

MEJO 459.1 COMMUNITY JOURNALISM 459

Fall 2023

Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.,

Room: CA 59

Carl W. Kenney II

Assistant Professor of Practice

Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 12:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

or by appointment

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OVERVIEW

Despite losses, community newspapers still dominate the U.S. Market.

“A newspaper is the center of a community, it’s one of the tent poles of the community, and that’s not going to be replaced by web sites and blogs.”

*Michael Connelly, former Daytona Beach News-Journal reporter
and successful author with more than two dozen crime-related
novels*

Ours is a country dominated in numbers by small newspapers — papers that practice “community framing,” throwing much of their news and editorial weight behind local coverage and the local angle. However, many beginners suffer under the common misconception that the community paper is just a smaller version of the big-city daily. Nothing could be further from the truth. As you will learn in this course, the enlightened community paper plays a unique and vital role in the life of its community. Compared to the major metro dailies, most community newspapers have a fundamentally different approach to the factors of news judgment, and indeed, to every facet of the *philosophy of news*.

METHODOLOGY AND FORMAT: Theory into Practice

In practical terms, journalism theory doesn’t get into practice any more effectively than by putting your words and pictures online and in print. So, in this class we’ll talk the talk, AND walk the walk.

Our project-based learning will focus on *the VOICE*, a Durham, NC online publication. **We’ll produce six Web-based editions of the VOICE.**

ABOUT THE VOICE

The VOICE is produced by our class. We will hear from Durham leaders. These conversations help us better understand the dynamics at work in Durham. *The VOICE* can help create *civic engagement*, that vital ingredient of a healthy democracy. It's what Walter Lippmann meant when he said,

"A free press is not a privilege, but an organic necessity in a great society..."

As we produce *the VOICE*, we will be dealing with all the major issues facing the complete community journalist: the nature of the community being served, the role of the media in that community, the culture and character of each paper, as well as journalism ethics, news, features, editorials, sports, lifestyle, the interview, graphics and design, photojournalism, emerging technology, business, newsroom management and personnel.

Our class will focus on Durham's upcoming primary and municipal elections. You will Interview candidates for mayor and city council, members of political action committees and Durham residents to tell the story of this election. We will spend time during class to discuss Issues, the candidates and community concerns.

There are opportunities to write stories based on specific Issues. Like many communities across America, Durham residents are Impacted by gentrification, massive Infrastructure changes which Impede the ecosystem, crime, lost Identity and other concerns, some known and others developing in the moment.

This course meets the General Education diversity requirement: "Courses in U.S. diversity help students develop a greater understanding of diverse peoples and cultures within the United States and thereby enhance their ability to fulfill their obligations of United States citizenship. These courses address in systematic fashion one or more aspects of diversity in the United States, whether arising from ethnic, generational, class, gender, sexual, regional, or religious differences" (p. 29).

THE SPECS

Over the course of the semester, each student journalist will produce five story/photo packages of 500–700-word count, (500 words min.) including a photo and caption. In addition, the class will write endorsements for Durham mayor and three at-large candidates to serve on the city council. Your story/photo packages for *the Durham VOICE* and your involvement in the process will count as **60 percent** of the final grade. Every story **MUST** be accompanied by a photograph. I want each of you to have the experience of illustrating your own story. As to taking your own photos, you may use a smartphone so long it's one of the newer generation models like the iPhone 6s or later.

STORY/PHOTO DUE-DATES

Here are the story/photo deadlines.

This course is taught in collaboration with MEJO 557, News Editing, taught by Professor Andy Bechtel. On deadline days, our class will send a google doc file with each story to the News Editing class for edits. Edited stories will return in time for conversation and rewrites prior to the launch of Durham VOICE.

September 19, Tues.	VOICE #1
October 3, Tues	VOICE #2
October 17, Tues	VOICE #3
October 31, Tues	VOICE #4
November 9, Tues	VOICE #5

TEXT

COMMUNITY JOURNALISM: *Relentlessly Local*

by Jock Lauterer

UNC Press, 3nd. ed., 2006. \$41.95.

