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**MEJO 630 – Business News Wire**

**Fall 2019, 3 credits**

**Instructor:** Lauren Berry, Adjunct Professor & Managing Editor for Bloomberg News

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**Office hours:** Available on campus every other Monday, always reachable by Slack, email, or phone

**Meeting time**: This class meets online via the Slack message system. However, if you want to meet with the instructor, please let her know.

**Objectives:** To run a business news website providing real-time news from SEC filings, press releases and other public records to media organizations.

**Program of study:** Students will be part of a small team working together to run a business news website. The students in this course will publish work on the North Carolina Business News Wire at [www.ncbiznews.com](http://www.ncbiznews.com) site. Students will also be in charge of the social media, the daily email distribution and promoting the content.

This course will:

1. Run a website that contains breaking news about North Carolina companies based on their SEC filings, press releases and web content;
2. Create templates for those stories so that the content can be quickly written and downloaded to the site;
3. Market the content to interested media organizations in North Carolina;
4. Publish a daily email alert system that sends out daily a budget of stories available to media organizations;
5. Explore ways to use social media to increase readership.

Students will be graded based on:

1. Quality of work;
2. Ability to work as a team;
3. Ease at determining how to use Sqoop.com to find stories;
4. Number of stories produced;
5. Amount of stories picked up by media organizations;
6. Ability to cover news in real-time;
7. Success in monitoring a variety of sources to break news.

GRADING:

The bulk of the grading of this course is primarily (70 percent) quantitative and is focused on your writing. The requirement is that each student write at least one story the first week of the semester and at least two stories for each of the following weeks.   
  
Stories will be graded on speed and accuracy. If you write two stories for a week, then can receive a 100 percent for that week – UNLESS one of the stories has a fact error and must be corrected. If you only write one story during a week, the highest grade for that week would be 50 percent. At the end of the semester, your grades for each week will be averaged.

In addition, each student must write one longer, in-depth story about a company. That story will count as part of your grade for the last week of the semester. **Please be on the lookout for potential companies to write in-depth about.**Students will also need to cover one real-time news event during the course of the semester in a flash headlines format. These headlines will be posted as real-time tweets on the newswire twitter account. Your performance in this task will count for 10 percent of your grade and will be judged on speed, accuracy and content.

**Students will be required to produce a story within TWO HOURS of saying they will write it.**

Once the story is ready to be edited and posted, please send the instructor an email or a Slack message. **DO NOT post stories until the instructor has had a chance to review and edit.**

Stories will include:

1. 8-K materially important events happening in public North Carolina and Maryland companies;
2. Insider buying and selling;
3. Quarterly earnings;
4. Companies filing to sell additional shares;
5. Executive compensation;
6. Buying and selling of stock by major shareholders;
7. WARN ACT filings;
8. Form D filings for private companies;
9. Patent and trademark applications;
10. Press releases;
11. Twitter and other social media.

FINAL EXAM: The final exam will be one-longer, in-depth story about a North Carolina company. The final exam will count for 20 percent of your grade for this class.

**Grading:**

A: 92-100

A-: 90-92

B+: 88-90

B: 82-88

B-: 80-82

C+: 78-80

C: 72-78

C-: 70-72

D+: 68-70

D: 62-68

D-: 60-62

F: Below 60

The final grade will be determined as follows:

70%=Writing assignments.  
  
10%= Live Event Coverage.

20%=Final project paper.

**Schedule:**With the exception of the first week where students will be required to write one story, students will write two stories every week. This will be ongoing throughout the semester.

Week 1: Build Tweet Deck for NC companies and share with team and write one story.  
  
Week 2: Build coverage calendar for September  
  
Week 6: Build coverage calendar for October  
  
Week 10: Build coverage calendar for November  
  
Live event should be done in the course of the semester but must be completed by Dec. 11.  
  
Final project due Dec. 11.

**Setting up Slack:**

Each student will be added to the Slack site by the instructor. However, each student should also download the Slack app on their phones and check it regularly each day. Slack is how the class communicates with each other, and how the instructor lets you know when stories are available and who has been assigned what stories to write.

**Setting up Sqoop.com:**

1. Go to [sqoop.com](http://sqoop.com) and create an account.

2. Under search, click on “Search in your current location.”

3. Under name, enter “North Carolina

4. Under state, enter “NC.”

5. Click the green “save” button.

6.In the left-hand column, click all of the SEC filings.

7. Click the green “Save Search” button.

8. Add a title to the search.

9. Under “Alert settings,” add how many times a day you want to receive the email.

10. Click “save.”

You will now get email alerts of SEC filings from North Carolina companies.

Other:

1. After the first week, when each student writes one story, each student will be required to write two stories a week in the website. Students are free to write more. The more you write, the more opportunities you have to get picked up by the media.
2. At the end of each story, add the tagline, “This story is from the North Carolina Business News Wire, a service of UNC-Chapel Hill’s School of Media and Journalism” **Note there is no period at the end.**
3. Each student will post on Slack when they pick up a story so that there is no duplication of effort. We operate on a first-come, first-serve basis.
4. Each student will post on Slack when their stories are in the website to let me know to edit/approve them.

Stories:

1. Each story must include the town or city where the company is headquartered.
2. Each story must include a sentence describing what the company does.
3. Each story must include the company’s current stock price, if publicly traded.
4. Each story must include a link to the SEC filing.
5. **If the story is about a private company, it needs to include information about the CEO/founder.**
6. **If the private company has a YouTube video explaining what it does, please embed that in your story.**

Other helpful resources are here: <http://guides.lib.unc.edu/BusinessNewsWire>

NOTE:

Speed is a necessary component to running a business wire service. People make investment and business decisions based on what they read every day. We will explore how speed plays a part in the North Carolina Business News Wire throughout the semester. What we learned during 2016-17 and 2017-18 is that the faster stories get posted, the more likely they will be picked up by other media.

**Hence, the two-hour requirement for breaking news stories. These are not long stories. If you follow the story templates, they should not take long to write.**

**Honor Code:**

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system ([http://honor.unc.edu](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=_PwXhu5wkEKfdEIVTpil9KJAr6RORM8IBwmgW7JyZPUuO4or7Dri_9D4gXEkBO0Z0IIreRKEjIQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fhonor.unc.edu)). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code.  If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

**Seeking Help:**

If you need individual assistance, it’s your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

**Diversity:**

The University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in on the EOC website at <https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/>*.* UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

**Special Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at [*http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/*](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=_PwXhu5wkEKfdEIVTpil9KJAr6RORM8IBwmgW7JyZPUuO4or7Dri_9D4gXEkBO0Z0IIreRKEjIQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fdisabilityservices.unc.edu%2f)

**Accreditation:**

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program.  Learn more about them here: [http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=XciXt6cD-UGWmSsiOI50ZzqEMU9vI9AI9RIjk3k3N01dLuvhbfv_0PYGw11_4sIpiXYZSqGOi3A.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww2.ku.edu%2f%7eacejmc%2fPROGRAM%2fPRINCIPLES.SHTML%23vals%26comps)

 No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.  In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.