to produce advanced multimedia news stories which meet industry standards. More specifically, you will learn to:

1. Modify existing web pages by manipulating their source code;
2. Create a mini website using HTML & CSS;
3. Produce videos and other web-oriented multimedia content;
4. Find data in databases and through access to information requests;
5. Clean and analyze data in order to identify news stories;
6. Use formulas to automate part of your data analysis in spreadsheet software such as Google Sheets;
7. Turn your data into graphics and maps;
8. Produce a 1500-word long article, which will include multimedia elements and be backed by a strong work of data analysis and visualization.

Theoretical: As young academics, you ought to be able to take a critical stance towards digital journalism. At the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Defend your editorial decisions from both an ethical and a technical standpoint;
2. Explain your personal newsgathering process and the steps which led to the production of each of your news stories;
3. Develop strategies to cope with some of the issues associated with digital journalism, such as source protection and data perennality.

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, once I am done grading them, so that we can learn common lessons. Lastly, I will try to set up meetups with members of the industry, so that they can share their expertise with you.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In past years, I used Blackboard to share useful resources, a copy of the mandatory readings, instructions for the assignments, etc. with students. However, since the University of Ottawa just made the switch to Virtual Campus (Brightspace), I have decided to use my own [website](#) to share important information and documents with you.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

You must bring your own laptop to each of our meetings, since we will be doing practical exercises in class. If you do not own a laptop, you can borrow one at the Morisset Library or at the University of Ottawa's Multimedia Distribution Service.

We will be using Google tools, which are already linked to your official University of Ottawa email account. When feasible, I will recommend free and/or open source software to you.

This term, you will also need access to 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

You do not have to buy a specific course kit, book or textbook for this course. However, as explained in the "Formatting & Style" section of this syllabus, your news stories must follow the guidelines of *The Canadian Press Stylebook* and *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling*. I encourage you to get a copy of each book at the campus bookstore or to subscribe to the [web-based searchable edition](#). These books will prove useful throughout your journalistic career. I have also placed a copy in the course reserve at the Morisset Library.

I encourage you to consume without restraint the content produced by leading digital journalism organizations such as *La Presse+*, *ICI.Radio-Canada.ca*, *The New York Times*, *CBCNews.ca*, *NPR*, *BBC*, etc.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

This course will be taught in English. Please note that the [Regulation on Bilingualism at 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) to spellcheck your articles.

ASSIGNMENTS & PARTICIPATION

Your assignments must be published on the WordPress blog you created in JOU3100. The only exception to this rule is your mini website, which must be uploaded to GitHub.

You must send me by email to marierjs@gmail.com a link to each of your assignments **before 23:59 on the due date**, as specified below. Do not forget to write "JOU4100" in the subject line of your message.

Hereafter, you will find a brief description of the assignments. I will publish detailed guidelines on my website ahead of time.

Description	Deadline	Value
Mini website	Tuesday, October 17	10%
Video story linked to the Quebec municipal elections (team assignment)	Friday, November 3	20%
Data gathering, analysis & visualization story	Tuesday, December 5	20%
Final journalism project	Thursday, December 21	40%
Active participation (rubric below)	Throughout the term	10%

Mini website

Using your new HTML & CSS coding skills, you must create a three-page mini website, including a homepage, your biography and a page of your choosing. All three webpages must be linked to the same CSS sheet.

Video story linked to the Quebec municipal elections (team assignment)

On November 5, Gatineau voters, like those in the rest of Quebec, will be electing their new municipal representatives. For this story, you must find an interesting angle linked to these elections. In order to allow you to experiment, I am pretty open in terms of your story's format, as long as it is a video of about 2:30 minutes in duration. This assignment must be completed in pairs.

Data gathering, analysis & visualization story

This 600-word news story on a regional issue must rely primarily on data. You could, for example, focus on crime rates in one of Ottawa's neighbourhoods or drinking water quality in the Outaouais. Your piece must include quotes from at least two interviews, at least one photo taken in the field, at least two hyperlinks, as well as a map or graph produced using your dataset.

