PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM SYLLABUS (JMC 2300)

This course is designed to acquaint you with the concepts and functions of journalism in American society, including the underlying principles of journalism. The course will highlight the values of journalism, its distinctive public service mission and its adaptation to the digital age.

Through readings, discussions, activities, lectures and case studies you will learn the ART of our peculiar tribe: acting, reading and thinking like a journalist.

You will:

**Acting**

- DEFINE JOURNALISTS’ KEY PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS
- EXPLAIN THE PRESSURES JOURNALISTS FACE IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT
- APPLY OF THE GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM TO REAL WORLD SITUATIONS

**Reading**

- RELATE JOURNALISTIC VALUES TO CURRENT NEWS
- ANALYZE A NEWS STORY JOURNALISTICALLY
- COMPARE THE RELATIVE VALUE OF NEWS STORIES

**Thinking**

- DESCRIBE JOURNALISM’S ROLE IN A DEMOCRACY
- OUTLINE THE BASIC TENETS OF MEDIA LAW
- TRACE THE EVOLUTION OF JOURNALISM AS A PROFESSION

Together those also contribute to the School of Journalism and Mass Communication Learning Goals.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

Journalism’s values are both universal, enshrined in places like Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and peculiar to the history of the evolving profession.

For that reason, we will trace the evolution of journalism and at each stage explore further the important journalistic norms and values that emerged at that point in our history.
**Grading**

The class is graded on the following basis:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>60 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal essay</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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This class is graded using the +/- system without A+’s.

**Active Participation**

This is not a class where students can be passive and do well. Engagement and participation is a key part of student success in the course. You will be expected to demonstrate a professional work ethic by being on time and prepared to contribute to each class session.

Not only will you be active, this class will be team-oriented. That’s because when you go out to become of journalist (or anything else) you will be expected to be part of a team. For instance, for every on-camera reporter at CNN network there are dozens off-camera photographers, editors, producers, directors, etc.

To avoid the “free rider” problem, you will be graded on your contributions to your team – not the final outcome.

Early in the semester we’ll form teams (news organizations) that will last through the first exam. After each exam you will have the opportunity to change up teams if you want to. In class you will identify yourself “press conference” style: e.g. “Maud Beelman, Associated Press.”

On the first day of class we will – collaboratively – develop the grading criteria for individual and group participation including the following:

- speaking during class discussions
- asking questions in class
- contributing meaningfully to group work
- attendance

*The rubric will be added here following the first day of class.*

**Reading Expectations**

There are three expectations:
Textbook assignments
ICON assigned readings
Daily news consumption

Together this still provides what I consider a modest and reasonable reading load.

**THE TEXTBOOK**

The main textbook for this course is *Principles of American Journalism* by Stephanie Craft and Charles Davis. It is the standard for textbooks for this type of course, a position earned for good reason.

While you can order a hardcopy of the textbook Amazon.com, by enrolling in this course you've been given automatic access to it as an ebook through ICON Direct. Through this program, you receive a 40 percent discount on the book (billed directly to U-BILL).

Copies are also available in the SJMC Resource Center in the Adler Journalism Building and via the University Libraries.

**ICON "READINGS"**

The majority of your "reading" is in selected articles, audio and video available on this ICON site. A complete list of reading assignments can be found in the course schedule below.

**READING THE NEWS**

For most of you this is the first step on a path towards becoming a journalist, so it is time to begin what should be a lifelong habit of consuming a healthy and balanced news diet.

While your mileage may vary, must good newspapers attempt to create such a diet in their pages every day.

For this class, you are expected to be familiar with all the top stories of the day as reflected by the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*, one of the world's most important news outlets.

That list of top stories is available each day at WSJ.com. Since the WSJ has a paywall, I strongly encourage you to buy a one semester subscription. I have arranged for one to be available at $1 per week for the semester through a discount code: bit.ly/jmc2300-wsj-subscribe.

And yes, the quizzes and exams will include questions from the current news.

**SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

See ICON.

**QUIZZES**

Each week on Monday there will be a timed (20 minute), open-book, online quiz that can be taken anytime between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Each quiz will be 10 questions about the readings for the week ahead, major news stories or relevant material discussed in recent class sessions.
Students are expected to complete the quizzes on their own, to that end each student will have their 10 questions chosen at random from a larger bank of relevant questions.

Students who have *extra time* as an accommodation approved by Student Disability Services will need to make a standing appointment to take the quiz at a specific time Mondays in the SJMC departmental office, E305 Adler Journalism Building.

There is a quiz on the syllabus due before the second class session.

Students will be graded on their 10 best quizzes (in other words, the worst three are dropped).

