JMC 3400 Spring 2018 Specialized Reporting and Writing
Cross-Platform Journalism

Date and Time: Monday/Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 p.m.

Location: W332 Adler Journalism Building (AJB)

Catalog Listing: (Specialized Reporting and Writing) Topics may include public affairs, law, science, business, medicine, intercultural affairs, education, computer-assisted reporting.

MyUI Listing: These days reporters are asked to take a story concept and be able to produce content across platform. This course will cover how to create and distribute content for platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Students will also learn about the specific strategies leading publishers are using to create content on and across platforms.

Instructor: Max Freund maxwell-freund@uiowa.edu

Office Hours: From 8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays in The Gazette offices above the Hills Bank in the Old Capitol Mall.

Department information: School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Director: Professor David Ryfe Email: david-ryfe@uiowa.edu Main office: E305 Adler Journalism Building Office phone: 335-3486

Notes: Some of the policies relating to this course (such as the drop deadline) are governed by its administrative home, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 120 Schaeffer Hall.

Course description and goals: This course is a best attempt to simulate the varied approach to content distribution that the average newsroom must tackle on a daily basis.

Very few newsrooms are limited to a single content type or medium of delivery. Even companies like NPR that are known for their audio content
have websites, social media avenues, and public outreach for memberships that all fall into their purview for content strategy and distribution.

Ultimately with limited time and resources, journalists are faced with deciding how to tell a story, and often adapting one instance of reporting to serve a variety of mediums.

With this in mind, students will tackle “beats” throughout the entire semester. The rules for what makes a good beat will be discussed later. Within a beat, students will be asked to report on “newsworthy” events and topics. But with each instance of original reporting, multiple stories that match different formats will be produced.

This will allow you to explore not only structural and aesthetic differences in the way a piece of journalism can be created, but also the procedural and contextual decisions you will make based on the desired medium and audience.

While creating these cross-platform styles, we will strive to better understand the purposes, strengths, and weaknesses of these mediums as we produce content to serve them.

Ultimately, this course will be providing you with the necessary abilities to create cross-platform journalism, while instilling a more comprehensive understanding of what mediums and storytelling techniques best serve a story idea.

**School of Journalism and Mass Communication Learning Objectives:**
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. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here: https://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 the writing/storytelling, law/ethics and multiculturalism learning goals. Achieving these outcomes means the ability to:

- Demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account. [law/ethics]
- Gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences. [writing/storytelling]
- 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/storytelling]
- Demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the cultures, histories, perspectives, and socio-economic and political situations of diverse groups. [multiculturalism]

**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 capital 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.

**Grading and Assignments:** This class is graded out of 1000 points ... you start with 0 and earn points for successfully carrying out assignments and activities.

**Major Units (150 points each) x3:** Within the cross-platform structure, there will be three units focused on storytelling techniques: Written stories,
Social stories, and Audio/Visual stories. Inside each unit students will be expected to report on a newsworthy event or storyline. From that one cycle of reporting, they will then produce three pieces of journalism in styles that fit those units. Each story will be graded on its own merits, and will account for 50 points of the unit’s total grade.

**Final Project: (200 points)** Similar to the major unit stories, students will be expected to take a single instance of reporting, and craft multiple story types from that instance of reporting. Unlike the major units, there will not be a focused requirement on a style of storytelling (audio, written, etc) and students will be able to utilize the platforms they found most compelling throughout the semester. Additional information on project requirements will be provided near the time of the assignment.

**Attendance (100 points)** Attendance is important with a class that is so dedicated to in-class work and discussion. Attendance is expected and students will earn points based on being present and attentive during class.

With this expectation, sometimes students find themselves unable to attend for personal reasons. To simulate a “real world” environment, students will be provided with two “PTO” days. These are free misses that do not affect your grade. However for them to be used a student must notify me via email about their intention to miss class.

Additional misses will only be excused for university-sanctioned events (think travel for sports etc.) or for documented hospitalization or medical issues. Additional misses above the two “PTO” days will result in a 10-point reduction in attendance for each miss. If a student misses 5 or more days without cause, their grade and overall standing in this course will be under review, and will be subject to a 1 on 1 meeting where we discuss how we can rectify this issue and refocus the student’s efforts in class.

**Social Media Certifications (75 points)** A variety of popular social media environments offer certifications. As social media is both a storytelling platform as well as audience growth outlet, it is important that students are
well versed in the ways in which these mediums can be used. Completing the certification will be worth 50 points in total.

**Auxiliary blog posts and topic reflections (100 points)**
Throughout the semester, smaller blogging and reflective posts will be expected. These posts will not be based in reporting, but rather a space for you to expound upon your own reporting, and usage of storytelling mediums throughout the semester. Expectations for these assignments will be laid out in the course schedule.

**In Class Quizzes (75 points)**
This is en lieu of the more classic “participation” component of a class. I believe the classic “participation” structure can penalize students who are thoughtful, engaged, yet a bit more passive or reserved than other students. While it is my goal to foster a community where ideas are exchanged freely, and all feel compelled to share their opinions in discussion, I do not believe that structured points should be used to punish those who do not speak up as often as others. Throughout the course, reading and reflective assignments will be given. The in class quizzes will be a way to demonstrate not only a working understanding of the topics covered, but that you are taking time to reflect on the purposes and usage of the different mediums of journalism. In class quizzes will not be announced, and if you miss a quiz, you will not be allowed to make up that quiz, unless you have a documented and approved reason for missing that class period.

**Overall Grading Scale**
The class is out of 1000 points, which makes math easy. Students will begin with 0 points in ICON, and have those points added as assignments are turned in and graded. Your grading scales is as follows, and all decimal points will be rounded down.
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**Class Schedule:** The class schedule can be found online here: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rIgwUFzH1LTGhz9gnBUemIcKi4OBQNR5y--fwDiDXiA/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rIgwUFzH1LTGhz9gnBUemIcKi4OBQNR5y--fwDiDXiA/edit?usp=sharing) (link will be on ICON as well)

The schedule is a best attempt to give you a sense of what we are covering, and when assignments will be due.

If any major changes are made to due dates or schedule, they will be announced in class prior to changing on the web calendar.

**Resources for Students:** Students will find the Writing Center and the Speaking Center very useful for this course; the Tutor Iowa site is also very valuable for students seeking extra help: • Writing Center: [https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu](https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu) • Speaking Center: [https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu](https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu) • Tutor Iowa: [https://tutor.uiowa.edu](https://tutor.uiowa.edu)

**The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences:** Important Policies and Procedures 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.

**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 correspondence (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11).

**Accommodations for Disabilities**: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office hours to make particular arrangements. See https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for more information.

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**: The University of Iowa 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, diversity@uiowa.edu, or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

**Academic Honesty**: All students taking CLAS courses 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 date and time of every final examination is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. 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. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the 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 Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator 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 Public Safety website.