

MEJO 625.002 MEDIA HUB SPRING 2024

MW 12:30-1:45, CT 301

Instructor: Amy Fulk

Office hours: By appointment. in-person or Zoom

Email: Amy.Fulk@unc.edu

Phone: 919-523-8335

FOREWORD:

This syllabus is a plan based on hope and ambition. My hope is that you will all hit the ground running. My ambition is that this course can proceed with rigor and enthusiasm. My goal remains unchanged: that you succeed, become better storytellers, and have your work published.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a serious course for serious students. This course is entirely hands-on. Under the direction of the instructor, students from the school's various specialty areas work together to find, produce and market stories that would attract the attention of professional media partners throughout the state and region, and at times, the nation. We produce multiple versions of each story and expect each to be at a level of quality to warrant publication. We expect you to be an expert on your particular platform, and conversant enough with the other platforms to earn the title of APJ (all-platform journalist). We look for stories with broad appeal. We concentrate on trends and developments that many news organizations don't have the staff to cover.

The majority of the work in this class will be fieldwork — from chasing down leads to investigating tips; securing sources; performing print, audio or video interviews; capturing video and audio; pitching stories to news managers; promoting the students' work regionally; etc. Each week, every student on every team will spend a majority of their time working outside the classroom to capture and gather the raw materials necessary to turn these packages into professional-quality work. The stories will involve local, regional and national issues, and the teams will pitch all the completed packages to professional news outlets across the state, region and country.

The marketing team coordinates with the content teams so that we might keep our professional partners apprised as we move through the newsgathering, production, and delivery phases of the work. As a team, the marketing group produces contact lists for media outlets across the state, building on the strong relationships established in earlier semesters. The marketing team also continues to brand the Media Hub initiative, chart pickups by professional outlets, develop best practices, and contribute to the degree possible to content creation.

COURSE WORK:

This mimics the professional journalist's work environment more than any other class in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Because teamwork is expected in the professional work, it's expected here, too. Students will be assigned to cross-functional teams. Each content creator is expected to produce four projects. At least two students must collaborate on each project. For instance, a writer and photographer work together to produce a story with photos; or a graphic artist and a broadcaster work together to produce a video with graphics. Each story should be the efforts of one journalist. We do NOT produce double byline stories.

STORIES:

Before you pitch a story ask yourself three questions:

- * Can I bring a unique angle to it?
- * How many people does it affect?
- * Can I get it?

Print pieces 1 and 2 will average 1,000-1,500 words each; pieces 3 and 4 will average 2,000 words each. Broadcast and multimedia pieces will require effort that mirrors this – generally 2 minutes, 30 seconds. Print projects 1 and 2 must include four human sources each. Print projects 3 and 4 must include **five** human sources each. Video stories may include GoPro videos and will include relevant natural sound pops at least every 45 seconds on average. Graphics & photo efforts will be similar in scope. TV stories must include standups.

With instructor permission, students who are fluent in languages other than English may swap out one of their first two stories in exchange for translating two stories – theirs or a classmate's – into another language.

When you interview sources, be explicit that you are working on a story FOR PUBLICATION. Related, don't identify yourself as a student journalist. You're a reporter working on a story about XXX. If they ask for whom, say "Media Hub at UNC. We write/broadcast/shoot stories that are published across the state."

Each team's project will have a leader, and everyone, except the PR team member, will lead one project. That team leader is expected to update the instructor via email **each Sunday** on the team's progress on the project.

The best writing comes with rewriting. Scripts/drafts/outlines are due for review a few days before the finished draft is due. (Schedule below.) Assume your work will be sent back to you with edits, likely more than once. Re-reporting and re-shooting may also be required. Each content team member is responsible for each other team member's work. That is, before anything is considered ready for publication, each team member will have read and OK'd the work.

Students will also follow the class Twitter and Instagram pages and like the class Facebook page. Branding and networking are goals of media professionals in the real world. You're expected to RT and share your classmates' posts on social media as well as your own.

PITCHING

The PR students in the class are responsible for pitching stories to outside publications, posting to the website and handling the course social media accounts. For each story, a student producing the story is required to send their PR representative a pitch email that outlines what their story is about and best places to pitch it. Examples will be distributed in class. The PR team will not pitch a story for publication until the pitch email is received.

