

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 208 Reporting Basics II: Technology for Journalists
Spring 2019
Monday-Wednesday-Friday/11:30-12:20 p.m.
School of Communication Room 015

Instructor: Katie Drews
Email: kdrews1@luc.edu (Please allow up to 24 hours for a response)
Phone: 630-981-1528 (cell)
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to teach you the fundamentals of technology used in today's newsrooms to report events and tell stories. You will learn the basics of photography, graphics, audio and video, as well as computer-assisted reporting and website building, while practicing your 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

Associated Press Stylebook

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. 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.

Grading

Grades will be weighted according to the following scale:

Assignments/Exercises: 20%

News story + photo: 10%

Data story + graphic: 15%
Video story: 15%
Audio Q&A: 10%
Final project: 20%
Professionalism/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 post complete? (Including SEO headline, hyperlinks where appropriate, a photo or graphic with credits and captions, etc.)

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.

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. Late assignments will drop one letter grade each day they are filed past deadline. Remember to allow ample time for getting a hold of sources and be prepared for technology to fail when you need it the most.

Professionalism/participation

This class is run like a newsroom, and you should treat it as if it were your job. Therefore, you will be expected to display a respectable level of professionalism by attending class regularly, arriving on time, being prepared for class, paying attention during lectures and participating in discussions and critiques. The use of technology for purposes unrelated to this class will not be tolerated. If you're expecting to be absent or late, please call or email me before class, the same as if I were your editor. Frequent absences and/or tardiness will result in a lower grade.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. 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;
- 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.

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 <http://luc.edu/english/writing.shtml#source> .

In addition, a student may not submit the same paper or other work for credit in two or more classes. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during 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.

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 appropriate area head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

A complete description of the School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <http://www.luc.edu/soc/Policy.shtml>

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 (SSWD) 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. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, can be found on the SSWD website.

Schedule *(Subject to change)*

For details about your upcoming assignments and projects, please refer to Sakai. Additional readings may be posted on Sakai and/or emailed at least one week before they are due. You will also be expected to complete outside work in order to finish your story assignments. In addition to any assigned homework, you should be regularly working on your upcoming projects.

Week One

January 14, 16, 18

Introductions, course overview and expectations; Review reporting & writing essentials; Finding story ideas

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three examples of stories with strong leads. Connect with sources and start developing story ideas.

Week Two

January 23, 25 (No class on January 21)

Building a website & using a content management system; Ethics in online journalism

HOMEWORK: Begin setting up your blog.

Week Three

January 28, 30, February 1

Intro to photography; Photo ethics & editing techniques in Photoshop; Writing captions, headlines and social media posts

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three examples of effective news photos. Take at least one news photo for publication. Edit and post to your blog (with captions).

Week Four

February 4, 6, 8

Photo critique; Intro to computer-assisted reporting (CAR) & methods for obtaining data

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three examples of data-driven stories. Find a dataset that interests you and develop story ideas for a data-driven story.

Week Five

February 11, 13, 15

Cleaning, analyzing & working with data

HOMEWORK: Complete exercises with practice datasets.

Project Deadline: News Story + Photo Due Monday, February 11

Week Six

February 18, 20, 22

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

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three examples of compelling graphics. Create a graphic with your practice dataset and post to your blog.

Week Seven

February 25, 27, March 1

Graphic critique; Overview of additional CAR resources & web-based reporting tools

SPRING BREAK (No class March 4-8)

Week Eight

March 11, 13, 15

Intro to broadcast journalism & types of video storytelling; Shooting video & elements of a video package; Person-on-the-street interviews

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three news videos each with a unique style of storytelling. Develop story ideas for a video story.

Project Deadline: Data Story + Graphic Due Monday, March 11

Week Nine

March 18, 20, 22

Script writing; Video editing & voiceovers; Potential guest speaker

HOMEWORK: Edit and post your person-on-the-street video to your blog.

Week Ten

March 25, 27, 29

Video critiques; Planning a multimedia project

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three multimedia stories that inspire you. Develop story ideas for your final project.

Week Eleven

April 1, 3, 5

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

HOMEWORK: Find and evaluate three different kinds of audio pieces. Set up interview for audio Q&A.

Project Deadline: Video Story Due Monday, April 1

Week Twelve

April 8, 10, 12

Audio editing; Potential guest speaker

Week Thirteen

April 15, 17 (No class on Friday, April 19)

Refining your blog & Coding 101

Project Deadline: Audio Q&A Due Monday, April 15

Week Fourteen

April 24, 26 (No class on Monday, April 22)

Wrap-up final projects

Final Examination

Monday, April 29 from 1-3 p.m.

Present final projects

Final Project Due