

Loyola University Chicago | Fall 2019
COMM 208-201 Reporting Basics II: Technology for Journalists
Monday | 4:15 to 6:45 p.m.
School of Communication Room 003

Instructor: Katie Drews

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(Please allow up to 24 hours for a response & longer on weekends)

Office Hours: Mondays | 3 to 4 p.m. | Location TBD

Course Description

This course is designed to teach you the fundamentals of technology used in today's newsrooms to report and tell stories. You will learn the basics of audio and video storytelling, photography, website management and computer-assisted reporting -- all the while practicing and improving your core journalistic skills. The goal is to make you feel comfortable and confident in using a wide variety of technologies to produce well-planned, well-written and well-edited stories. Ultimately, this course aims to offer you a taste of different mediums and tools to help you choose how best to tell your stories, as well as your own path within journalism.

Required Materials

Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production by Jonathan Kern
Associated Press Stylebook (*Either the book or [an online subscription](#)*)

Wordpress hosting (*Free or paid plans are available through [Siteground.com](#). More info to come.*)

You should also be reading local and national publications daily to stay current with the news. This includes your own campus paper, the [Loyola Phoenix](#). The Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Tribune and NY Times [are all available for free](#) through the library.

For photo, audio and video assignments, you may use your own equipment, including the recorder or camera on your cell phone or tablet. If you don't have your own gear—don't worry. You can borrow Loyola's gear from the Owl Lab in SOC 004. You can see the full rules for the Owl Lab [here](#) and reserve equipment [here](#). For some projects, you will be able to download free

copies of software onto your own laptops. Again, don't worry if you don't have one. The digital media labs will have everything you'll need. You can work there. Some of these technologies may be new to you and you might run into snags. It will be up to you to troubleshoot the best you can. If you need extra help with gear or software, your next step would be to go to the Owl Lab or Loyola's Digital Media Services.

Assignments & Projects

Assignments, both in class and on your own, will be designed to help you develop your skills using communication technologies in a journalistic setting. The major sections will include a larger project on which to demonstrate those skills. Each person will also maintain a professionally focused website to publicly post your work.

In addition, we will have several ongoing or rolling assignments throughout the semester:

AP Style Quizzes

We will adhere to AP Style for all writing assignments in this course to ensure your copy is clean and consistent. To help you learn and memorize the style guidelines, we will have a short AP Style quiz each class period. It will be open book, so you can reference the style guide during the quiz. Quizzes cannot be made up if you miss class. At the end of the semester, I will drop the quiz with the lowest grade.

Email Newsletter

Together we will create an ongoing classroom newsletter that will deliver news to your inbox every Monday before class. Each student will be responsible for creating the newsletter for one week over the course of the semester, and you can sign up for your time slot [here](#). When it's your turn, you will curate the news that's been published in the past week and select 10 to 15 stories you think would be most newsworthy for your audience. When it is not your turn, you will be expected to read all of the news stories your colleagues have compiled on a weekly basis. Please see the assignment in Sakai for more details.

Podcast

Also together as a class, we will create a podcast on journalism and the media with episodes regularly published throughout the semester. You will be responsible for creating one episode during which you will conduct and produce an interview with a media professional on a

particular topic. We will brainstorm and discuss topic ideas as a class so that as a whole our podcast represents a variety of viewpoints and themes. You can sign up for your time slot and topic [here](#). Please see the assignment in Sakai for more details.

Facebook Group

I have created a private Facebook group for members of this class only. Please find the group “[COMM 208: Reporting Basics II](#)” and request to join. We will use this online forum to develop your professional social media skills as it relates to your public persona and promoting your work. But perhaps more importantly, this forum will also be a community for all of us to engage in outside of the classroom. We will regularly share links, tips, sources, ideas, questions -- you name it -- in a safe, judgment-free zone. Your contributions will factor into your participation grade.

Grading

Grades will be weighted according to the following scale:

Assignments/Quizzes: 20%

News story + photo: 15%

Video story: 15%

Podcast: 15%

Final project: 25%

Participation: 10%

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the accumulated points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale: A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%; C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 64-66%; D- 60-63%; F 0-59%

Grading criteria

Each assignment will have specific instructions. Remember, technology is a vehicle for storytelling, but using sound journalistic practices remains the priority. In general, grades will be determined considering the following criteria:

--Were instructions followed?

--Is your content clear and concise?