ASSIGNED READING

For all assignments, you must have a clear understanding of the relevant materials in the textbook. Everything we discuss in class has ties to the textbook, although we may not always specifically cite chapters and page numbers during our discussions. For each reading assignment, you will send me an e-reflection (a big, hefty paragraph) via SAKAI'S *forums* (reading responses), explaining what you learned from the reading and how the reading relates to your prior experience and/or your experiences with the *VOICE*.

Each of the reflections is due by 1:15 p.m. before class on the date listed in the class schedule. *For late **reading** assignments, the instructor will dock late work one letter grade for every day that it is late. Hence, one day late is a B, two days late is a C, and three days late is a D. After four days, the late assignment turns into a zero.*

This component is worth 20 percent of the final grade. The 15 reading due dates are listed below:

1. Foreword, Preface and Introduction, Ch. 1 & 2	Aug 29, Tues.
2. Ch. 3 & 4 Framing community	Aug 31, Thur.
3. Ch. 16 Ethics	Sept. 7, Thur.
4. Ch. 5 & 6 Newspaper ownership	Sept. 12, Tues.

5. Ch. 7	News	Sept. 14, Thurs.
6. Ch. 8	Features	Sept. 19, Tues.
7. Ch. 14	Photojournalism	Sept. 26, Tues.
8. Ch. 9	Editorials/Commentary	Sept. 28, Thurs.
9. Ch. 15	Technology and "Reality Check"	Oct. 3, Tues.
10. Ch. 10	Interviewing and Writing	Oct. 5, Thurs.
11. Ch. 17 & 18	Business/Personnel	Oct. 10, Tues.
12. Ch. 13	Graphics	Oct. 12, Thurs.
13. Ch. 19	Hablamos Espanol?	Oct. 24, Tues.
14. Ch. 12	Sports	Oct. 31, Tues.
15. Ch. 23	Two Case Studies of Start-Ups	Nov. 9, Thurs.

GUEST SPEAKERS

During this course, several guest speakers will introduce you to their life and work in Durham. We will discuss your perceptions during the following class. Also, you'll need to take notes for your final project.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS

Come prepared to discuss articles or broadcast reports about Durham during each class period.

THE REPORTER'S FINAL PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Due at our **Last Day of Class, Tuesday, December 5**, in a three-ring binder you will turn in a final portfolio containing:

- Original hard copy of all five stories, with my marks showing.
- Print-outs of all your photos.
- Clips you have made from screenshots of your online work
- A 10-page minimum reflection and self-evaluation of your reporting experiences, your photography experiences, and your thoughts about our guest speakers and the public service/mentoring work you've done.
- A listing of your contacts and sources: name, title, company or organization, address, phone and email.

The portfolio will be graded at semester's end as the Final Project in this class, worth 20 percent of the total grade. Note: at best, this is an incremental project, not something to be knocked out on an all-nighter before the due date. You need to be building this as the semester goes along. Yes, you can make this as creative and fun as you like, decorating it with drawings, designs, photos, quotes...etc.

ATTENDANCE; DEADLINES

This is a professional level class. Stories and/or photos for the VOICE **not making deadline will receive an automatic F/zero**. No exceptions. No excuses. Zero tolerance. Consider yourself forewarned and thus, forearmed.

*For late **reading** assignments, the instructor will dock late work one letter grade for every day that it is late. Hence, one day late is a B, two days late is a C, and three days late is a D. After four days, the late work turns into a zero.*

AP/UNC/CC STYLE

Your VOICE stories will be graded for spelling, grammar and AP Style. The *VOICE Handbook and Style Guides* are our bibles for style and formatting issues. If you don't own an *AP Stylebook*, get one. The new online UNC Stylebook is also very handy.

GRADING

Your final grade will be the result of the following formula:

VOICE stories	60 percent
Text reading reaction papers	20 percent
The Reporter's Portfolio/Final Project	20 percent

GRADING SCALE

Grades will be determined according to the following break-out.

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
78-79	C+
72-77	C
70-71	C-
60-69	D
Below 60	F

CLASS SCHEDULE

Insofar as it's possible, here is the classroom/newsroom schedule for this semester. It would be smart to mark these DEADLINES in your calendar now.

