

JOMC 753.1, "Reporting and Writing News"
Fall 2013

Assistant Professor Ryan Thornburg
Classroom: Carroll 142
Office: 219 Carroll Hall

1-2:45 p.m., MW
Office Hours: on demand

About This Course

Students in Reporting & Writing News will learn the journalistic style of writing with brevity, precision and verification to tell true stories that are memorable and relevant to specific audiences.

What You Will Learn

We'll start the semester by taking a critical look at how professional editors and reporters decide what's news. We'll look at the demographics and behaviors of today's news audiences, and how they compare with those of the past and future.

With that understanding of news judgment and audience, students will become "beat reporters" in area of specialization. Through regular reporting assignments, students will learn how to find, report and write stories for a variety of formats from social media platforms to magazines to radio and newspapers.

The semester will climax in December as students complete an in-depth investigative or narrative written news project.

Throughout the semester, our work will closely track with the work you're doing in JOMC 782 "Multimedia Storytelling."

The Goal of This Course

Students who successfully complete this course will know how to approach a new beat, from audience, source and story development to presentation and promotion.

Required Textbooks

Producing Online News: Digital Skills, Stronger Stories. Also available online at <http://www.cqpress.com/product/Thornburg.html> (Aug. 22)

CoursePack (Available from Student Stores. Texts will also be on e-reserve. Aug. 29)

Investigative Reporter's Handbook (Aug. 29. As a student, you can become a member of IRE for only \$25, which also gets you a \$10 discount on the book when ordered from <http://store.ire.org>)

Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production (Sep. 5)

Associated Press Stylebook (*Mobile or online editions are also available from <https://www.apstylebook.com/apbookstore/invoice.php>*) (Sep. 10)

Don't Make Me Think! (Sep. 12)

UnSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation (Sep. 24)

In addition, you are expected to be regular readers of The Daily Tar Heel, The News & Observer, either The New York Times or Wall Street Journal, and as many other news sources that interest you. To be a great reporter and news writer there is nothing better you can do than read the work of other great journalists and be generally abreast of global, national, state and local affairs.

Assignments

Beat Reporting	400 points
FAQ	100
Profile Backgrounder Memo	100
Multimedia Profile	200
Data-driven story	200
Live Event Coverage	100
Event Day After Story	100
Event Analysis Story	100
Final Project	400
TOTAL	1,700 points

Course Grades

H High Pass - Clear Excellence; **ready for publication by a professional news organization** (1,632 to 1,700 points)

P Pass - Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work; **could be published in a professional news organization after a thorough edit** (1,631)

L Low Pass - Inadequate Graduate Work; **unacceptable for publication** (1,088 to 1,274)

F Fail (fewer than 1,088 points)

Attendance and Deadline Policy

My absence and deadline policy begins with the premise that we expect each other to behave like professionals. I will hold you to those standards and I expect you to hold me to the same. In the professional world, deadlines don't wait on anything. And when you're out, someone else has to pick up the slack. What that means for this class:

* You can miss two classes without penalty. After that, 68 points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE for each additional class missed. Use your 2 wisely (save them for any unfortunate illnesses, not to watch Oprah). The only exception to this will be a serious medical condition.

* If an assignment misses deadline, 25% is deducted. If the assignment is more than 24 hours late, 40% is deducted. More than 48 hours late is a 50% deduction. More than three days is a 60% deduction. Four days is 70%. Five days is 80%. Six days is 90% and seven days is 100%.

* No in-class work may be made up unless you receive my approval by requesting it at least three days in advance. I will generally grant approval for documented extended illnesses, deaths in the family, or University-related trips. With an approved absence, you must make up the work at a mutually convenient time within a week of your return.

Honor and Integrity

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has had a student-led honor system for over 100 years. Academic integrity is at the heart of Carolina and we all are responsible for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. The student-led Honor System is responsible for adjudicating any suspected violations of the Honor Code and all suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the honor system. Information, including your responsibilities as a student is outlined in the Instrument of Student Judicial Governance. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected.

During the last quarter of the last century, the Society of Professional Journalists and other industry organizations developed their own codes of ethics. The SPJ code is at <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp?mobile=no> .

Two of the principals of the journalistic approach to writing are independence and transparency. That means that you report your stories “without fear or favor” as you interpret the evidence. And it also means that you show your work, enabling the audience to reproduce as closely as possible the evidence you used to create your story. When information or ideas come from someone else, you must give them credit. A good guide for the fair use of other people’s work in journalism can be found at <http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/journalism>.

Schedule

	In Class	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Aug. 20	intro; what's news & why do people consume it?		http://jomclabaccess.web.unc.edu/
Aug. 22	Finding the news values and elements.	PON Chapters 1-3	Identify and critique news report.
Aug. 27			
Aug. 29	Discuss ideas for beats and stories.	PON pp. 278-290; Magazine Editing, Cs. 1-3; Investigative Handbook C. 1	Set up your Wordpress.com blog
Sep. 3	FB for Journos: Privacy, friend lists, writing		Beat Proposal; five story ideas
Sep. 5	Crime Briefs; Leads from Facts	Reaching Audiences, Cs. 3-6; NPR 3&10	
Sep. 10	AP style trivia game	AP Stylebook	extra credit: fact, grammar, style errors
Sep. 12	Twitter for Journos: Style and standards	Don't Make Me Think 1-5	
Sep. 17	Storify; HootSuite	Don't Make Me Think 6-10	

	In Class	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Sep. 19	Headlines, captions, blurbs and links	PON 5&7	
Sep. 24	Public records requests; advanced Googling	UnSpun 1-4	
Sep. 26	Backgrounding Sources. Social & public records	UnSpun 5-8	FAQ v.1
Oct. 1	Excel	PON C. 6	FOIA Request
Oct. 3	Clip searches w/ Lexis-Nexis	IRE 2-4	
Oct. 8	Interviewing	IRE 5; NPR 4	Clips Memo
Oct. 10	Excel	PON 8	
Oct. 15	Excel	IRE 6-7; NPR 2 & 13	Backgrounder Memo
Oct. 17	FALL BREAK		
Oct. 22	Access	PON 11	Multimedia profile
Oct. 24	Refine	IRE 4	
Oct. 28	GIS	PON 9 & 12	
Oct. 31	Tableau		Data Story
Nov. 5	Pitching your stories		
Nov. 7	Work on final story		
Nov. 12	Work on final story		Live event story due
Nov. 14	Work on final story		"What?" next-day event story due
Nov. 19	Work on final story		
Nov. 21	Work on final story		
Nov. 26	Work on final story		"So What?" event story due
Nov. 28	THANKSGIVING		
Dec. 3	Work on final story		
Dec. 5	Work on final story		Final Narrative or Investigative Story