

**University of North Texas
Mayborn School of Journalism
Online Journalism - JOUR 3340.001**

**Instructor: Neil Foote, Principal Lecturer, GAB 109
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Office hours: By appointment.**

**Semester: Fall 2013
Class Sessions:
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Meeting Place: GAB 319**

Required Reading:

Reporters' Guide to Multimedia Proficiency, by Professor Mindy McAdams
FREE download: <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/faculty/mmcadams/PDFs/RGMPbook.pdf>

Recommended Reading:

JournalismNext, A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Editor, Mark Briggs, (CQ Press)

Entrepreneurial Journalism, How to Build What's Next for News, Mark Briggs (CQ Press)

Additional readings will be made available online.

Recommended "tools":

- Jump drive/Flash Drive with Min. 2GB or more, to store images and/or video files; or
- External hard drive
- Virtual storage (e.g. Google Drive, DropBox, etc)

Journalism Course Registration

- Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.
- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all pre-major courses, and Math 1680/1681 and also have applied for major status. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

Email communication

Communicating with students using the UNT student email account is part of the university's contract with students. Electronic communication with students in this class will be through the students' **myunt accounts** rather than personal email accounts.

Re-taking Failed Courses

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at [940.565.4323](tel:940.565.4323).

Textbook policy

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

SETE

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a university-wide online evaluation and a requirement for all UNT classes. The Mayborn School of Journalism needs your input to improve our teaching and curriculum. This short survey will be available at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Prompt completion of the SETE will mean earlier access to final semester grades. You're a critical part of our growth and success. We look forward to your input through SETE.

Academic Honesty

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety. Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable.

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It is a firing offense in the professional world.

Mayborn School of Journalism Academic Integrity Policy

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

First Class Day Attendance

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

Course Objectives

By the end of this class you will:

- Learn how traditional media has transformed from analog to digital
- Learn how to write for the web and understand the fundamentals of multimedia storytelling
- Understand basic concepts of how news media websites function, including understanding how to identify the elements of website design and critique functionality
- Learn how to post content – text, video and audio – on the web
- Understand the basic concepts of how journalists can use social media as a tool to report, curate and distribute news – text, images, and video.
- Publish a final website project showcasing your reporting, writing and multimedia storytelling skills

This class is designed to help you learn how to become an effective online journalist and multimedia storyteller. You'll learn some of the history, theory and strategy of how traditional news websites are transitioning to digital media platforms. You'll learn the importance of how best to engage readers, listeners and viewers as well as use some of the most current digital media tools.

Additionally, this course addresses nine of the ACEJMC core competencies (#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11):

1. Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;
4. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
5. Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
6. Think critically, creatively and independently;
7. Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
8. Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
9. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
10. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
11. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Getting the Most Out of This Class

- ✓ We will be using BlackBoard Learn for this class. Course readings, assignments and some grading will be posted on <http://learn.unt.edu>
- ✓ In case of inclement weather or campus closure, we will use the virtual classroom or chat programs to conduct coursework.
- ✓ Since the goal of this class is to prepare you to become a multimedia journalist, you will be expected to become as knowledgeable as possible about the current media trends and issues as well as how news websites are using their websites and social media to report, write, produce and distribute news. You

will see several links to industry blogs on Blackboard with which you should immediately become familiar.

- ✓ **Do not check your email, Facebook, use your cell phone or text message during class unless it is part of class work. You will get two (2) warnings. On the third warning, you will lose five (5) points from your overall course grade and be asked to leave the class.**
- ✓ **If you are not in class at 11:00 a.m., you are late and will be marked absent unless you have a written excuse. More than three (3) times late, you will lose five (5) points for each lateness after that.**

GRADING:

There are several components of this class that contribute to your grade. This is subject to change, but you will be notified of any changes throughout the course of the semester.

ARTICLES (4)	40%
BLOG POSTS/WRITING	30%
FINAL PROJECT Proposal	5%
FINAL PROJECT	15%
TEACHER EVALUATION / ATTENDANCE	10%
TOTAL POSSIBLE	100%

NOTE: The work you do in this class must be original and may not be turned in for any other class. You are allowed to use equipment assigned to this class and, with approval from the professor, other equipment as long as it is similar to the equipment accessible from the University.

Your grades posted on Blackboard will not reflect your final grades, but will give you a very good estimate. Remember, each assignment is weighted so for each assignment, you will receive a certain number of points. For example, the assignment has a weight of 15% of the total grade. If you get an 85 on one of that homework assignment, you multiply 85 by .15 to get the total points for that specific assignment: 12.75. Total all the points for each assignment to get your final grade.

You must follow all rules and guidelines related to checking out any audio/visual equipment. Any violation of those guidelines will limit or completely restrict your usage of the equipment. You also are responsible for all costs related to any damage to the equipment.

STORIES

Online Journalism will work as a “functioning newsroom” where you will work in **two-person** teams to write, shoot stills, capture audio and post stories that may run in the NT Daily and NT Daily.com. You will be assigned a category where you will be assigned to generate stories based on that beat.