LATE WORK:

Making deadline counts. Missing deadline hurts. Pay close attention to deadlines and details. Justified extensions will be granted by the instructor grudgingly, **but all students will be expected to submit their work progress on deadline.**

DETERMINATION OF GRADE:

Projects one and two will each count 20 percent of your grade. Project three will count 25 percent, and project four will count 35 percent.

Your grade will be based on objective and subjective criteria, as will whether you're hired and subsequently retained by a news or sports operation or marketing firm after you graduate. I will assess both the quality and quantity of your work. You will be evaluated on these measures:

- * The quality of your pitch/idea (the more interesting and enterprising, the better);
- * The quality of your work, from first submitted piece to publication ready. Take note: If your first draft requires significant rewriting, that will be reflected in the overall grade of the piece.

- * Your deadline performance, both on the initial submission and rewrites;
- * The degree to which you've stretched yourself;
- * Your classroom performance (attendance, arriving on time, productivity, using social media, giving the expected information to the Marketing team).

Before final grades are calculated, you will be asked to evaluate your performance. Failure to complete that evaluation will affect your final grade. Grading throughout the semester is conducted on a numerical scale. Each student begins each assignment with a raw score of 100. Points are added or subtracted from that according to the standards listed below. You may determine your approximate grade standing in the course by converting your numerical grades to letter grades on your assignments according to this scale:

90 and above	= A
80 - 89	= B
70 - 79	= C
60 - 69	= D
below 60	= F

Grades may be assigned plusses and minuses; using this scale: A numerical grade of 80-81.9 is a B-; 82-87.9 is a B; and 88-89.9 is a B+. The same applies to all letter grade except there is no A+ or D-.

Under the definitions established by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, students who receive the following letter grades are considered to have reached the level of attainment defining that letter. Thus, letter grades received for reporting and writing courses may be interpreted as follows. We'll be looking to see which of the following categories best describes you and your efforts:

A: nearly perfect in execution... quality and quantity of work is exceptional

A-: stands out from crowd (in a good way!)... good attitude... work is impressive in terms of quantity and quality... very few problems all term... works like career depends on it

B+: very good performance... would get an unqualified job recommendation... consistently does more than required... a self starter

B: solid effort... would have no problem recommending this person

B-: with a bit more polish, this person should make it in the business... good team player

C+: good in one phase of job, but consistent problems in another phase or contributed in only one phase

C: acceptable work... follows instructions... understands basics.... but didn't perform/contribute across the board...punches the clock.

C-: has glimpses of potential in a limited range of jobs

D: needs to consider a different field

F: wouldn't have gotten this far

In addition, graduate students will produce a fifth project, with the same or greater rigor.

EQUIPMENT

The Park Library lends gear. Here is how to access it: <https://equipmentroom.mj.unc.edu/>

Here are the equipment manuals for the gear lent: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals>

CARE OF EQUIPMENT:

Broadcast students will share the video gear. The course has two DSLR sets in the library devoted to our use. It's your responsibility to be very cautious regarding the field gear and editing equipment. When you check out or reserve gear, take a moment to look it over to see if anything is wrong and report it immediately. If anything happens to the equipment while it's checked out in your name, you'll be responsible for the cost of repairs. So, return every piece in the same condition it was in when you took it out.

****NEVER LEAVE EQUIPMENT UNATTENDED!!!** BE AS PARANOID AS YOU HAVE TO BE, IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!! DO NOT LEAVE EQUIPMENT IN YOUR CAR.**

ATTENDANCE:

University Policy:

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

HONOR CODE:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.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. 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 Julie Dixon-Green, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

SYLLABUS CHANGES

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

ARS

The University of North Carolina at 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. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.
(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly 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 their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

TITLE IX

Any student who is impacted 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 <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsoc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

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 <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

DIVERSITY

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](#) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harassment and discrimination](#). In summary, 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

ACCREDITATION:

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

NOTE: Always be professional in your dealings with your fellow workers and the people you meet as you gather news. News directors and editors say they want people with good attitudes as well as solid journalism skills.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

January 10 Course overview. Formation of teams.

January 17 Idea generation; create a list of 8 doable ideas; team leaders determined. Every Wednesday after this date, each team will send a two-paragraph report outlining progress on upcoming stories.

January 24 First project pitch due

February 5 First project due

February 7 Second project pitch due

February 26 Second project due

February 28 Third project pitch due

March 18 Third project due

March 20 Fourth project pitch due

April 24 Fourth project due

May 6 Final presentations

Motto to live by: One-stop shopping doesn't cut it in this class. If it's a story a professional could turn in a day, it's not MH worthy.