Final journalism project

The final project consists of a 1500-word article, which must include at least three multimedia elements (video, interactive map, graphic, photo-essay, etc.). I strongly encourage you to pick a topic in the Ottawa-Gatineau area, in order to simplify your newsgathering. It is worth 40% of the final mark. You must meet with me individually during my office hours to discuss your project. This meeting is worth 1 point towards your active participation mark.

Active participation

I believe that your participation mark should not be a simple attendance mark, especially since this is a fourth-year course. As such, you must earn each of your participation points by actively contributing to your own learning and the learning of your peers. Here is the rubric I will be using:

You must complete all modules of Learn HTML and the first module (CSS Selectors and Visual Rules) of Learn CSS , before class on Tuesday, September 26. Both lessons are offered free of charge by Codecademy. You must send me screen captures showing your progress by email.	2 points
Before the end of the term, you will each have to do a five-minute in-class presentation on a digital news story which you deem worthy of our attention. You must identify its strengths and weaknesses. Send me an email the night before to let me know that you intend to do your presentation the following morning.	2 points

I want to have an individual meeting with each of you, before the end of October, to discuss your final journalism project. Please book an appointment or drop by during my office hours!	1 point
Before the end of the term, you ought to complete an individual learning activity. For example, you can complete another online course on Codecademy, attend a conference or workshop on an issue pertaining to digital journalism, etc. You must send me a brief summary of your learnings by email. I am open to your ideas, but please consult me before completing your activity.	5 points

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 be formatted according to the guidelines highlighted in *The Canadian Press Stylebook* and *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling*.

Journalists working for most big media outlets such as CBC/Radio-Canada, The Associated Press, *The Globe and Mail*, *The Ottawa Citizen*, etc. must follow strict writing and formatting guidelines. So, let’s start developing good habits.

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](#).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Digital Journalism II is an advanced course. As such, students must produce a body of work which meets industry standards. Generally speaking, an assignment which could be published with no or few edits will deserve a mark in the A- to A+ range. A news story which is on the right track but which requires substantial editing will receive a B or B+. A grade of D to C+ will be awarded to stories which showcase potential, all the while needing a major rewrite. Plagiarism, major factual mistakes, etc. will lead to failure.

I will provide you a copy of the grading rubric ahead of each assignment.

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](#).

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

Whether there's 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. If you miss more than two lectures, you will need to produce a medical note or any other form of proper paperwork. Otherwise, you will get a 0 as your active participation mark.

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 news story, 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

Advanced Digital Journalism

1. Tuesday, September 12 - First Class

Welcome, presentation of the course outline, your learning goals, quick review of the subjects addressed in JOU3100, Q & A session.

2. Tuesday, September 19 - Learn to Code in HTML & CSS: Part I

Together with JavaScript, the HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) are the three core building blocks of a website. Over the next two weeks, we will learn to build a website using HTML and CSS. Today's class will be split in two parts. I will first do a one-hour presentation. I will then give you time to start the online lessons on HTML5 and CSS3 offered free of charge by Codecademy.

To do before class:

- Create a [GitHub](#) account.
- Create a [Codecademy](#) account using your GitHub credentials to log in.

3. Tuesday, September 26 - Learn to Code in HTML & CSS: Part II

We will dedicate a big chunk of today's lecture to practical coding exercises. We will also talk about the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) accessibility standards and intellectual property issues pertaining to the source code of software, applications and websites.

To do before class:

- You must complete the following lessons on Codecademy, which will earn you two active participation points:
 - All modules of [Learn HTML](#)
 - The first module (CSS Selectors and Visual Rules) of [Learn CSS](#)

4. Tuesday, October 3 - Interactive Images & Photos

Today, we will create simple infographics and animations. We will also explore how archival materials can help us to better understand and explain today's world.

To do before class:

- Complete the following training lessons on Google News Lab:
 - [Google Historical Imagery](#)
 - [Permissions: Source Google Data](#).
- I encourage you to complete the remaining modules of Learn CSS.

