INTRODUCTORY TOPICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION:
THE INTERNET AND JOURNALISM
019:169:003 (JMC:3832:0003)
SPRING 2013
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:45AM
E146 Adler Journalism Building
Prof. David Dowling
Office: E336 Adler Journalism Building
david-dowling@uiowa.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11-12:30 pm, or by appointment

Course description and objectives
This course centers on the most current trend facing journalism today: the Internet’s effect on the content of news media and the work of reporters. The course begins with a survey of open source journalism and convergence culture, examining the collision between old and new media, and the mass amateurization of professional communication. We will consider the transformation of journalism in the digital age in light of the apparent shrinking size of articles, the reduction in readers’ attention span, and the decline of deep reading. The course then focuses on the debate over the effect of the Internet on culture, featuring readings arguing that the increased use of the web has placed a new premium on flashy headlines and shorter stories, a trend that has moved away from the content and explanation of fuller more nuanced pieces. Others will find unique entrepreneurial opportunities that have arisen through computer-mediated communication.

Topics include how writing and production values of major magazines and newspapers are increasingly mimicking web design and other features of the Internet. All of these trends have tended to devalue journalists as writers and threaten to transform them into replaceable “content producers.” Current movements that have responded by harkening back to an earlier age that regularly featured seven-thousand-word stories like those of Gonzo Journalist Hunter S. Thompson in the *Rolling Stone* include Grantland.com, longform.org, and longreads.com, and highly publicized live marathon readings of long, difficult works such as *Moby-Dick*.

Required texts available at University Bookstore

“The Iowa Dozen”
In this course, and throughout the curriculum of the SJMC at the University of Iowa,

We learn:
1. to write correctly and clearly
2. to conduct research and gather information responsibly
3. to edit and evaluate carefully
4. to use media technologies thoughtfully
5. to apply statistical concepts appropriately¹

We value:
6. First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups
7. a diverse global community
8. creativity and independence
9. truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

We explore:
10. mass communication theories and concepts
11. media institutions and practices
12. the role of media in shaping cultures.

Class Policies:

- **Late papers** will be penalized one letter grade for each weekday after the deadline. For example, a paper assessed as a “B,” which is due on Thursday and turned in on Monday is two weekdays late and would therefore receive a “D.” Students with legitimate difficulty in meeting a deadline should make advance arrangements with the professor for an extension; this may require turning in work before the due date. No emailed assignments please.

- Make up work is only accepted for excused absences. **It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the content of classes missed through classmates who were in attendance.** Exchange contact information with a partner who will agree to give you the class notes in case you are absent. Never ask if you missed anything important; assume that it was important, and contact your partner for the notes.

- **Academic Fraud** – We are bound by the Code of Academic Honesty, in which each of us agreed to do “my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge [http://thechallenge.uiowa.edu/meet/index.html](http://thechallenge.uiowa.edu/meet/index.html). I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Attempting to disguise another’s work as your own is therefore strictly forbidden. Words that are not your own must be clearly identified by the use of quotation marks. Paraphrased material must be properly cited. For more details, see [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml).

¹ Does not apply to this course.
• **Reacting Safely to Severe Weather** – If the warning system indicates severe weather, we should immediately seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level. Stay clear of windows and free-standing expanses. The class will reconvene after the severe weather has ended.

• **Special accommodations** – I want to hear from anyone who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements. Please contact me during my office hours, by e-mail or after class. Special academic arrangements for students with disabilities are handled in cooperation with Student Disability Services ([www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/)). Students who feel they need special accommodations for any aspect of the course are encouraged to contact SDS and to speak with the instructor and/or TAs early in the semester, so that accommodation can be made as soon as possible.

• **Conflict resolution** – Should conflict arise, please seek to resolve them with us directly. Students seeking to resolve a conflict should first contact myself, then, should the issue remain unresolved, David Perlmutter (Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication). For more information, see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook at: [www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml).

• **Sexual harassment policy** – Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. We all have a duty to report incidents of sexual harassment immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at [www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy. Immediately report any concerns to Professor Dowling or Director David Perlmutter (AJB 305).

