

ONLINE JOURNALISM I – Spring 2010 (Mon, Wed)
Department of Journalism, Rowan University

Online Journalism I - 21863 - JRN 02321 - 1
Monday and Wednesday
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Boz 134

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the online news landscape. Students learn which principles of traditional journalism can and should be applied to the Web, and what makes online journalism unique. Students gain this knowledge through reading assignments, class activities, and a series of reporting, writing, and multimedia reporting assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Gain an overview of the state of online journalism today.
- Explore the unique challenges and opportunities of doing journalism on the Web.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of HTML, CSS and the use of a Content Management System.
- Use various online tools to manage text, links, photos, maps, audio, and video.
- Gain experience reporting, writing, and producing for online media.
- Experiment with digital storytelling.
- Produce an online publication with original reporting, writing, photographs, interviews, audio, video, and interactive map and/or timeline. If done well, this publication will be suitable for internship, freelance, and job applications.

TEXTS:

All assignments, articles, quiz information, and tutorials will be posted on a blog for the course called “The South Jersey Line” at <http://mbgjournalism.wordpress.com/>. It is also a portal to student work. Students should bookmark the class blog or subscribe to its RSS feed, and use it regularly.

JournalismNext: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing
By Mark Briggs, CQ Press, ISBN # 978-1-60426-560-6
\$21.95 in Rowan bookstore and also on Amazon.com, and
cqpress.com/product/Briggs.html

The Associated Press Stylebook by Norm Goldstein (editor)
Note: All of your writing for this course must follow AP style.

Various articles will be assigned for you to read. Links to them will be posted on the class blog. The articles include:

- “Out of Print: The Death and Life of the American Newspaper” by Eric Alterman (*New Yorker Magazine*, March 31, 2008)

- “Why I Blog” by Andrew Sullivan (*The Atlantic Magazine*, November 2008)
- “Exposed: Blog-post Confidential” by Emily Gould (*The New York Times Magazine*, May 25, 2008)
- “Amateur Hour: Journalism without Journalists” by Nicholas Lemann (*New Yorker Magazine*, August 7, 2006)
- “Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business” by Chris Anderson (*Wired Magazine*, Feb. 25, 2008)

TEACHING METHODS:

Students will practice online journalism in this course. Practice, in this case, means *doing* journalism, not *pretending to do* journalism just to fulfill a school assignment. Students will select a topic or beat to cover for the semester. Each student will create a blog and then report, write, edit, and create multimedia content to cover his/her topic. Students will build an audience. I will serve as an editorial advisor and give the same responses, instruction, and suggestions that I would give to professional journalists.

There are also reading assignments, quizzes, class discussions, and class activities.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is essential for academic success in this course. Students are expected to be in class on time. Students who miss class are responsible for all material covered in that class and must meet all deadlines related to that material. Excused absences include medical reasons, death in family, and pre-approved school-related activities. More than four (4) unexcused absences will drop the final grade one letter.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Do not use words, photos, or other kinds of content without proper attribution and copyright permission. This includes copying content from the Internet. Plagiarism also includes passing off another student’s work as your own or giving your work to another student. When in doubt, ask. For Rowan’s complete academic honesty policy, download the Student Information Guide from <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/infoguide/pdf/infoguide0809.pdf>. (See pages 27-28 in guide.)

Anyone caught plagiarizing could receive an F for the course.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me at the beginning of the semester. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center to receive official university services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234 and is located in Savitz Hall, 3rd floor. The staff is available to answer questions about accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations.

OFFICE HOURS:

I welcome conversations with students outside of class. My regular office hours are posted on my office door at Bozorth 105E. I may also be available other times as well. If you would like to make an appointment, feel free to email me. If you have questions about assignments anytime throughout the week, please email me and I will respond as soon as I am able.

I will also email students between classes with updates on assignments, grades, and responses to your work. Please check your email throughout the week so that you receive messages.

COMPUTER LAB ETIQUETTE:

We will often use the computers for in-class assignments. When we do use the computers, please refrain from unrelated multi-tasking (i.e. web surfing, checking your email, updating your Facebook page, twittering, IM-ing, etc.) When we are not using the computers for in-class assignments, please close your browser and other applications. Please turn off your cell phone, pda, iPhone, etc before class begins.

