Course Outline
JOU3100 - DIGITAL JOURNALISM I

Winter 2018
Thursday, 8:30-11:30 a.m.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Instructor: Jean-Sébastien Marier
Office Hours: Thursday, 11:45-13:00, Desmarais 11109 (by appointment)*
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* We can also chat via Apple FaceTime, Facebook, Google Hangouts or Skype.
** Please write "JOU3100" in the subject line of your message.

OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION

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

COURSE CONTENT

Digital journalism requires reporters to learn new skills, such as using a Content Management System (CMS), using social media as storytelling tools, creating multimedia contents, etc. But beyond its "technical" components, digital journalism remains a form of journalism. As such, reporters must learn to master "traditional" competencies like lead-writing, fact-checking, etc. Therefore, the first part of this course will focus on the basics of web-writing. Then, you will learn to find people and information online thanks to social media and databases. We will also explore how social media can be used as storytelling tools. Then, we will produce and edit photographic, audio and video elements. Lastly, we will take a quick look at data journalism.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

<u>**Practical**</u>

This course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the tools and practices of digital journalism, and provide them with 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. Use social media in a professional setting;
4. Find people and information online, and fact-check said information;
5. Take and edit photos;
6. Record and edit audio stories;
7. Record and edit video stories;
8. Use, analyze and understand simple databases and spreadsheets.

<u>**Theoretical**</u>

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. 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, once I am done grading them, so that we can learn common lessons. 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 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 from 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 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. You can also borrow a video camera from the Faculty of Arts.

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. Alternatively, you can borrow them from the course reserve at the Morisset Library.

The USA's 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 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 spell check your articles.

ASSIGNMENTS & ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Description	Deadline	Value
News Item 1: Profile of an "Interesting" Person	Thursday, February 8	15%
News Item 2: Story Based on a Municipal Issue	Thursday, March 1	15%
News Item 3: Social Media Reporting Assignment	Thursday, March 15	15%
News Item 4: Photojournalism Assignment	Thursday, March 29	15%
Analysis of a News Website or Mobile News App	Thursday, April 26	30%
Active Participation (rubric below)	Throughout the term	10%

Your news items must be published on a WordPress blog which we will be creating in-class at the beginning of the semester. You must also send me a copy of each assignment as a Google Document, so that I can annotate your work. You must send me your news items via Virtual Campus **before 23:59 on the due date**. Please include links to your WordPress blog and your Google Document in the comments section.

Your analysis of a news website or mobile news app is due **before 23:59 on Monday, April 26**. Please note that there will be no extension for this final assignment. Please send me your paper as a Google Document (or Word file) via Virtual Campus.

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

News Item 1: Profile of an "Interesting" Person

You must write a 400-word profile of someone with an "interesting" life story, skill, job or hobby. Please, DO NOT interview a friend or relative. Take this assignment as an opportunity to explore your community. Your piece needs to include a photo of your interviewee.

News Item 2: Story Based on a Municipal 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 assignment consists of a 400-word article about a municipal issue in Ottawa or Gatineau. Your piece must include quotes from at least two people: 1) a citizen directly affected by your issue, and 2) a city councillor or city official knowledgeable about said issue.

News Item 3: Social Media Reporting Assignment

For this assignment, you must cover a news story in real time using a social media platform of your choosing. For example, you could live-tweet a city council meeting or do a "hit" on Facebook Live during a protest, etc.

News Item 4: Photojournalism Assignment

It is often said that "a picture is worth a thousand words." Photojournalism is a form of journalism in its own right. For this assignment, you must produce a 10 to 12-image photo essay on a local issue. Your piece should also include about 400 words of text either as captions below your photos or as an article in which you will embed said photos.

Analysis of a News Website or Mobile News App

This assignment consists of a 10-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 backed by at least three scholarly sources.

Active Participation

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 earn each of your participation points by actively contributing to your own learning and the learning of your peers. Please send me the proper documentation for each item via Virtual Campus. Here is the rubric I will be using:

Before the beginning of class on January 25, **add an "About" section to your WordPress blog**. Include a short biography, together with a photo of yourself. Don't forget to send me the link!	2 points
Before the beginning of class on February 15, you must **complete the [Facebook for Journalists Certificate](#)** offered by Poynter Institute and Facebook. In order to get your participation points, you must send me a digital copy of your certificate of completion.	2 points
I want to have an **individual meeting with each of you, before the end of February, to discuss your analytical paper**. Please book an appointment!	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
Before the end of the term, **write a 200-word reflection on an issue pertaining to digital journalism or a short tutorial linked to something we saw in class** and post it on your WordPress blog. Don't forget to send me the link!	2 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 I 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 plagiarize 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

Introduction to Digital Journalism & Writing for the Web

1. Thursday, January 11 - First Class

Welcome, presentation of the syllabus, introduction to digital journalism, examples of successful digital news stories.

