INTRODUCTORY TOPICS IN MASS COMMUNICATION:  
THE INTERNET AND JOURNALISM  
019:169:001 (JMC:3832:0001)  
FALL 2013  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00AM-12:15PM  
214 English Philosophy Building  
Prof. David Dowling  
Office: E334 Adler Journalism Building  
david-dowling@uiowa.edu  
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-2PM, 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
Dan Gillmor, We the Media, free online at  

“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 appropriately

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.

Policies and Resources:

- **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.

- **Attendance** will be taken at each class meeting. Excessive absences will result in the reduction of your grade.

- 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.

- **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 Academic Policies Handbook at [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

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1 Does not apply to this course.
• **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, k.11).

• **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.

• **Academic Honesty:** All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. 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." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

• **CLAS Final Examination Policies:** The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the tenth day of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

• **Making a Suggestion or a Complaint:** Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

• **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 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. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Department of Public Safety website.
**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.

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<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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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<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, August 27**: Introductions and course overview

**Open Journalism and Convergence Culture**

- **Thursday, August 29**: Reading: *We the Media*: Intro-Ch. 1

**Week 2**

- **Tuesday, September 3**: Reading: *We the Media*: Chapters 2 & 7
- **Thursday, September 5**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 1-2

**Week 3**

- **Tuesday, September 10**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 3-4 (Quiz 1)
- **Thursday, September 12**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 5

**Week 4**

- **Tuesday, September 17**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 6-7
- **Thursday, September 19**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapter 8-9

**Week 5**

- **Tuesday, September 24**: Reading: *Here Comes Everybody*: Chapters 10-Epilogue (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, September 26  Reading: Convergence Culture: Intro-Ch. 1

Week 6
Tuesday, October 1  Reading: Convergence Culture: Chapters 2-3
Thursday, October 3  Reading: Convergence Culture: Chapters 4-5 (Quiz 2)

Week 7
Tuesday, October 8  Reading: Convergence Culture: Chapters 6-Conclusion
(Midterm Exam; Essay Option Due)

The Digital Age and Its Discontents

Thursday, October 10  Reading: The Shallows: Prologue-Chapter 2

Week 8
Tuesday, October 15  Reading: The Shallows: Chapters 3-5
Thursday, October 17  Reading: The Shallows: Chapters 6-8 (Quiz 3)

Week 9
Tuesday, October 22  Reading: The Shallows: Chapters 9-Epilogue (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, October 24  Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part I

Week 10
Tuesday, October 29  Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part II
Thursday, October 31  Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part III

Week 11
Tuesday, November 5  Reading: Fast Media/Media Fast: Part IV (Essay Option Due)

The Future of Journalism

Thursday, November 7  Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 1-2

Week 12
Tuesday, November 12  Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 3-5 (Quiz 4)
Thursday, November 14  Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chapters 18-20

Week 13
Tuesday, November 19  Reading: Will the Last Reporter...: Chs. 24, 29 & 32 (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, November 21  Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Foreward-Ch. 2

Week 14
November 26, 28  Thanksgiving Break

Week 15
Tuesday, December 3  Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 3-4
Thursday, December 5  Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 5-6

Week 16
Tuesday, December 10  Reading: Entrepreneurial Journalism: Chapters 7-8 (Essay Option Due)
Thursday, December 12  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.