Overview: This course is the gateway introduction to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, and to your own progression of study here. This semester, you will learn the basics of journalism -- both in this course and its companion, Introduction to Multimedia Storytelling. Combined, the two courses will challenge you to learn the fundamental line of questioning that is the basic training of the journalistic mindset, as well as the reporting, writing and media production skills to best present your stories. Specifically, this course will sharpen your critical thinking skills, introduce you the conventions of journalistic writing, and require you to jump in and start reporting. Along the way, your method of gathering information, reporting and writing will improve.

The common weekly Monday lectures will provide background on enduring questions and issues in journalism as well as current ethical problems that arise in the coverage of news.

Then in your smaller section meetings you will practice the conventions of lead writing, of hard news and later in the semester, feature stories. These skills will prepare you for the next assignment in this course, the next class you take at the School and will even serve as a foundation that will help you in any communication endeavor, journalistic or otherwise.

This class will require consistent attendance and, more critically, attention on your part. The assignments require you to plan ahead for your reporting; unlike academic papers, journalism pieces aren’t something you can throw together the night (or hours) before it’s due. To succeed, you should expect to spend a minimum of six hours a week on this course in addition to time
spent in class. The reward for doing so will go beyond a grade; it will bring with it the knowledge that you have a solid grasp of what actually goes into the practice of journalism.

**A note about co-requisites:** This course and Multimedia Storytelling

The multimedia course is designed to introduce you to the basics of presenting journalism in different mediums, and learning which mediums best serve which types of stories. It’s an ability that employers now assume entry-level journalists will have, and thus goes along with basic reporting, writing and AP style as foundational skills you will be expected to have.

In the interest of supporting creative efforts to tell good journalistic stories in a number of ways, there is some allowable crossover of editorial content. Some assignments for this class may be about the same *general topic* as your multimedia project, but only on condition that the stories are distinct in focus and in presentation. You may use in your multimedia projects reporting and writing content that you developed for this course, but the actual results must be clearly different. For example, the difference is *not* clear enough if all you do is take a story from this class and submit it, verbatim or with only minor re-arranging of paragraphs and a different lead, as a text project to your multimedia class.

**Required Texts:**

*The Associated Press Stylebook 2012*. On order at the University Bookstore, cross listed both under 019:098 (this course) and 019:088 Multimedia. This is the reference book of record for the professional news industry in the United States. You will be expected to get into the habit of consulting it for written assignment in both courses, and to learn some of the basic conventions for your assignments. If you have a 2011 version available, you may use that.

*The New York Times*, which is available in hard copy in the machines in the Adler Journalism Building (1st floor adjacent to the lounge) and *The Daily Iowan* (available all over campus) or the online versions of both. These are your daily textbooks both to be prepared for the weekly news quiz, and also to deepen your understanding of what defines news.

**A note on assigned readings and deadlines.** For the most part, the assigned readings listed on the common syllabus for each week are a preparation for your *section* meeting, not for the large Monday lecture. *The exceptions are italicized and highlighted on the syllabus*. You may do in-class writing drills in your sections that are based on the assigned reading, or you may read and discuss parts of the chapters in class. This will be up to your instructor, who will communicate this to you in section meetings and, likely, in the ICON message board for your section.

The deadlines for the major assignments are indicated below by the week they are due. The exact day and time during that week by which they are due is again, up to your section instructor.
Final Exam:

There is no final exam for either the Monday lecture or for your section, so there is no test during finals week. As such, the last assignment is due during the last week of class.

Major Assignments: Deadlines at a Glance

#1 Life Event Essay due week 2
#2 Interviewing/reaction story due week 4
#3 Mock presser due week 5
#4 City Council due week 7 or TBD as per city council schedule
#5 Cops/Crime/Courts story due week 10
#6 Feature 1 (Choice) due week 13
#7 Feature 2 (Profile) due week 15

Semester Schedule* (Section activities, including assigned readings for your sections, will vary according to instructor. Assigned readings are for your section unless “Assigned or Monday Lecture” is indicated)

Week 1: What is News

Monday lecture 8/20  Course Introduction, What is News lecture, focus on functions of media in political campaign coverage.