2. Thursday, January 18 - The Modern Digital Newsroom

We will learn about online storytelling and modes of narration. We will also talk about digital workflows and get an overview of digital tools. Lastly, we will create and customize a WordPress blog which you will use as a Content Management System (CMS) to publish your assignments.

To read before class:

- McKercher, C., Cumming, C. & Thompson, A. (2011). *The Canadian reporter: news writing and reporting*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education. (Virtual Campus)
    - 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)

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - Canadian Press policies

3. Thursday, January 25 - Writing for the Web I

To be a good digital journalist, one ought to be a good writer. Whether you work for a paper, a broadcaster or an online publication, you must know how to write a well-structured story. This week and next week, we will put your skills to the test through in-class writing assignments.

To do before class:

- Add an "About" section to your WordPress blog.

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: editing for print
    - The working journalist: headlines
    - The working journalist: online news
    - The working journalist: writing for print

4. Thursday, February 1 - Writing for the Web II

Continuation from last week. We will also play a *CP Stylebook*-inspired Jeopardy game!

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: interviewing
    - The working journalist: quicks and fact boxes
    - The working journalist: reporting
    - Tools and technical guides: quotation marks
    - Legal

5. Thursday, February 8 - Field Trip

We will visit CBC/Radio-Canada's newsroom, located at 181 Queen Street. I am also looking into organizing a visit to City Hall or Parliament Hill.

To read before class:

● There are no mandatory readings for today, but I encourage you to take a quick look at the "Tools and technical guides" chapter of *The Canadian Press stylebook* over the next few days. It will prove useful when completing your assignments, since they must follow the Canadian Press' writing guidelines.

Due tonight:

● News Item 1: Profile of an "Interesting" Person

Using Social Media... Beyond Cat Videos

6. Thursday, February 15 - Using Social Media as News Gathering Tools

Social media are now a key component of a digital journalist's toolbox. Today, we will learn how to use them– together with online registries and databases– to find people and information. Amongst other things, we will explore ways of verifying and fact-checking User Generated Content (UGC).

To do before class:

● You must complete the Facebook for Journalists Certificate offered by Poynter Institute and Facebook. Please send me a digital copy of your certificate of completion once you have completed the following modules:
  ○ How Journalists Can Best Utilize Facebook and Instagram
  ○ Connect and Engage With Your Audience Using Facebook Live
  ○ Immersive Storytelling With Facebook 360
  ○ Poynter Assessment

Reading Week February 19-25

7. Thursday, March 1 - Using Social Media as Storytelling Tools

Today, we will explore how social media can be used as storytelling tools in order to bring a story to life. Amongst other things, we will learn to plan and deliver a "hit" on Facebook Live. We will also spend some time discussing the ethics of social media. To tweet or not to tweet?

To read before class:

- 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

Due tonight:

- News Item 2: Story Based on a Municipal Issue

Multimedia Reporting 101

8. Thursday, March 8 - Multimedia Reporting 101: Photojournalism

We will address topics such as composition, camera settings, IPTC metadata, captions, alternative text, post-processing, etc.

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: pictures

- NPR Training:
    - [A handy guide to making awesome photos](#)
    - [A guide to making better images with your iPhone](#)
    - [Tips for making storytelling portraits (it's not just a headshot)](#)
    - [5 tips for making better images](#)

9. Thursday, March 15 - Multimedia Reporting 101: Audio Production

We will learn how to tell stories with sounds. We will talk about microphone positioning, multitrack editing, etc.

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: audio
    - The working journalist: reading the news
    - The working journalist: writing for broadcast

- Read the following posts on NPR Training:
    - [Audio production FAQ: Headphones, levels, mics and more](#)
    - [Get great sound every time with this field recording checklist](#)
    - [Which mic should I use? (Mics part 1)](#)
    - [Which mic do they use? (Mics part 2)](#)

Due tonight:

- News Item 3: Social Media Reporting Assignment

10. Thursday, March 22 - Multimedia Reporting 101: Video Production

Video is the marriage of moving pictures and sounds. As such, we will build on the skills we have acquired during the last two classes to create video stories.

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: video

- BBC Academy:
    - Smartphone journalism: Video
    - How to shoot short-form video and get it seen
    - Video on mobile: How to file great digital content
    - Creating short form video for the web

Digital Journalism and Beyond: A Look at Data Journalism & Other Issues

11. Thursday, March 29 - Introduction to Data Journalism

This class will give you a taste of what awaits you next term. We will talk about datasets and spreadsheets, and learn a few formulas.

To read before class:

- McCarten, J. (2017). *The Canadian Press stylebook: a guide for writers and editors*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Press.
    - The working journalist: polls
    - The working journalist: statistics

- Bleicher, A. (2017, September 18). Why math is the best way to make sense of the world. *Wired*.

- Martin, S. D. (2010, December 6). Journalists need to do the math: Numbers still make many watchdogs whimper. *Columbia Journalism Review*.

Due tonight:

- News Item 4: Photojournalism Assignment

12. Thursday, April 5 - Tying it Together

Group discussion on the future of digital journalism, recap of the semester, questions on the final assignment, etc.

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