You’ll be responsible for coming to class prepared to pitch your story ideas that must include original reporting and pictures, live interviews and a written story. It’s up to you and your team member to figure out where to find the story. You can use find your ideas anywhere in North Texas. You’re free to go beyond UNT’s campus into Denton, Dallas, Plano, Frisco, Flower Mound or any of the surrounding communities to report the story.

Since this class is preparing you for a real-life journalism experience, you must follow the rules accuracy, clarity, conciseness, spelling, usage, and grammar. You are expected to know and understand AP Style for print or broadcast. You must meet all deadlines. You cannot make up in-class writing assignments.

You will have **four (4) story assignments** throughout the semester that will require original reporting, images and video. The **best stories** will be recommended to the NTDaily for publication.

Stories are due:

- Tuesday, Oct. 1
- Tuesday, Oct. 15
- Tuesday, Oct. 29
- Tuesday, Nov. 12

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS / BLOG ENTRIES

Part of your experience of becoming a journalist of the 21s Century is that you constantly practice the craft. Throughout the course, you must write an item for a blog that will be posted on Blackboard Learn that may discuss and/or analyze topics we discuss in class or items you find in the news or on media websites. You will be given a specific assignment that will be tied to a certain aspect we are currently studying in class. **Your weekly posting must be made posted by the deadline.**

Your blog post will be graded using the following rubric:

- Quality of writing
- Embedding at least three links
- Embedding at least one picture (or screenshot)
- Embedding at least one related video from a **news** website with a YouTube page.

FINAL PROJECT

This project is going to reflect a culmination of all your coursework. Your final project is designed to: (1) Take our class readings, discussions and analysis and put them into practice; (2) Tap into your skill as a journalist and novice at understanding how the internet works, particularly how content can be presented on the Internet; and (3) Allow you to create a blog that could serve as an important component of your portfolio. Your final grade for this project will be based on your thoroughness in reporting and writing; use of interactivity (e.g. use of related links, photos, slideshows, audio and video), your creativity and the option to do a 5-minute in-class presentation. You are not expected or required to hire a web designer or a programmer. All the tools you need are readily available for free on the web, and do not require any sophisticated technical knowledge. Your grade will be based on the submission of your idea, your site map and your short presentation during class.

TEACHER EVALUATION:

You will be judged throughout the semester on your attendance, attitude, participation, creativity, energy, ideas and overall improvement.

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1 – AUGUST 29

Introduction: Review syllabus, grading, class format. Course goals. Discuss evolution, role and importance of online journalism. Becoming a Digital First Journalist. Evolution of news websites –Web 1.0 to Web. 2.0, now Web 3.0.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, Sept. 5 ~ Blog Post #1:

- Please read the Knight Digital Media Center's report, "[The Transition to Digital Journalism](http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/digital-transform/)". (<http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/digital-transform/>) Choose one category, then write a **memo** with at least **three suggestions** to a local media company on what it should do to become a more digitally successful publication.

WEEK 2 – SEPT 3 / SEPT 5

- What makes a good news website? News Websites: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly / Analyzing/Critiquing websites. Media company structures. How news organizations have changed. Types of Convergence/Characteristics of Online News & Reporting for Web: New roles, new responsibilities. Discussion of the websites you analyzed.

>>>> READ:

- The Smashing Book: Usability Principles for Modern Websites: <http://www.smashingmagazine.com/smashing-book-1/usability-principles-for-modern-websites/>
- Jakob Nielsen, guru of web design and usability:
 - **Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design:** <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9605.html>
 - **Top Ten New Mistakes in Web design:** <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990530.html>
 - **Top Ten Guidelines for Homepage Usability:** <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20020512.html>

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, September 12 -- Blog Post #2:

- Analyzing a Website Part 1: Based on today's lecture on websites, go to <http://www.newslink.org/index.html> to find a local newspaper or television website (outside of North Texas). Critique the newspaper or television station website based on your current knowledge.

WEEK 3 – SEPT. 10 / SEPT. 12

Writing for the web. Writing in multiple formats.

- Components of the Online News Story; Basic HTML; Story Forms.
- Beat assignments/Discussions

>>>> **Blog Posts #3 & #4:** IN CLASS WRITING assignments- You will be given a handout in class and instructions.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, September 19 - Blog Post # 5

- Beat memo. Describe your beat. Discuss how you will cover your beat. What are some of the key sources? Identify three possible stories.

WEEK 4 – SEPT. 17 / SEPT. 19

What makes a good audio/visual SlideShow. Defining/Discussing Digital Storytelling. Creating slide shows. Using SoundSlides. Using Audacity. Telling great multimedia stories.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, September 24

Read:

- Picking the Right Media for Reporting Your Story, <http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/picking-right-media-reporting-story/>
- 5 Types of Photos that Make for Strong Photo Essays, Audio Slideshows: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/visual-voice/171050/5-types-of-photos-that-make-for-strong-photo-essays-audio-slideshows/>

- Take a look at the National Press Photographers' Association website:
<https://nppa.org/competitions/best-of-photojournalism>

WEEK 5 – SEPT. 24 / SEPT. 26

Elements of a digital storytelling. Working with audio. Shooting good pictures.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, September 26

- Read “Inside the Story” – available on Blackboard Learn.
- Read Chapters 4, 7, 8, 10 and 11, “Reporter’s Guide to Multimedia Proficiency”

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, October 3 - Blog Post # 6

- Find a multimedia story on a news website (OUTSIDE OF NORTH TEXAS). How effective is the piece in telling the story? How well does the journalist use the elements of digital story telling based on the advice suggested in “*Inside the Story*”?