- Is your lead compelling?
- Are your quotes lively and informative?
- Is it organized in a thoughtful and logical way?
- Is it thoroughly researched with multiple sources?
- Is it factually accurate? If you have any major factual errors, your grade will automatically be dropped by one letter grade.
- Is proper grammar, punctuation and spelling used? All content should be in AP Style.
- Is your web post complete? (Including a headline, hyperlinks where appropriate, a photo or graphic with credits and captions, etc.)

Story Subjects

For objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, close friends or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't build stories around people you are related to or are particularly close to. Likewise, avoid doing stories about groups you belong to. Such stories will receive a grade reduction, unless: 1) it is a unique circumstance, 2) the story is about your connection to the story subject, and 3) the connection is revealed in the story. Please contact me in advance if you have a story idea that would justify first-person involvement, but these should be the exception and not the rule.

Furthermore, you cannot use content from another journalist or organization in your work. All work for this class must be original and produced during and for this course.

Rewrites

If you receive a grade of C- or below on a story assignment, you have one week to rewrite the story for an improved grade. Your final grade for the assignment will be the average of the two scores.

Deadlines

Meeting deadlines is a critical part of being a journalist. So is managing multiple assignments at one time. Always be mindful of upcoming deadlines and manage your time accordingly. Remember to allow ample time for getting a hold of sources and be prepared for technology to fail when you need it the most. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. If there are truly extenuating circumstances, you must discuss it with me before your deadline.

Participation

You will be expected to display a proper level of professionalism by attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions and critiques. Please be respectful when it comes to using your cell phone and laptop during class. If you are absent, it will be your responsibility to seek out a classmate to see what you missed. Frequent absences and/or tardiness will result in a lower participation grade.

Final Project

There will be a final project in lieu of a final exam, which will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. The project will incorporate several elements using the various technologies. Final projects will be due on the day and time of our scheduled final, Monday, December 9 at 4:15 p.m. We will meet during the final exam period and everyone will present their projects to the class. Details will be distributed later in the semester and on Sakai.

School of Communication Statement on Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher;
- Providing information to another student during an examination;
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination;
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor;
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted;

- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom;
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines; or
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.;
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material;
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit; or
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml .

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction. The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances.

The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml .

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.

Special Needs

Any student with a learning disability that needs special accommodation during exams or class periods should provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities confidentially to me. I will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is your responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet your own needs and assignment due dates.

Schedule *(Subject to change)*

Additional homework may be assigned. You will also be expected to complete outside work in order to finish your story assignments. In addition to any assigned homework for the week, you should be regularly working on your upcoming projects. For details about your upcoming assignments and projects, please refer to Sakai.

Week One - August 26

Introductions, course overview and expectations; Interviewing

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 4 & Chapter 10; Begin setting up your blog and start brainstorming story ideas

Week Two - September 2

Labor Day - NO CLASS

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 9, Chapter 11 & pages 324-328 (section on podcasting)

Week Three - September 9

Intro to audio storytelling & podcasts; Recording sound & elements of a radio package

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting pages 80-83 "Finding sounds & scenes", Chapter 12 up until "Producing Music Pieces" on page 228; Find and evaluate three radio news pieces.

Week Four - September 16

Audio editing

DUE: Story pitches for news story + photo project

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 2

Week Five - September 23

Intro to photography; Photo ethics & editing techniques

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 13; Find and evaluate three news photos.

Week Six - September 30

Photo critique; Writing captions, headlines and social media posts

MID-SEMESTER BREAK - NO CLASS OCTOBER 7

Week Seven - October 14

Refining your blog & using a content management system

DUE: Story pitches for video project

Week Eight - October 21

Intro to broadcast journalism; Shooting video & elements of a video package

Project Deadline: News Story + Photo Due Monday, October 21

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 3; Find and evaluate three news videos.

Week Nine - October 28

Script writing; Video editing

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 8

Week Ten - November 4

Video critiques; Planning a multimedia project

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 18 (skip section on “podcasting” from pg. 324-328); Find and evaluate three multimedia stories.

Week Eleven - November 11

Intro to computer-assisted reporting (CAR)

DUE: Story pitches for final project

Project Deadline: Video Story Due Monday, November 11

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 6; Find and evaluate three data-driven stories.

Week Twelve - November 18

Cleaning, analyzing & working with data

HOMEWORK: Read Sound Reporting Chapter 15

Week Thirteen - November 25

Intro to data visualization; Creating charts, maps & graphics using data

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three news infographics.

Week Fourteen - December 2

Wrap-up final projects

Final Examination - Monday, December 9 from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m.

Present final projects

Project Deadline: Final Project Due