5. Tuesday, October 10 - Advanced Audiovisual Production

In JOU3100, you learned core audio and video production skills, together with basic photojournalism tips and tricks. Today, we will push things a little further by looking at how tools such as podcasting, Facebook Live, 360 videos, virtual reality, etc. can be used in a journalistic context.

To read before class:

- Hudson, G., & Rowlands, S. (2014). *The broadcast journalism handbook*. London: Routledge. (Course Reserve)
 - Chapter 4: "The interview" (pp. 79-114)
 - Chapter 5: "News writing" (pp. 115-148)

Data Journalism 201: Finding & Extracting Data**6. Tuesday, October 17 - Access to Government Data**

Although it has been around for quite some time in one form or another, data journalism is the flavour of the day thanks to the Internet and the digitization of data. Today, we will look at how to find data by filing access to information requests and by exploring government databases.

To read before class:

- Gray, J., Bounegru, L., & Chambers, L. (2012). *The data journalism handbook*. Sebastopol, Calif: O'Reilly & Associates. ([Web Version](#))
 - Chapter 1 : "Introduction"
 - Chapter 4: "Getting Data"

----- Mini website due before 23:59 tonight -----

----- Reading Week October 22-28 -----

7. Tuesday, October 31 - Being an Ethical Computer Hacker: Web Scraping

Last week, we looked at “official” ways to get government data. Today, we turn our attention to web scraping, that is the use of lines of code and scripts to extract data. We will take a quick look at the Python programming language.

To read before class:

- Shiab, N. (2015, June 22). [On the ethics of web scraping and data journalism](#). J-Source.

Complementary resources:

I encourage you to explore [Python.org](#) over the weekend. If you are up for a challenge, Codecademy offers a [free 10-hour course](#) on Python. This course can count as your individual learning activity, which is worth 5 active participation points.

----- Video story linked to the Quebec municipal elections due by 23:59 Friday -----

Data Journalism 201: Cleaning & Analyzing

8. Tuesday, November 7 - Exploring Data & Finding a Story: Part I

Once we have found an interesting dataset, we must clean it and analyze it in order to identify a potential story. To do so, we will use tools such as OpenRefine and Google Sheets. I will teach you how to “program” functions to automatically calculate averages, totals, etc.

To read before class:

- Gray, J., Bounegru, L., & Chambers, L. (2012). *The data journalism handbook*. Sebastopol, Calif: O'Reilly & Associates. ([Web Version](#))
 - Chapter 5: “Understanding data”
- Also take a look at the [Google spreadsheets function list](#).

To do before class:

- Please observe how media outlets will be covering the municipal elections on Sunday, November 5. Pay close attention to their digital coverage. We will take a few minutes in class to talk about it.

9. Tuesday, November 14 - Exploring Data & Finding a Story: Part II

Continuation from last week.

Data Journalism 201: Visualizing & Presenting Data

10. Tuesday, November 21 - Creation of Interactive Graphics & Charts

Today, we will look at ways to make our data “speak”. We will learn how to turn our data into interactive graphs and charts.

To read before class:

- Gray, J., Bounegru, L., & Chambers, L. (2012). *The data journalism handbook*. Sebastopol, Calif: O'Reilly & Associates. ([Web Version](#))
 - Chapter 6: “Delivering Data”

11. Tuesday, November 28 - Using Geolocation Data to Create Maps

Datasets are not only comprised of numbers. They also often include geolocation data. We could, for instance, show on a map the locations of collisions between cars and cyclists in Ottawa.

To do before class:

- Complete the following training lessons on Google News Lab:
 - [Google My Maps: Show where stories happen](#)
 - [Google Crisis Map: Diagramming a disaster and its response](#)

Digital Journalism Best Practices & Conclusion

12. Tuesday, December 5 - Key Issues Pertaining to Digital Journalism

We will talk about the protection of sources online (cryptography software and secure drops), virtual private networks (VPN), proxies, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), sponsored content, copyright, etc. We will also do a recap of the term and I will answer your questions about the final project.

To read before class:

- To be confirmed

----- Data gathering, analysis & visualization story due before 23:59 tonight -----

**Final assignment due before 23:59 on Thursday,
December 21!!!**