Sections: Assign 500 word life event essays. Suggest reading, discussing in class Covering the 21 Debate as an example of a newspaper’s function in a community. TBD other resources in ICON designed to foster similar discussion.

Week 2: Objectivity and Tone

Assigned Reading:
Blur Chapter 3 *(Assigned for Monday Lecture)* (ICON)

**Monday lecture 8/27** (RWWk2Jan.20.ppt revise)  
Balance and Objectivity. Include discussion of assigned reading

*Sections: Assignment #1* Life event essay due. Fix your writing mistakes activity. Sections A01 and A02 assign WRN Ch. 3 and exercises to do and submit to ICON in lieu of the missed week 3 meetings.

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**Week 3: Introduction to Leads**

*Assigned Reading:*
WRN Ch. 3 The Basic News Story (ICON)

**Monday lecture 9/3** University Holiday  
No Monday lecture, sections A01 and A02 don’t meet

*Sections: A03, A04, A05* discuss leads: starting off the story, lead types. Use WRN Ch. 3 resources or as per instructor in class. Sections A01, A02 will do as homework, as these sections will not meet week 3.

Suggest exercises using WRN Ch. 3 The Basic News Story exercises at end of chapter, and/or AP Guide to News Writing Ch. 3 and AP Guide Newswriting Exercise.

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**Week 4: Basic Interviewing, More Leads**

*Assigned Reading:*
WRN Ch. 8 Leads and Nut Graphs (ICON)

**Monday lecture 9/10**  
The reaction story and basic interviewing. (Wk5Feb.13IntPP revise)
Sections: Assignment #2 Reaction Story due this week per section instructor’s instructions.

Suggest lead exercises in class: use WRN Ch. 8 exercises, AP Guide to News Writing, Quotes good and Bad, Quotes Attribution. Lead writing review see RWWk4Leads.PPT. (All in ICON)

Week 5: Mock News Conference

Monday lecture 9/17 Mock news conference guest lecture. (TBD UI press office, Board Regents, etc.)

Sections: Instructors assign Assignment #3 Mock Presser due this week, based on 9/17 press conference in big lecture. May include additional reporting TBD. Otherwise more lead exercises including Good Time Gals (ICON)

Week 6: Covering Meetings, Approaching Sources

Assigned Reading:
WRN Chapter 20 Speeches, News Conferences and Meetings (ICON)

Monday lecture 9/24 Questioning with Intent (Wk7Feb27.PPT revise)

Sections: Suggest exercises end of WRN Chapter 20 or other resources in ICON.

Week 7: Working with Sources

Monday Lecture 10/1 Guest lecture: police spokeswoman Denise Brotherton (planned)
Sections: Suggest prepare for City Council meeting. See agenda on City of Iowa City website. Other activities as per instructors.

Assign students to cover the Tuesday, date TBD City Council Meeting. Assignment #4 City Council must be submitted on ICON by midnight of the same evening of the meeting.

Week 8: Beat and/or Crime Reporting

Assigned Reading
WRN Ch. 22 Crime and Punishment (ICON)

Monday lecture 10/8  Guest lecture: Gazett.com / ICPC reporter or Steve Berry

Sections: Suggest introduce students to public and court records available online (in ICON) as a start to a public record homework assignment. The purpose of this is to give them a start on the Crime/Cops/Court Assignment #5.

Week 9: Investigative Journalism

Monday lecture 10/15  Steve Berry lecture

Sections: Students report on development of their Crime, Cops, Courts in class. Other activities as per instructor for the purpose of developing Crime/Cops/Court Assignment #5.

Week 10: Features

Monday lecture 10/22  Defining the interest: Features (Wk10March26FeaturesPPT revise)

Sections Assignment #5 Crime/Cops/Court story due week 10. Spend time in sections on features (assignment #6) Suggest Map the Story exercise and/or Features re-writes/discussion (Both in ICON)
Alternate: Suggested homework: Find the story: Pairs go to areas of campus to find a story. Following week (week 6) give oral reports on why it’s a story in terms of impact, who is it affects, audience interest.