**REQUIREMENTS**
Two essays of 4-5 pages are required. Students may select any of the books to write their essays on. One of the three papers will be revised and expanded into an 8-10 page paper to be submitted the day of the final exam. You will do a brief presentation of the paper during the final exam session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>200 (50 pts. each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, 4-5 Pg. Essays</td>
<td>200 (100 pts. each)</td>
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<td>Revised Essay</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td><strong>Course total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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**Grading scale**
A 90% and above
B 80% and above
C 70% and above
D 60% and above
F below 60%

Calendar

Week 1
Tuesday, January 22  Introductions and course overview

Open Journalism and Convergence Culture

Thursday, January 24  Reading: *We the Media*: Intro-Ch. 1

Week 2
Tuesday, January 29  Reading: *We the Media*: Chapters 2 & 7
Thursday, January 31  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 1-2

Week 3
Tuesday, February 5  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 3-4 (Quiz 1)
Thursday, February 7  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 5

Week 4
Tuesday, February 12  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 6-7
Thursday, February 14  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapter 8-9

Week 5
Tuesday, February 19  Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 10-Epilogue
(Essay Option Due)
Thursday, February 21  Reading: *Convergence Culture*: Intro-Ch. 1

Week 6
Tuesday, February 26  Reading: *Convergence Culture*: Chapters 2-3
Thursday, February 28  Reading: *Convergence Culture*: Chapters 4-5 (Quiz 2)

Week 7
Tuesday, March 5  Reading: *Convergence Culture*: Chapters 6-Conclusion
(Midterm Exam; Essay Option Due)

The Digital Age and Its Discontents

Thursday, March 7  Reading: *The Shallows*: Prologue-Chapter 2

Week 8
Tuesday, March 12  Reading: *The Shallows*: Chapters 3-5
Thursday, March 14  Reading: *The Shallows*: Chapters 6-8 (Quiz 3)

Week 9
Spring Break, March 17-25
Week 10
Tuesday, March 26
Reading: The Shallows: Chapters 9-Epilogue (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, March 28
Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part I

Week 11
Tuesday, April 2
Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part II
Thursday, April 4
Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part III

Week 12
Tuesday, April 9
Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part IV (Essay Option Due)

The Future of Journalism
Thursday, April 11
Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 1-2

Week 13
Tuesday, April 16
Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 3-5 (Quiz 4)
Thursday, April 18
Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 18-20

Week 14
Tuesday, April 23
Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chs. 24, 29 & 32 (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, April 25
Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Foreward-Ch. 2

Week 15
Tuesday, April 30
Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 3-4
Thursday, May 2
Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 5-6

Week 16
Tuesday, May 7
Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 7-8 (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, May 9
Evaluations; Revision Project Discussed

Exam Week
Revised Paper (8-10 pp.) and Brief Presentation Due at Final
Final Exam – To Be Announced

Maintaining a Professional Environment

- Be courteous and professional in your correspondence for this course, using proper grammar and proper modes of address.
- Come prepared and be ready to contribute. Do not skip class meetings. Focus on the material when in class.
- Do not read the newspaper, text, sleep, surf the web, pass notes, or otherwise engage in behavior that distracts your (and possibly others’) attention from the course.

Media scholarship is founded upon the use of evidence and logic to formulate forceful and convincing claims. Insights and comments will be judged strictly on the merit of their content and use of textual support without regard to the individual who asserts it. The
assertion of any personal, or “editorial” values beyond the scope of the course content is not required, and should be made only at the student’s discretion.

In addition to respecting one and other in class, students will approach the course’s readings and films as academic material for active study rather than passive entertainment. The study of journalism and mass communication, like the work of anthropology, involves examining texts to discover how a culture thinks about itself. In an exciting, safe classroom environment, in which the student’s social class, ethnic background, gender orientation or other personal attributes will not come under scrutiny or judgment, satisfaction will derive from finding profound meaning in the world of mass communication. It is in this spirit of mutual respect for classmates, professor, and subject matter that we begin our intellectual journey.