**EXAMS**

There are three exams, primarily in the form of multiple choice, short answers and definitions. Two are during the semester, each focusing on material covered during the preceding five weeks.

The final is *cumulative* and held during the finals period. There will be an optional review session during finals week.

**PERSONAL ESSAY**

At the end of the semester, you will complete a short (800-word) personal essay answering the question: *What kind of journalist will you become?*

In this piece, you will outline your personal journalistic values and how you hope to apply them in your career. (Those not considering a career in journalism can write this for a hypothetical journalist of a specialty of their choice.)

This should include:

- A description of types of work (e.g. sportswriter, photojournalist) you plan to practice
- A description of the types of stories you intend to tell – and why
- Your evaluation of the relative importance of journalism’s competing roles and values based on readings, lectures and outside materials
- An explanation of why at least three specific pieces of journalism represent aspects of the journalism you hope to undertake

Beyond that, grading will be done on the clarity of writing, demonstration of understanding of the material from class, and spelling, style and grammar of the writing.

It’s due the last day of classes, but I am happy to go over drafts with you at any time during office hours.

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

There is ample evidence that the use of laptops, phones and other devices in class leads to poorer learning outcomes and poorer grades for students.
We will review some of the evidence and develop a policy together in class.

*The policy will be added here following the first day of class.*

**EMAIL POLICY**

Any email you send to me should be considered a professional communication. That means it should be:

- addressed *Dear Professor Lathrop:*
- written in complete sentences
- written in a work-appropriate tone
- signed with your full name

(These are good guidelines to follow with your other professors.)

**CHANGES IN GRADES**

If you believe a specific grade has been given in error or otherwise should be changed, you need to notify me by email within 48 hours of the grade being posted and schedule a meeting within the following week to discuss it in person. Those meetings should happen during office hours unless you have class or other academic obligations during those times.

No changes or discussions of changes will be handled in email. (I will check to make sure there has not been data entry or similar error immediately.)

If you believe your semester grade has been given in error or otherwise should be changed, you need to notify me within one week of grades being published and schedule a time to meet with me in person before the beginning of the next semester.

No changes or discussions of changes will be handled in email. (I will check to make sure there has not been data entry or similar error immediately.)

**GRADING SCHEME**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79%</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 - 66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 - 62%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
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**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION LEARNING GOALS**

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 their degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here at clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/sjmc-assessment-plan.

We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. This course contributes to these learning outcomes by introducing elements of the law & ethics, media literacy and media history goals. Achieving these outcomes for this class means students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of the history of the First Amendment and awareness of the rights protected by the First Amendment in different media contexts. (Law & Ethics Learning Objective No. 1)
- learn how to create and disseminate media messages in various forms. (Law & Ethics Learning Objective No. 2)
- demonstrate critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions. (Media Literacy Learning Objective No. 2)
- demonstrate knowledge of technological innovations in print and electronic communication and their impact on media publishing industries for mass audiences, showing an awareness of their distinct political, social, and economic contexts and uses. (Media History Learning Objective No. 1)

**CLAS TEACHING POLICIES & RESOURCES**

**ADMINISTRATIVE HOME**

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 other policies. These policies vary by college (clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).
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 mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu).

NONDISCRIMINATION IN THE CLASSROOM

UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. 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 at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

CLAS FINAL EXAMINATION POLICIES

The final exam schedule for each semester 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 final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals (clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies).

MAKING A COMPLAINT

Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see osmrc.uiowa.edu.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are copies of our textbook and other course materials at the SJMC Resource Center, Adler Journalism Building room E350 (clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/facilities/resource-center).
Students may find the Speaking Center very useful in becoming more comfortable participating in class (speakingcenter.uiowa.edu).

The Writing Center (writingcenter.uiowa.edu) and SJMC’s Writing Assistance Program (clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/facilities/resource-center#guidelines) may be helpful in completing your personal essay.

The Tutor Iowa (tutor.uiowa.edu) can also be valuable resource for students seeking a leg up or having difficulties in this or any other class.

**A NOTE FROM THE WRITING CENTER**

Visit the Writing Center this semester and take the stress out of writing assignments.

Book a 30 minute appointment when you need it.

Reserve a regular weekly meeting for the entire semester — register now through our website: writingcenter.uiowa.edu.

Upload a draft to our online system and get comments and suggestions by email.

Sign up for graduate student programs and professional development opportunities.

All our services are free (it’s the best deal in town). Check out our website at writingcenter.uiowa.edu or stop by to see us in 110 EPB.

The Writing Center is hosted by the Department of Rhetoric and supported by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.