Week 11: Media Ethics

Assigned Reading:
WRN Ch. 10 Story Forms (ICON)

Monday lecture 10/29  News Media Ethics. (Wk 11, 12, 13 PPT revise)

Sections: Continue ethics discussion as relevant.
Otherwise, preparation for Assignment #6 Feature might include assigning reading groups for week 12 workshop. And/or show and discuss One in 8 Million: New York Times audio slideshows and/or feature readings in ICON or WRN Ch. 10 material.

Week 12: Economics of the News Industry

Assigned Reading:
Free For All Ch. 7 (ICON) Assigned for Monday lecture

Monday lecture 11/5  Newspaper industry losses, the Internet and impact on international news coverage

Sections: Suggest in-class workshop for the first draft of Assignment #6 Feature. This generally takes the entire section time.

Week 13: Profiles
Assigned Reading:
The Long War (ICON)

Monday lecture 11/12  Guest lecture: Natalia? Profiles

Sections: Assignment #6 Feature due. Suggest writing exercises (active/passive in ICON) or read/discuss part of The Long War.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: Public Relations and News Media

Monday lecture 11/26  Guest lecture from PAB Board TBD

Sections: As per instructors TBD.

Week 15: Final Week

Monday lecture 12/3 (last lecture of semester) Surveys, final remarks, career advice

Sections: Assignment #7 Feature 2 (Profile) due this week. Suggest workshop first draft of profiles in the sections to be due the end of this week.

Schedule for major assignments, Fall 2012

NOTE: Your section instructor will determine exact deadlines and tell you how to file your stories. (Hard copy, ICON or both)

#1 Life Event Essay due week 2

#2 Interviewing/reaction story due week 4 (documentation* name only)
Week 2

Assignment #1 Life Event Essay  500 to 550 words.  No interviews.

The purpose of the first assignment is to get used to the idea of starting a story at the most interesting part, and maintaining focus throughout on facts that are relevant or that back up the beginning of your story. You will do this by writing a lead as the first paragraph. Choose one event in your life that stands out and starting with that. This is the opposite of a chronological account of life events leading up to your main event, so don’t write a chronology! My suggestion is to summarize the impact, relevance or importance of the event in a lead, then use the rest of the story to fill in the details of how the event happened. Use detail in your writing. Describe how you and others reacted, how you felt, etc. You can paraphrase what people said at the time, but don’t use quotation marks, as you will not be interviewing anyone for this assignment. This is the only assignment in which you may write in the first person.

Week 4

Assignment #2: Reaction Story.  500 to 550 words.  Minimum 5 interviews.

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct interviews with several people (a minimum of five) about their reaction to the same topic or event. Your first step is to think about a recent issue or event that not only has been covered recently in the news, but that potentially affects those you will interview. The more potential impact, the more your subjects will have to say about it. Avoid broad events like the Republican primaries; instead focus on something specific within that topic, such as whether first-time voters are motivated this election year. Here’s a suggested approach: characterize or summarize the reactions in the lead, making sure the lead also includes
a reference to what people are reacting to. Use the rest of the story for your quotes, descriptions, and relevant information about the people that gives context to the quotes you use. Write a nut graph by the 4th or 5th paragraph in which you summarize in greater detail the event or issue. You may research this using other news media sources. Finally, pay attention to accurate quotes in the proper format, short concise paragraphs, and getting first quote up high in the story.

Week 5

Assignment #3: Mock Presser. 550 to 600 words. TBD whether there will be other sources aside from the speaker at the press conference.

The assignment is to write a story based on a question and answer session by a guest in the weekly Monday lecture. The person will likely speak for about 15 minutes, then take questions from the class. You need to take notes, including accurate quotes. You may use quotes that come from questions that the other students ask. Aside from using the most relevant quotes, the story should also give a sense of who the person is and why their comments are relevant. Do some research about the person before the press conference. Part of the purpose of this assignment is to learn to differentiate what information is best paraphrased and what is best quoted.

Week 7

Assignment #4: City Council Meeting: 600 to 700 words. Quotes or paraphrased comments from at least 3 sources (likely City Council councilors) at the meeting.

