CROSS-PLATFORM JOURNALISM SYLLABUS

SPECIALIZED REPORTING AND WRITING (JMC 3400 SECTION 2)

This class is meant to teach you the way journalism is being done, namely across many publishing platforms.

These days reporters are asked to take a story concept and be able to produce content across platform.

This course will cover how to take your reporting and generate content for platforms like Twitter, Facebook, podcasting, online video and blogs.

Students will also learn about the specific strategies leading publishers are using to create content on and across platforms.

This addresses both fundamentals of writing that cross all platforms as well as the unique skills called for by particular platforms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

You will demonstrate the ability to:

- use multiple publishing platforms for effective journalistic communication
- use social platforms as reporting tools
- write tweets, social stories, social posts, video scripts and audio scripts
- produce social media videos
- report and produce narrative and interview-based audio podcast pieces

You will also:

- improve your fundamental reporting skills
- improve your news writing
- improve your proficiency in AP Style
- better understand issues of race, gender, class and harassment online

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

COURSE STRUCTURE

This class will be a combination of lecture-style sessions (typically on Tuesdays) and workshop/discussion-style sessions (typically on Thursdays). Each week you will complete a short writing assignment (a “social story”) and an online quiz on the material.
In addition you will complete a portfolio of social media work, a podcast segment, a viral video and a final project.

At the beginning of the semester each student will choose a “beat” to follow for the semester and all of her work will be done on stories from that beat. Appropriate beats will be discussed the first day of class and determined the second.

**THE TEXTBOOKS**

The textbooks for this course are:

- *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production* by Jonathan Kern

They are for sale at the Hawk Shop bookstore in the IMU.

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

**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.

**ICON “READINGS”**

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

**GRADING**

The class is graded on the following basis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly writing</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media portfolio</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast and video</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Final project 20 percent

This class is graded using the +/- system without A+'s.

**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.

This also means successfully completing the in-class activities and projects.

While this will be assessed holistically, attending all required sessions (with the exception of PTO days) and being prepared to participate on its own will result in a “B” (8.5 out of 10) in participation. Further points will be earned by asking and answering questions, helping other students during work sessions, etc.

An estimate of this grade will be placed in ICON mid-semester.

**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).

**WEEKLY “SOCIAL STORY” WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Your weekly writing assignment is a “social story” in which you take a current news story on your beat and report in out in a blog post written in AP style, aggregating information from social media. Each is expected to be roughly 500 words, well written and newsworthy.

Each is graded on a “check”, “check plus”, “check minus” system and they are graded as a whole at the end of the semester.
An entire semester of “checks” will result in a B. The inclusion of “check pluses” and “check minuses” will be used holistically to determine a grade. ICON will display a running estimate of this.

Assignments up to 24 hours late will be penalized one category. Because deadlines matter in journalism, assignments won't be accepted more than 24 hours late.

Further details will be discussed in class.

**SOCIAL MEDIA PORTFOLIO**

Your social media portfolio will consist of a combination of certifications (Hootsuite, Google, Facebook), personal social pages (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) and your social media activity over the course of the semester.

You are expected to post at least daily about your beat to at least two major social networks (generally Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, reddit, Instagram and LinkedIn). That will be monitored through hashtags and/or by you submitting evidence.

This will be graded holistically. Submitting all the required material and certificates on time will result in a B (17 out of 20). Doing less than that and/or turning things in late will result in a lower grade. Doing higher quality work will result in a better grade.

You'll be asked to attach links to your social posts at the end of each week’s social story so that a running estimate of your grade can be maintained.

**PODCAST AND VIDEO PROJECTS**

During the semester you will complete a narrative or interview-based podcast segment on your beat and a “viral”-style video on your beat.

Detailed grading criteria will be given in class. They are weighted equally.

**FINAL PROJECT**

Your final project will be one of the following: a half-hour narrative or interview-based podcast, a 15 minute “mini-doc”, or an extensive, longform interactive story with multiple elements. The final must be a newsworthy story from your beat.

Detailed grading criteria will be given in class.

**SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

Available on ICON

**CONDUCT**
You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner befitting a professional. You are expected to follow two rules: courtesy and common sense. Repeated or egregious failure to do so can result in a significant reduction of your final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

In addition, plagiarism is a capitol crime in journalism. Therefore plagiarism or cheating will result in an F in the course. All journalistic work must be conducted in accord with the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics. Failure to do so will result in an F on the assignment.

PTO DAYS

Since life does happen, you have three “PTO days” that do not count against you in considering participation.

In the professional world, Paid Time Off (PTO) is an employee's pool of available sick and vacation days off from work.

Your three “PTO days” can be used any time, but you must notify me as far in advance as possible and at least 20 minutes before class via email or a voicemail (my office phone is 319-335-3331).

Use these days wisely. Additional excused absences will be given only in accordance with university policies, for student-athlete travel to out-of-town games, and in extraordinary cases such as documented inpatient hospitalization.

Remember, taking all three of those is already missing 10 percent of our of the class sessions. I encourage you not to do that.

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.

On the other hand, this is a technology class and as future journalists you will be expected to be fully connected during your career.

So I expect you to pay attention and be present regardless of what’s going on in your phone, email, social feeds, etc.

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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 - 86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 - 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 - 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 - 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Grades rounded to the nearest full percent)

**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 reinforcing elements of the writing and storytelling, media literacy, media history goals, law and ethics and multiculturalism learning goals. Achieving these outcomes for this class means students will:

- demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences. (Writing and Storytelling Learning Objective 1)

- display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards. (Writing and Storytelling Learning Objective 2)

- demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media. (Writing and Storytelling Learning Objective 3)

- learn how to create and disseminate media messages in various forms. (Media Literacy Learning Objective 3)

- demonstrate knowledge of the main areas of media law, including libel, invasion of privacy, obscenity, commercial speech, intellectual property, and the freedom of the press. (Law & Ethics Learning Objective 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 1)

- demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the cultures, histories, perspectives, and socio-economic and political situations of diverse groups. (Multiculturalism Learning Objective 2)

**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 and speaking on tape (https://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 writing assignments.

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.

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**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.