PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM
JMC 1400:0001, SPRING 2021
Delivery Mode: Web
Prof. David Dowling
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Office hours: 24/7 via email or Zoom (Tuesdays at 2PM and by appointment)

Course Description

This asynchronous online course does not require students to attend class at a particular day or time, but deadlines still exist that students must meet, including due dates to view lectures; to complete homework; and to take exams.

An optional Zoom review session will be available every Tuesday at 2PM as a way to stay in contact, answer questions, and discuss the finer points of principles of journalism.

This course examines the rapid changes occurring now in media within the areas of journalism and strategic communication. We will consider the major forces driving those changes and how to navigate the future of these fields. Special attention will be paid to how core principles of journalism, marketing, and promotion have adapted to technological developments in digital media communication.

No textbook is required for this course. All readings are available on ICON and links on this syllabus under the section labeled “Course Calendar.”

SJMC Learning Outcomes

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. In this course, students will

- Reflect on the institution of journalism and its role in society [ethics learning outcome]
- Understand the major causes of disruption within journalism and their consequences for the field [media history learning outcome]
- Demonstrate knowledge of core journalistic practices and values [media literacy learning outcome]
- Evaluate the landscape of the contemporary journalistic field and its immediate future
Policies:

- **Missed exams and assignments** without forewarning automatically fail. If a calamitous event occurs that prevents you from taking an exam at the scheduled time, please contact me before the exam; documentation must be provided 48 hours after the exam.

- **No email submissions.** Submit your written assignment to ICON only.

Assignments and Grades

- Participation: 150 points (based on ICON discussions)
- 3 Exams: 100 points each (300 total points)
- Written Assignment: 50 points

Total: 500 points

**Participation** will be based on your contribution to a lively, engaged online learning environment. On ICON you will have the opportunity to discuss the reading with your classmates.

1) I will post discussion questions every Monday. Make sure you post a response by Thursday evening (whatever time that evening is fine). Your initial post should be at least one full paragraph long.

2) Then reply to at least three other posts by your classmates by Friday evening. The quality and quantity of your contribution to these online discussions will determine your participation grade.

Knowledge Checks (KCs) are on key concepts drawn from the reading material and, on occasion, from outside the reading. KCs occur at the beginning of the first recorded lecture of each week (with the exception of Week 1). They consist of 3-5 items you will be asked to identify on your own. The challenge is to find each item in the reading and be able to identify it when asked. For any KCs not in the reading, research it online to familiarize yourself with it for the lecture. **Individual KC's are not graded; instead they are an informal way for you to check your grasp of the material.** KCs will be drawn from a longer list provided at the end of the second lecture of each week.

I will provide bi-weekly feedback on your participation performance based on ICON analytics that track your online contributions. It is crucial that you are clear about where you stand each week on your participation performance, which carries a great deal of weight (150 points) in this course. At the end of the semester, you will submit a participation self-evaluation document showcasing your best commentary and/or feedback from ICON discussions.

The three exams are open book and note; each is worth 100 points and consists of fifty multiple-choice questions taken online on the dates listed on the syllabus. **Many questions are drawn from material presented in lectures only.**
The final 3-5 page paper will engage one of the course’s themes on the future of media principles. Readings and a peer critique are scheduled the week before the paper (worth 50 points) is due on ICON the last day of the semester to give you the maximum amount of time for its completion. Several model papers will be provided to help you with this assignment.

HOW TO VIEW LECTURES
Lectures are audio narrated PowerPoint (PPT) Slideshows posted on ICON one week at a time by 9AM every Monday of the semester. Slides will remain on ICON for downloading until the following Monday at 9AM, when a new set of slides will appear in place of them. Lectures from previous weeks are NOT saved on ICON. Students are responsible for downloading and saving the lectures each week on their own hard drives. Once these lectures are on your hard drive, they can be viewed asynchronously.

1) Accessing the lectures: Go to ICON. On the “Home” page for our course, two lectures (PPT Slideshows) will appear each Monday by 9AM under the module, “This Week’s Lectures.” Download them, one at a time, onto your hard drive, where you can view (and review) them any time throughout the semester. For best results on exams, view lectures the week they appear. ICON discussions and readings will also align with the lectures and require familiarity with them.

3) Viewing the lectures: PPTs were not designed to run on ICON; they will only play properly from your computer’s hard drive. Once fully downloaded (which may take a minute or two), open the PPT you would like to view by double-clicking on it. The audio will automatically play and the slides will advance on their own through the lecture.

4) Navigating through the lectures: You can pause the PPT Slideshow by hitting the left arrow on your keyboard. Press the right arrow to continue. Press and hold the right arrow to skip forward through the PPT. Press and hold the left arrow to skip backward through the PPT. A single press of the right arrow will resume play at any point in the lecture.

If you ever feel the pace of the lecture is too fast or too slow, use pause and/or fast-forward/backward. Unlike an in-person lecture, you can stop in the middle and move through it at will. I highly recommend you take advantage of this autonomous navigation, especially if you are one who prefers a slow pace, which you can achieve through strategic use of the pause (left arrow) button. Conversely, if you prefer a faster pace, the forward (right arrow) button will be useful. Utilizing navigation to fit your learning needs is essential to successful mastery of the lecture material.

5) For optimal retention, power down all other devices to create a non-distracting environment and take notes with a pen and paper as you normally would in an in-person lecture. Students are responsible for having functional
computer equipment to access these PPT Slideshows. Please contact ITS (Help Desk Live Chat) if you need assistance: https://its.uiowa.edu/support All lectures are new and were recorded specifically for this semester’s course. Audio lecture content expands on and contextualizes principles of journalism. Be prepared to critically examine each principle from a variety of angles that challenge—and in some cases undermine—its assumptions, particularly in light of advances in digital media.