GRADING:

Journalism is a craft best learned through a process of trial and error. My goal is to impart the standards and ethics of journalism while encouraging innovation and ingenuity in a digital medium.

Each student will select a news beat (i.e., a subject, a neighborhood, or a focused topic). Your topic must be something that you can access on a regular basis: you must be able to attend events, interview people, and gather original audio, photographs, and video related to your subject. The topic must be approved by the instructor. Students will then set up a blog and post all assignments on it.

Two weekly blog posts are required beginning the week of Feb. 8. A total of 20 posts are expected over the course of the semester (worth 20 percent of overall grade). Weekly blog posts are due by 8:00 p.m. each Saturday. Each post will be graded on content and execution and when specific kinds of posts are assigned, if they meet the stated objective of the assignment.

In addition to regular blog posts, students will perform specific multimedia reporting assignments, including:

- a photo essay (10 percent of overall grade)
- an audio or video interview (10 percent of overall grade)
- an interactive map or timeline (10 percent of overall grade)
- and a final multimedia project (15 percent of overall grade).

There will be five quizzes on the reading and course work during the semester (worth a total of 10 percent of overall grade).

At the end of the semester, each student will receive an overall assessment of his/her body of online work (10 percent of overall grade).

At the end of the semester, each student will do a brief class presentation of her/his class work (2.5 percent of overall grade).

Finally, each student will receive a class participation grade for attendance and class interaction (10 percent of overall grade).

Please plan ahead. Use the full time given for each assignment. No late work will be accepted. If your work is not on your blog by the deadline, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Blog Set Up	25 points	Feb. 8
Quizzes	(5 X 20 points each) 100 points	See dates below
Twice-a-Week Blog Posts	(20 X 10 points each) 200 points	Saturdays, 8 p.m.
Photo Essay	100 points	March 1
Interview	100 points	March 29
Interactive Feature	100 points	April 12
Final Project	150 points	TBA
Class Presentation	25 points	End of semester
Overall Blog Assessment	100 points	End of semester
Class Participation	100 points	End of semester
Total	1000 points	

GRADING SCALE:

A	940- 1000
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	600-669
F	0-599

EQUIPMENT:

I have a limited number of digital cameras, audio recorders, video cameras and microphones for students to check out. They are in my office and are available on a first-come-first served basis. If you want to use equipment, please plan ahead. The use of these items depends on properly caring for the equipment and returning it on time.

I **strongly recommend** that you purchase some equipment for this course. Here are some suggestions:

Headphones

Headphones or ear buds are helpful to bring to class when we are working with audio. Over the year headphones work best, but any will do.

Digital Audio Recorder

If you purchase a digital audio recorder, make sure it:

- saves files in WAV, WMA or MP3 format
- has a MIC jack
- has a headphone jack
- can upload files to a computer via USB without additional software.

Olympus VN 5200PC (listed for \$37), Olympus VN 6200PC (listed for \$44), and Olympus WS-400 (listed for \$57) are available on Amazon.com.

Do not purchase a recorder that requires you to download software or that creates files in a format other than WAV, MP3, or WMA. They will not work in our classroom. And beware: Not all recorders are the same. So shop carefully. And talk to me before you purchase anything if you are unsure.

Digital Camera

Many of you already have **digital cameras**. If you have one, take it with you when you go out to report. If you are looking to buy a new camera anyway, now would be a great time. You can use it to shoot both still photos and short videos.

If you do purchase a digital camera, make sure that it meets or exceeds the following specifications:

- 7 megapixels or better
- Image stabilization (essential)
- Video at 640 x 480 at 30 fps; video must include audio
- 3x OPTICAL zoom or better
- 2 GB (gigabyte) high-speed SD card or larger
- USB 2 output

Cameras in this range start out at around \$130.

CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE – SPRING 2010

The following schedule is a guide for the semester. Deadlines and specific assignments are subject to change. Check the class blog for updates.

Week 1

Wed, Jan 20

In Class: Introduction and cover syllabus

Read "Out of Print" by Eric Alterman, *New Yorker Magazine*

Assignment: Explore the Web sites listed ONA 2009 Finalists.

Week 2

Mon, Jan 25

In Class: What Is Online Journalism? What's the Big Deal? Why is the Internet Wreaking Havoc on the News Industry?