August 22	First class, org'ing, assigning staff roles, etc., the book, readings, class structure and format, notecards, the Durham Community VOICE <i>Assign: Research the Durham Hayti Community and Durham's Black Wall Street</i>
August 24	Class discussion: Hayti and Black Wall Street. What 's the Impact on the upcoming election Who are the candidates for mayor and city council?
August 29	Reading 1 due: Foreword, Preface and Introduction, and Ch. 1 & 2. Durham County Government Brenda Howerton Chairwoman Durham Board of County Commissioners
August 31	Reading 2 due: Ch. 3 & 4 Durham's Political Action Committees Dr. Andrea Benjamin Associate Professor University of Oklahoma
Sept 5	Well-being Day. No Classes Held
Sept. 7	Reading 3 due: Ethics, Chapter 16, Framing community, story assignments, more basics involving community journalism
Sept. 12	Reading 4 due: Newspaper Ownership, Ch. 5&6 Jacqueline Wagstaff Former member of both Durham City Council and Board of Education
Sept. 14	Reading 5 due: News, Chapter 7 Class discussion: What's the story? How to write that story
Sept. 19	Reading 6 due: Features, Chapter 8

	Peer Review of stories, submit Durham VOICE #1 stories for edits
Sept. 21	Durham and Gentrification Class discussion: What's the next story
Sept. 26	Reading 7 due: Photojournalism, Chapter 14 Discussion: Municipal Election Endorsement
Sept. 28	Reading 8 due: Editorials/Commentary, Ch. 9 Launch Durham VOICE #1
Oct. 3	Reading 9 due: Technology & Reality Check, Ch. 15 Peer Review: Durham VOICE #2 Submit Durham VOICE #2 stories for edits
Oct. 5	Reading 10 due: Interviewing & Writing, Chapter 10 Class discussion: What's the story
Oct. 10	Reading 11 due: Business/Personnel, Ch. 17 & 18 Class Discussion: Candidate endorsement
Oct. 12	Reading 12 due: Graphics, Chapter 13 Launch Durham VOICE #2
Oct. 17	Submit Durham VOICE #3 stories for edits Class Discussion: What's the story
Oct. 19	Fall Break, No Class
Oct. 24	Reading 13 due: Hablamos Espanol? Chapter 19 Launch Durham VOICE #3
Oct. 26	Discuss and write municipal election endorsements Launch General Election Endorsements
Oct. 31	Reading 14 due: Sports, Chapter 12 Submit Durham VOICE #4 stories for edits Class Discussion: What's the story
Nov. 2	Peer Review: Durham VOICE #5 Class Discussion: The untold stories
Nov. 7	Class Discussion: Thoughts on today's election What are the post-election stories Launch Durham VOICE #4

Nov. 9	Reading 15 due: Two Case Studies of Start-Ups, Chapter 23 Submit Durham VOICE #5 for edits
Nov. 14	Class Discussion: Lessons from the election
Nov. 16	Updates and rewrites of Durham VOICE #5 stories Launch Durham VOICE #5
Nov. 21-27	Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 28	Class Discussion: What's the story Preparing your portfolio
Nov. 30 Dec.5	Class Discussion: A letter to Durham, editorial writing Last day of class. Final Projects due Celebration of our work Class Evaluations

Title IX: Any student who is affected by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident.

ARS: UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodation is determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS site for contact information: ars.unc.edu or email ars@unc.edu.

Counseling and psychological services: CAPS is committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to the website caps.unc.edu or contact [Carolyn Eberling](#), the CAPS embedded counselor in the Hussman School.

Policy on non-discrimination: The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions

without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied. If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident.

Diversity and inclusion: I strive to make our classroom an inclusive place for all students. The journalism school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on prohibiting harassment and discrimination. 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 status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Honor code: Students are expected to conduct themselves within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with high levels of honesty and integrity. You are expected to produce your own work in this course. 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 you may speak with a representative of the office of the Dean of Students

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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 the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. 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 needs:

If you have any disability or other special situation that might make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

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>

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 values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