**READINGS**

Complete the week’s readings (listed on the calendar) prior to viewing lectures and participating on ICON discussions. As indicated on the calendar below, readings are either in PDF form on our ICON “Home” page or in the link next to the title on the calendar on this syllabus. Please download, print and carefully annotate (underline, highlight, and write notes in the margins) each reading.

**Grading Scale**

Rounding only at .5 to the next whole number; .4 will not be rounded up.

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**COURSE CALENDAR**

**Weeks 1-5: A FOUNDATION**

**Week 1: Getting Started**

January 26: Introduction

January 28: The Nature of the News; **ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.**

**Week’s Reading:**

- View the *Guardian* award-winning advertisement: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDGrfhJH1P4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDGrfhJH1P4)
Week 2: Democracy and Media

Feb. 2: Journalism’s Democratic Role

Feb. 4: Challenges to Public Interest Journalism; ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:

Week 3: Norms and Practices of Journalism

Feb. 9: Facts and Values

Feb. 11: Verification in Journalism Practice; ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:

Week 4: Public Interest Journalism

Feb. 16: Exposing Political Corruption

Feb. 18: Exposing Financial Corruption; ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:


Week 5: Recap

Feb. 23: Review: ICON Discussion

Feb. 25: Exam I

Weeks 6-10: DIGITAL MEDIA

Week 6: Digital and Paywalled Media

March 2: Instructional Break

March 4: Lecture 9, Parts 1 & 2; ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:


Week 7: Networks and Brands

March 9: Social Networks

March 11: The Rise of Podcasting ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:

• Rainie, L. & Wellman, B. (2012). Networked information. Chapter 9 of Networked: The social operating system. The MIT Press. [ICON]


Week 8: Big Tech and Media Publishers

March 16: Platforms, Content, and Profits
March 18: Collaboration or Competition?: Google and the News Business ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:
- Ha, A. (2020) *Tech Crunch*  
  https://techcrunch.com/2020/04/15/google-announces-a-journalism-emergency-relief-fund-for-local-newsrooms/?guccounter=1
- Smith, B. (2020) *New York Times*  

Week 9: Facebook and Media Expansion

March 23: Facebook in India

March 25: Crafting Viral News ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:

Week 10: Recap

March 30: Review: ICON Discussion

April 1: Exam II

Weeks 11-15: NEW PRACTICES AND VALUES

Week 11: Reassessing Objectivity in the Digital Age

April 6: Race, Media Ownership, Business Models, and Objectivity

April 8: Objectivity as method ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.

Week’s Reading:
- Invisible men (2020) *Economist* [ICON]

**Week 12:** Alternative Business Models

April 13: The Slow Media Movement

April 15: New Revenue Streams **ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.**

**Week’s Reading:**

**Week 13:** Digital Branding

April 20: Longform Documentary

April 22: Sponsored Content **ICON Discussion Post Due; 3 Replies Due Fri.**

**Week’s Reading:**

**Week 14:** Recap

April 27: Review: ICON Discussions

April 29: **Exam III**

**Week 15:** The Future of Media: Changing Principles

May 4: Readings:
• Model student essays [ICON]

May 6: **Peer Critique Due (on ICON Discussion); 3 Replies Due Fri. May 7**
(This week’s discussion will be a peer critique in which you share and comment on a rough draft of pg. 1 of the Final Paper on the future of media principles)

**Friday, May 14:**
Final Paper Due on ICON by 8PM, 3-5 pages (No final exam)

**Maintaining a Professional Environment**

- Be courteous and professional in your correspondence for this course, using proper grammar and proper modes of address.
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner when collaborating and discussing issues with your classmates on ICON.

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 another in class, students will approach the course’s readings as academic material for active study rather than passive entertainment. The study of journalism and media involves examining texts to discover how a culture thinks about itself. In an exciting, safe online 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 media communication. It is in this spirit of mutual respect for classmates, professor, and subject matter that we begin our intellectual journey.

**Expectation of Time Allocation**

In a three-semester hour course, students should expect (on average) 6 additional hours of outside work per week or a total of around 9 hours per course per week if classroom time is included. A student taking 5 courses (3 s.h. each) should expect to spend around 45 hours a week on academic work.

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

**Information for Undergraduates Spring 2021**

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing course absence policies, which vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must
uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, and University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused; the form is located on ICON within the top banner under "Student Tools."

**Academic Integrity**

All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have in essence agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code). Academic misconduct affects a student's related grade and is reported to the College which applies an additional sanction including suspension. Outcomes about misconduct are communicated through UI email (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**

UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as a mental health, attention, learning, vision, and a physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

**Administrative Home of the Course**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other UI colleges may have different policies for courses offered by that college. CLAS policies may be found here: [https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**Classroom Expectations**

Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life (https://dos.uiowa.edu/policies/code-of-student-life/). This includes related UI policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, each student must wear a face mask when in a UI building, including a classroom. The density of seats in classrooms has been reduced, and in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face mask and maintaining as much distance as is possible are vital to slowing the spread of
COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with a reasonable directive of an instructor or of the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student to leave the space immediately for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the UI Office of Student Accountability, with the possibility of additional follow-up with the student. Students who need temporary alternative learning arrangements (TALA) for a future semester related to COVID-19 should visit this website for more information: https://coronavirus.uiowa.edu/temporary-alternative-learning-arrangements-tala.

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those who are not enrolled in the course; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and in some cases is a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within or with UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Complaints
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. See this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with a few exceptions made for particular
types of courses such as labs or off-cycle courses: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**
The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eod; +1 319 335-0705 or (diversity.uiowa.edu)

**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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.