Course Outline
JOU3100 A - DIGITAL JOURNALISM I
Winter 2016
Monday, 7p.m. to 10 p.m.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Jean-Sébastien Marier
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

OBJECTIVES

Practical: This course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the tools and practices of digital journalism. They will learn that the Internet is both a platform to gather and disseminate information. More specifically, by the end of the semester, students should be able to produce a substantial work of digital journalism which meets the expectations of a modern professional newsroom.

Theoretical: This course also aims to foster discussions and reflections on the work of digital journalists, who often work with little or no direct guidance from senior editors while in the field. As such, students will be assigned reading materials pertaining to digital journalism practices, journalistic standards and media ethics.

TEACHING METHODS

This course combines lectures, academic and technical readings, group discussions, and hands-on assignments. Students are expected to complete the mandatory readings listed in this syllabus before each class. It is also strongly recommended that they complete the suggested readings posted to Blackboard Learn.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND EQUIPMENT

In order to help you save some money so that you can spend it on coffee like true journalists (or tea or water or juice), I will spare you the purchase of a required textbook. The required readings (or links) will be posted on Blackboard Learn.

To complete the assignments for this course, you will need access to a computer, as well as a cell phone and/or camera with audio and video recording capabilities. The University of Ottawa offers some of these resources. Please do not hesitate to speak to me if you require assistance.

EVALUATION METHODS AND DISTRIBUTION

Assignment*	Deadline	Value
News item 1: Creation of a basic WordPress blog	Monday January 25th, 7 p.m.	5%
News item 2: Short social media reporting assignment	Monday February 8th, 7 p.m.	10%
Story pitch for the final project	Monday February 29th, 7.p.m.**	5%
News item 3: Production of audio-visual content on a smartphone	Monday March 7th, 7 p.m.	10%
News item 4: Data-gathering assignment	Monday March 21st, 7 p.m.	10%
News item 5: Data-visualization assignment	Monday April 4th, 7 p.m.	10%
Short essay: 5-page essay on an issue pertaining to digital journalism	Monday April 11th, 7 p.m.	10%
Final digital journalism project	Wednesday April 27th, 4 p.m.	40%

* Detailed instructions for each assignment will be handed out in-class ahead of time. Since journalism is first and foremost a trade, the news items are short assignments designed to develop and test your digital reporting skills. They should take about 3-4 hours each to complete.

** Don't miss this deadline. It only comes around once every four years. (Thank my wife for the joke.)

FINAL GRADES

Grades assigned use the official University of Ottawa grade scale:

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

EIN   Failure/Incomplete
ABS   Absent
NNR   Grade not available or not submitted because of an ongoing investigation over alleged academic fraud

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 on the due date, I will reduce your grade by one full letter grade per day, unless you can produce a medical certificate.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Whether there's a power outage, a flood, a winter blizzard or any other natural disaster, journalists ought to show up for work on time to keep the public informed. As such, I strongly encourage you to show up for class. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be missing a lecture or if you are expecting to be late. I will deduct 5% from your final grade for each missed class without a documented reason, starting with the second absence.

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

Lectures and reading materials will be in English. However, in accordance with the University of Ottawa's bilingualism policy, you are free to hand in your assignments in either official language.

If you require assistance, please do not hesitate to visit the Academic Writing Help Centre. Additionally, you can find writing guides on the Faculty of Arts website.

ACADEMIC FRAUD

Although academics and journalists don't always see eye to eye, we do have at least one thing in common: we do not tolerate plagiarism. This includes using sentences and quotes that are not yours without properly attributing them. It also includes using images and recordings that were captured by another person without giving them the proper credit. In short: don't pass someone else's work off as your own.

It is also prohibited to plagiarise yourself. Don't hand-in an assignment that was already submitted in another course. If you wish to reuse material you have produced elsewhere – for an internship or a grant application for instance – speak to me about it first.

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

CLASS CALENDAR AND READINGS

1 - Jan. 11th - What is digital journalism?
Welcome, presentation of the syllabus, introduction to digital journalism, examples of successful digital journalism

2 - Jan. 18th - The modern digital newsroom
Online storytelling & modes of narration, digital workflows, overview of digital tools, content management

Mandatory readings:
McKercher, C., Cumming, C. & Thompson, A. (2011). *The Canadian reporter: news writing and reporting*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.
   - Chap. 1: A day in the life of three newsrooms (pp. 3-18)
   - Chap. 11: Journalism online: words are not enough on the web (pp. 171-184)

Crawford, M. G. (2008). *The journalist's legal guide*. Scarborough, ON: Thomson Carswell.
   - Chap. 17: Internet law and journalism (pp. 497-514)

3 - Jan. 25th - Social media as storytelling tools
Ethical use of social media in a journalistic environment, to retweet or not to retweet?, choosing the best format for the story, engaging the audience

Assignment due: News item 1: Creation of a basic WordPress blog

Mandatory readings:
Canadian Association of Journalists. (2011). Ethics guidelines.
- Conflict of interest
- Digital media: special Issues

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. (2015). Journalistic standards and practices.
- Live reporting
- Use of social media
- User generated content (UGC)

Toronto Star. (2011). Toronto Star newsroom policy and journalistic standards guide.
- Digital policies
- Multimedia and visual journalism

4 - Feb. 1st - Social media and the Internet as information-gathering tools
Finding people on the Internet, gathering comments, identifying trends and story ideas through social media, verifying the accuracy of user- and citizen journalist-generated content, vetting online sources

Mandatory readings:
English, K. (2012, Feb. 17). Star's mistake links wrong Iranian professors to academic plagiarism. *Public Editor - Toronto Star*.