This is your initiation into covering a public meeting, using the skills of differentiating paraphrased material from quotes that you learned in the previous assignment. A main purpose of this assignment is to avoid chronology! You are reporting, not repeating, which means it’s your job as a journalist to decide what is most important based on impact to the community. Advance research about the issues likely to be discussed and some familiarity with the City councilors will also be helpful. (A copy of the City Council meeting agenda will be available on the City of Iowa City website a few days beforehand.) Use a summary lead for a hard news story, being sure to get any key votes in the lead. Use relevant quotes from the meeting itself. This is due in ICON digital drop box by midnight the evening of the City Council meeting. See syllabus for exact date.

Week 10

Assignment #5: Cops/Crime/Courts 800 to 1,000 words. Minimum 4 interviews.
**PLANNING:** This story may revolve around a current or historical crime incident; a broader crime topic or issue; some aspect of the law enforcement/courts/criminal justice system; or another relevant focus, subject to your instructor’s approval.

Starting with the resource links on ICON for week 10, look for police/crime/courts items or topics that that puzzle or intrigue you, e.g., news that raises questions in your mind, incidents that suggest patterns, information that poses problems or challenges, or national issues that play out locally. In consultation with your instructor and classmates, determine a potential focus and line of inquiry that will result in a detailed news story, an examination of a larger issue, or both.

Your story is due by the end of week 10, so you’ll want to complete your research and reporting by week 9 at the latest so that you have time for drafting, filling in reporting gaps, revising, editing, etc. Your section instructor will provide precise deadlines and submission instructions for various stages of the process.

Notify your section instructor of your topic (and any backups) by e-mail, drop box and/or other method set by the instructor as early as possible—the instructor will set the specific deadline for this. Provide details of your research and reporting plans: How will you inform yourself about key information and issues, whom will you interview, what problems might you anticipate, etc.?

**REPORTING:** You are getting into complex territory, and need to accomplish the following:

(a) Define (and continue to refine) your topic;

(b) Research and read other news stories and features that may help you develop both content and format;

(c) Acquire further knowledge through journal and Web searches, consulting experts, etc., that will help you understand the subject matter;

(d) Identify original sources and do local background and foreground reporting to build your story, using documents, interviews and investigation to establish facts, reconstruct key events, grasp the context and background of the story, place specific incidents in a broader framework, etc.
Along with your article, provide a documentation page that includes (a) a reporting log listing what you did when, (b) a list of phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses of everyone interviewed for the story, (c) a list of key documents and other resources and references used.

Week 13

Assignment #6: Feature 800 to 1,000 words. Minimum 5 interviews. For this assignment you will write a feature story on the topic of your choice. Possible approaches include finding a local angle to a regional or national story, or developing an enterprise feature with no particular news hook. One thing all approaches have in common is that the topic must be something with potential impact on a community, whether that’s students or the broader community beyond the University. Avoid topics too close to your personal experience; the point is to delve into something new, not to stay within your circumstantial comfort zone. Beware of interviewing your friends and roommates. Your instructors will discourage Dance Marathon and other Greek activities or charities, not based on an anti-Greek bias but because far too often these stories end up being essentially promotional in nature and narrowly focused around events.

Use Soft or delayed lead. There must be context in the form of a nut graph, not to exclude background and context in other parts of the story. This is not a profile.

Qualities of a Feature Story

• Feature stories are descriptive and full of detail.
• Feature stories generally have a strong narrative (storytelling) line.
• Feature stories have a strong lead that grabs readers and makes them want to read on.
• Feature stories often depend on interviews.
• Feature stories include quotations from the person(s) involved.
• Feature stories combine facts and opinion*, with a focus on the human interest side of the story. While they can report news, the news content is not of primary importance. *Opinion expressed by the people you are interviewing, not your own.
• Feature stories both educate and entertain. They can include colorful detail as well as humor.
• Feature stories can be organized in a variety of ways (i.e., chronologically if relevant, or in narrative fashion).
• Feature stories often put the “meat” on the “skeletal bones” of a news story.
Week 15

**Assignment #7 Profile:** 800 to 1,000 words. *Minimum three interviews*, including the subject of the profile. The subject interview should include several quotes. The subject of your profile doesn’t have to be famous, but their experiences must tell a broader story about the society or circumstances in which they live and work. Like any feature, it needs to be interesting and relevant for readers. A chronological approach to telling a life story hardly ever works, although there may some chronological storytelling for parts of the story. In most cases you’re describing a particular aspect of someone’s life achievements or difficulties they overcame, and then providing background research to support that particular aspect of your subject’s life. Avoid friends and roommates … these hardly ever make for strong stories. The other two (minimum) should be colleagues, family, friends and even detractors who can provide insight. Use a soft or delayed lead.