➤ **HOMEWORK DUE: Story # 1 - Tuesday, Oct. 1**

WEEK 6 – OCT. 1 / OCT. 3

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE Tuesday, October 8:

Read

- When Journalists Blog: How It Changes What They Do,” by Paul Bradshaw, Nieman Reports, Winter 2008, <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=100696>
- “The Twisted Psychology of Journalists v. Bloggers,” by Jay Rosen, <http://pressthink.org/2011/03/the-psychology-of-bloggers-vs-journalists-my-talk-at-south-by-southwest/>

WEEK 7 – OCT. 8 / OCT. 10

News v. Blogs: Defining the Difference. Are blogs journalism? Analysis of media blogs v. pundits. What are the elements of a blog? What makes a good blog? Crowdsourcing.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, October 10

- **BLOG POST #7:** Based on these readings and our class discussion, find an example of a news blog. Discuss how effective is this in helping inform readers.

➤ **HOMEWORK DUE: STORY # 2 - Tuesday, October 15**

WEEK 8 – OCT. 15 / OCT. 17

Overview: Social Media for Journalists.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, October 17

READ:

- Facebook & Journalists: What Works
- Twitter for Journalists

WEEK 9 -- OCT. 22 / OCT. 24:

Discussion of final project. Handout distributed.

Social Media for Journalists. What journalists need to know about how to use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest for covering news.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, October 22

READ:

- Chapter 4, "Microblogging," **Mark Briggs**, Journalism Next: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing
- Find online or on Blackboard Learn in "Course Readings" Folder:
 - 10 Ways Journalists Can Use Twitter Before, During and After Reporting a Story: <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/digital-strategies/146345/10-ways-journalists-can-use-twitter-before-during-and-after-reporting-a-story/>
 - The Five Types of Stories that Make Good Storifys:
 - <http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/153697/the-5-types-of-stories-that-make-good-storifys/>

➤ **HOMEWORK DUE: Story #3 - Tuesday, Oct. 29**

Week 10 - OCT. 29 / OCT. 31

Social Media for Journalists continued. Tweeting the news. Using Storify.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, November 7: Blog Post #8

Find a local newspaper or TV station outside of North Texas (go to <http://newslink.org>) and map out your strategy on how the media outlet is using social media. Be specific. Find out if the newspaper or TV station has a Facebook page and/or Twitter accounts. Clearly define how successful these tools are based on our discussion of how we measure social media success.

READ:

- Search Engine Optimization – Basics: <http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/seo-search-engine-optimization-basics/> (Also available in the "Readings" folder on Blackboard)
- Top 5 SEO Tips for Media Owners and Journalists: <http://www.wordtracker.com/academy/seo-tips-media-journalists> (Also available in the "Readings" folder on Blackboard)

Week 11 -- NOV. 5 / NOV. 7

Understanding Search Engine Optimization.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE, Tuesday, November 12:

READ: Chapter 11, "Building a Digital Audience for News," by Mark Briggs, "JournalismNext"

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, November 12:

– Final Project Overview. Post on Blackboard

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Thursday, November 14 - Blog Post #9

Based on Briggs' Chapter 11, write a memo explaining how you would increase traffic at your news website.

➤ **HOMEWORK DUE: Story #4 - Tuesday, November 12**

Week 12 -- NOV. 12 / NOV. 14

Understanding how to analyze site traffic and impact social media. What makes a successful news website. Measuring success. Website Metrics 101.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, November 19

READ:

- “*Local and Niche Sites: The Advantage of Being Small*”, Chapter 3, “The Story So Far, What We Know about the Business of Digital Journalism”. AVAILABLE on Blackboard.

Week 13 – NOV. 19/ NOV. 21

Hyper-local News: What is it? How it’s impacting media outlets and fueling a wave of new sites.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, November 26 - Blog Post #10

Based on the readings, lecture and guest speakers, what would you do – using technology or business strategy – that would impact traditional media companies the most.

Week 14 -- NOV. 26 / NOV. 28

NO CLASS – THURSDAY, NOV. 28

Entrepreneurial Journalism: What you need to know to become an “entrepreneurial journalist”. Final project workshop. Be prepared to discuss your final project.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Tuesday, December 3: Assigned Reading Posted on Blackboard

Week 15—DEC. 3 / DEC. 5

Ethics: Doing the Right Thing Legal/Copyright: Knowing What’s Right. Future media trends. Searching for a job.

>>>> HOMEWORK DUE: Final Project Presentations Begin on Thursday, Dec. 5

Week 16 – DEC. 10

Final Project Presentations