Assignment: Read JournalismNext - Forward (p.xiv to xix) and Intro (p. 1-8)

Beat Idea Due on Wednesday

Wed, Jan 27

Due: Beat Idea

In Class: Watch portion of “News War: What’s Happening to the News,” Frontline Documentary
Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 1 – We are all Web workers now (p. 9-22) but skip section on Web design (p. 23-39)

Week 3

Mon, Feb 1

Quiz 1 on Reading

In Class: A Tour of the Best Journalism Blogs and Making Sense of Blogs, Feeds, and Web 2.0

Assignment: Bring Blog Pitch to Class

Wed, Feb 3

Due: Bring your Blog Pitch to Class

In Class: Setting Up Your Blog

Assignments: Read “Why I Blog” by Andrew Sullivan, *The Atlantic Magazine*

Read JournalismNext Chapter 2 – Advanced blogging (p. 40-67)

Get your blog up and ready to go by next week

Week 4

Mon, Feb 8

Due: Blog Set Up and Blog Post 1 Due

In Class: Reporting and Writing for the Web and Managing a Link Economy: Traffic, Social Networking, Twitter

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 4 – Microblogging (p. 93-118)

Read JournalismNext Chapter 3 – Crowd-powered collaboration (p. 68-92)

***NOTE: Twice-Weekly Blog Posts Begin This Week**

Thurs, Feb 10

In Class: A Few Legal and Ethical Issues to Consider

Assignment: Read “Exposed” by Emily Gould, *New York Times Magazine*

Due: Blog Posts 2 and 3 Due by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

Week 5

Mon, Feb 15

Quiz 2 on Reading

In Class: Digital Storytelling

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chap 10 – Managing news as a conversation (p. 277-309)

Wed, Feb 17

In Class: Trouble Shooting Day

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chap 11 – Building a digital audience for news (p. 310-334)

Due: Blog Posts 4 and 5 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

Week 6

Mon, Feb 22

In Class: Photos and Slideshow Work

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 5 – Visual storytelling with photographs

Wed, Feb 24

Slideshow Work

Assignment: Read "Amateur Hour" by Nicholas Lemann, *New Yorker Magazine*

Due: Blog Posts 6 and 7 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 7

Mon, March 1

Due: Slideshow

In Class: Audio

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 7 – Making audio journalism visible (p. 177-205)

Wed, March 3

Quiz 3 on Reading

In Class: More on Audio

Due: Blog Posts 8 and 9 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 8

Mon, March 8

In Class: Video

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 8 – Telling stories with video

Wed, March 10

In Class: Working on Online Interview/Profile

Due: Blog Posts 10 and 11 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

SPRING BREAK, MARCH 15-19 – No Assignments This Week

Week 9

Mon, March 22

In Class: Basic HTML and CSS

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chap 1 - Section on Web design (p. 23-39)

Read "Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business" by Chris Anderson, *Wired Magazine*

Wed, March 24

In Class: Basic HTML and CSS continued

Due: Blog Posts 12 and 13 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 10

Mon, March 29

Due: Interview

Quiz 4 on HTML and CSS

In Class: Interactives (Map and Dipity)

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chap 9 – Data driven journalism (p. 243-276)

Wed, March 31

In Class: Interactive Work Day (Map and Dipity)

Due: Blog Posts 14 and 15 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 11

Mon, April 5

In Class: Final Project Tour

Wed, April 7

In Class: What's the Big Deal? Why the Internet is Wreaking Havoc on Journalism?
Revisited

Due: Blog Posts 16 and 17 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 12

Mon, April 12

Due: Interactive Map or Timeline

Due: Final Project Pitch

Quiz 5: What is Online Journalism? (3 questions I will give ahead of time)

Wed, April 14

Working on Final Project

Due: Blog Posts 18 and 19 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 13

Mon, April 19

In Class: What Do I Do With My Blog at the End of the Semester?

Wed, April 21

Working on Final Project

Due: Blog Posts 18 and 19 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 14

Mon, April 26

No Class – Go hear Gail Collins speak on Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.

Wed, April 28

Work on your final project

Week 15

Mon, May 3

Blog Presentations (Session 1)

FINALS WEEK

Due: Final Project - TBA

Due: Blog Post 20 - TBA

Blog Presentations (Session 2) - TBA

GRADUATION – FRIDAY, MAY 14