Include documentation page as with assignment #5 and #6.

**Grade Allocation:**

1. Seven main reporting and writing assignments are 10% each, for a total of **70%** of the final grade.

2. Weekly news quizzes = **15%** of total grade

3. In-Class Graded Exercises = **10%** total of final grade.

4. Attendance for both weekly lectures and labs = **5%** (More than 2 unexcused absences for either a weekly lecture or a section meeting will result in losing the entire 5% attendance allocation. So 0-2 = 5%, and more than 2 = 0%)
Explanation of grading for the 7 main assignments

The assignments will be graded on a scale of 100. The following attributes is what your instructor will be looking for:

- Quality of observational and/or interview-based reporting
- Clarity of writing, correct grammar, and demonstration of applying AP Style
- Structure of story, as evident in the thought process about storytelling method

In terms of letter grades for the major assignments, they are assessed as follows:

**A**: Very well written both in terms of clarity, grammar and AP style, research strengthens the reporting, interviews representing a range of viewpoints as relevant for the story. Publishable with minor edits.

**B**: Basically well written in terms of clarity, grammar and proper AP style, research somewhat deficient in terms of helping the reporting, meets minimum requirement for the number of interviews but quotes are not used effectively, requires some further revision and additional material before publication.

**C**: Poorly written both in logical flow and grammar and style, little or no organization or story structure, inadequate material including interviews and research. Several basic grammar and AP style mistakes, little apparent copy editing. A major rewrite and additional reporting required.

**D**: Serious deficits in terms of clarity and information, including research and interview material. No organization or story structure, major writing and grammar problems with no apparent effort at copy editing.

**F**: Any evidence of plagiarism with intent, including cutting and pasting several paragraphs from another source, will result in an F grade. Otherwise, seriously incomplete in terms of the assignment parameters, confusing or erroneous information.

Policy on missed deadlines, emergency circumstances.

In general, late assignments will not be accepted. There will be no reduced credit for turning something in after the deadline. You simply loose the allocated percentage (10% of the total grade) for the missed paper. Instructors will judge emergency situations on a per-case basis, and may propose an alternate deadline. The key here is to communicate with your instructor in
advance of the deadline. In the case of a medical emergency, documentation verifying a visit to student health or other medical services is highly advisable to help your case for an extension.

It’s up to each instructor to determine whether he or she wants the assignments in electronic form in ICON, a hard copy, or both.

Weekly quizzes:
Starting from the second Monday weekly lecture (Jan. 30th), quizzes will be given at the beginning of the lecture. The material covered in the quizzes will come from the three sources listed below, based on the major stories published during the previous week. (The previous Monday through Friday.) Your completed quiz will be taken as evidence of your attendance at the Monday lecture. You will not be permitted to take a missed quiz after the fact.

1. The New York Times (actual front page on hard copy, The Front Page link for online)
2. The Daily Iowan (actual front page on hard copy, top large font headline stories for online)

Grading scale for major assignments and for the final grade

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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95% and greater</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 to 94%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>85 to 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>80% to 84%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>75% to 79%</td>
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<td>70% to 74%</td>
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<td>55% to 59%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>54% and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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The Iowa Dozen (practices specific to the School of Journalism and Communication)

As one of more than 104 programs in journalism and mass communication accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), we must assess student learning to assure that each of our graduates meets the following standards.

Note that the first 3 points will be a part of how the mid-term paper, final paper and in-class presentations will be evaluated. Points 6 onward are values that the course aspires to support.

We learn to ...
1. Write correctly, clearly and well. (papers, presentations)
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly. (papers, presentations)
3. Edit and evaluate carefully. (papers, presentations)

We value ...

6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...

10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:

Policies and Procedures

**Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml].

**Electronic Communication**

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

**Academic Fraud**

Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on
appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. (Operations Manual, Part IV, 16. See items e, h, and i.)

*The CLAS policy statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.