English, K. (2015, Oct. 16). Ljonny32@gmail.com, who are you really?. *Public Editor - Toronto Star*.

Enkin, E. (2014, Aug. 19). Using unverified video: make sure viewers know what they are seeing. *CBC Ombudsman*.

Stead, S. (2012, Dec. 7). Public Editor: A valuable lesson in using social media for journalism. *Community - Inside the Globe*.

5 - Feb. 8th - Digital mobile news gathering and reporting I
Introduction to audio-visual tools for the digital journalist, recording and editing sounds and videos on a smartphone, using a smartphone for online, radio and TV reporting at once, photography tips, publishing multimedia items on social media and content management systems

Assignment due: News item 2: Short social media reporting assignment

Mandatory readings:
McClelland, D. (2015, Jul. 18). How the smartphone changed the general election: has my mobile got election news for you?. *TechRadar*.

Phelps, A. (2011, May 23). Reporting live from the scene of breaking news… on an iPhone. *NiemanLab*.

I also invite you to spend a few minutes exploring and watching the following *BBC Academy* modules:
- Smartphone broadcasting: 5 live's Nick Garnett
- Smartphone journalism: Video
- Smartphone journalism: Audio
- Smartphone journalism: Photographs
- Writing for the web
- Picture editing

Family Day - Feb. 15th (no class)

6 - Feb. 22th - Digital mobile news gathering and reporting II
We will pick up where we left off on week 5.

Mandatory readings:
Aikins, M. (2012, May/June). The spy who came in from the code: how a filmmaker accidentally gave up his sources to Syrian spooks. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Foreman, G. (2010). *The ethical journalist: making responsible decisions in the pursuit of news*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chap. 19: Ethics issues specific to visual journalism: seeking the truth with the camera while minimizing harm (pp. 336-359)

7 - Feb. 29th - Digital mobile news gathering and reporting III
We will pick up where we left off on week 6.

Assignment due: Story pitch for the final project

Mandatory readings: You are off the hook this week. However, I strongly urge you to use this extra time to catch up on missed readings and to work on your upcoming assignments.

8 - Mar. 7th - The Internet as a news source I: Getting the data
Publically available databases and data, introduction to access to information requests, online archives, court records, annual reports, financial reports

Assignment due: News item 3: Production of audio-visual content on a smartphone

Mandatory readings:
Cribb, R., Jobb, D., McKie, D., & Vallance-Jones, F. (2006). *Digging deeper: a Canadian reporter's research guide*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Chap. 10: Getting behind closed doors: using the information laws (pp. 151-179)

I also invite you to spend a few minutes exploring the following open data websites:
- *Open Data Ottawa* (City of Ottawa)
- *Open Data - Accessing City Hall* (City of Toronto)
- *Open Government* (Government of Canada)
- *World Bank Open Data* (The World Bank)

9 - Mar. 14th - The Internet as a news source II: Analyzing the data
Compiling and analyzing data, basic spreadsheets, use of shared documents for collaborative work, preparation of data for data visualization

Mandatory readings:
Arthur, C. (2010, Nov. 22). Analysing data is the future for journalists, says Tim Berners-Lee. *The Guardian*.

Codrea-Rado, A. (2012, Oct. 24). A data dream team: one example of how academic researchers and journalists can work together on data projects. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Matias, J. N., & Evans, L. (2012, Oct. 23). Women's representation in media: readers preferences for online news revealed. *The Guardian - Datablog*.

10 - Mar. 21st - Introduction to data visualization
Presenting analyzed data with graphics, word clouds, maps, interactive tools, etc.

Assignment due: News item 4: Data-gathering assignment

Mandatory readings:
Ali, T. (2014, Jul. 3). This week's data journalism wins and fails. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Ali, T. (2014, Aug. 1). Multiple news orgs made Ebola outbreak data visualizations this week, and some succeeded more than others. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Sheridan, B. (2013, May 15). Less is more with mobile visualizations: as readers shift to tablets and smartphones, interactive newsrooms need to re-focus on the basics. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

I also invite you to spend a few minutes exploring the following websites:
- *FiveThirtyEight*
- *Kiln*

Easter Monday - Mar. 28th (no class)

11 - Apr. 4th - Tying it all together
In-class simulation of a digital reporting assignment

Assignment due: News item 5: Data-visualization assignment

Mandatory readings (will be discussed next week):
Bell, E. (2015). The rise of mobile and social news - and what it means for journalism. In N. Newman, D. A. L. Levy & R. K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Reuters Institute digital news report 2015: tracking the future of news* (pp. 89-91). Oxford, U.K.: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Black, J. (2010). Who is a journalist?. In C. Meyers (Ed.), *Journalism ethics: a philosophical approach* (pp. 103-116). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

12 - Apr. 11th - The digital journalist and the future of journalism
Group discussion on the future of digital journalism, recap of the semester, questions on the final project, etc.

Assignment due: 5-page essay on an issue pertaining to digital journalism

Mandatory readings:
Austin, S., & Newman, N. (2015). Attitudes to sponsored and branded content (native advertising). In N. Newman, D. A. L. Levy & R. K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Reuters Institute digital news report 2015: tracking the future of news* (pp. 101-107). Oxford, UK: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Martyn, P. (2009). The mojo in the third millennium: is multimedia journalism affecting the news we see?. *Journalism Practice, 3*(2), 196-215.