

**University of North Texas  
Department of Journalism  
Online Journalism - JOUR 3340  
Semester: Spring 2010**

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**Office hours:** By appointment.

**Class Meetings:** Throughout the course of the semester we will meet primarily in GAB 319.

**Text:** DOWNLOAD (free): “Journalism 2.0 How to Survive and Thrive”, reported by Mark Briggs, edited by Jan Schaffer. ([http://www.kcnn.org/resources/journalism\\_20/](http://www.kcnn.org/resources/journalism_20/))

Recommended Reading:

*JournalismNext, A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Editor*, Mark Briggs, (CQ Press, 251 pp)

*Convergent Journalism: An Introduction--Writing and Producing Across Media* (Paperback) by Stephen Quinn (Editor), Vincent Filak (Editor)

*“We the Media, Grassroots Journalism for the People, By the People”*, Dan Gilmour (O’Reilly Media, 334 pp)

Additional readings will be made available online.

### **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
- Maintain your own blog
- Publish a final website project showcasing your reporting, writing and multimedia storytelling skills

This class will combine lectures, discussion, in class assignments and reading assignments. This will be a hands on class where you will be using your basic journalism skills as well as learn the basics of integrating audio, photographs, graphics and video to enhance your articles. There will be regular and timely assignments where you will analyze, critique and discuss current practices of interactive tools on media websites.

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**

- √ 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. At the beginning of the course, each of you will be assigned to find a multimedia story or some other interactive element from a NEWS website tied to one of the day's top stories. You will prepare a memo – as if you were analyzing the story and/or website for the media outlet's editor or producer – present your findings to the class, and write a 300 – 400 word post for your blog.
- √ **Do not check your email, use your cell phone or text during class. You will be asked to leave the class immediately.**

You may draw from any number of the recommended sites below:

- Local/regional media sites, e.g. dallasnews.com, startelegram.com, dentronrc.com, NTDaily.com, KRLD.com, KNTU.com.
- National/international sites: cnn.com, nytimes.com, msnbc.com, BBC (bbc.co.uk), washingtonpost.com
- CyberJournalist.net: <http://cyberjournalist.net>
- News Voyager: <http://newsvoyager.com>
- PaidContent.org: <http://paidcontent.org>
- AssignmentEditor: <http://assignmenteditor.com>
- Poynter Institute: <http://poynter.org>
- American Press Institute: <http://www.mediacenter.org/> and <http://www.mediacenter.org/convergencetracker/search/>
- Wired Magazine: <http://wired.com>
- Media Week: <http://mediaweek.com>
- Broadcasting & Cable: <http://broadcastingandcable.com>
- MediaPost.com: <http://mediapost.com>
- PBS's MediaShift (<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift>)

### **University Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of seven to ten 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 journalism. It's a firing offense in the professional world. In the School of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism at UNT, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism (depending on the importance of the assignment):

- A grade of 'F' on a minor assignment;
- A request that the student drop the class;
- Withdrawal of the student from class, initiated by the professor;

- An 'F' for the course;
- A referral to the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities;
- A notation on the student's transcript; and,
- Expulsion from the university.

A combination of these penalties may also be used. If you need more information or have questions about plagiarism, ask your nearest journalism professor or visit the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**DISABILITIES.** The School of Journalism, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, makes reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you require any such accommodation, please contact the instructor within the first three weeks of class.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>January 19</b>  | Classes start                     |
| <b>Jan. 18 – 22</b>  | Add/Drop **                       |
| <b>Quizzes (Subject to change): Feb. 23 and March 11</b>                     |                                   |
| <b>Oct. 20th</b>   | <b>Final Project Proposal Due</b> |
| <b>Final Presentations:</b>  | <b>April 29</b>                   |
| ** Consult with School of Journalism office or Registrar for refund details. |                                   |

**GRADING:**

There are several components of this class that contribute to your grade:

- WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – 20%
- BLOG ENTRIES – 20%
- QUIZZES – 20%
- FINAL PROJECT – 30%
- TEACHER EVALUATION – 10%
- TOTAL POSSIBLE .....100%

**FINAL GRADE SCALE:**

- 100 – 90 = A
- 89 – 80 = B
- 79 – 70 = C
- 69 – 60 = D
- 59 – Below = F

**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.

**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.**

**WRITING ASSIGMENTS**

Your in-class and homework assignments include writing from wire copy, newspaper/magazine/e-zine articles, notes, tapes/CDs, lectures, your own interviews and textbooks. Since this class is preparing you for a real-life journalism experience, you must follow the rules accuracy, clarity, conciseness, spelling, usage, 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.

## **BLOG ENTRIES**

Part of your experience of becoming a journalist of the 21st Century is that you constantly practice the craft. During the first week of class, we will set up your course-related blog at WordPress.com. On this site, you must write a weekly item that discusses any issue related to electronic media, which 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 BEFORE the Thursday class at 11am.**

At least once during the class, you will be responsible for posting an analysis of an interactive tool based on daily news. **This posting will be due BEFORE the class you are making the presentation.**

## **QUIZZES**

These quizzes will include questions directly related to the lectures, notes, speakers, writing assignments, exercises, handouts, speakers, and class discussions.

## **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 your 10-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.

## **TEACHER EVALUATION:**

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

## ***(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)***

### Course Outline

#### **Week 1:**

Jan. 19 & 21

Introduction: Review syllabus, grading, class format. Course goals. Create your class blog. News website analysis.

#### **HOMEWORK DUE Jan. 26:**

Read and be prepared to discuss the following chapters of "The State of the New Media Report 2009":

- Overview: [http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative\\_overview\\_intro.php?media=1](http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_overview_intro.php?media=1)
- Online: [http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative\\_online\\_intro.php?media=5](http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_online_intro.php?media=5)

#### **Week 2: Jan. 26 & 28**

Overview: Discuss evolution, role and importance of online journalism.

The “Daily News” Website Analysis. What makes a good news website? News Websites: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly / Analyzing/Critiquing websites.  
Writing for the Web – Part 1

**Due Jan. 28 - Blog Assignment #1:** Based on today’s lecture on websites, go to [AssignmentEditor.com](http://AssignmentEditor.com) to find a **local** newspaper or television website (outside of North Texas). How does this news website meet the criteria? For additional information, read the following links.

**ALSO: READ:**

- “Thirty Principles to a better landing page design,” <http://www.landingpageoptimization.org/30-principles-to-a-better-landing-page-design>
- 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>

**Week 3: Feb. 2 & 4**

How news organizations have changed. Types of Convergence/Characteristics of Online News  
Components of the Online News Story; Basic HTML; Story Forms; Writing for the Web – Part II: Headlines, AP Style

**Additional Background:** “The Convergence Continuum: A Model for Studying Collaboration Between Media Newsrooms,” Larry Dailey, Lori Demo, Mary Spillman; A paper submitted to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, Missouri, July-August, 2003. <http://web.bsu.edu/ldailey/>

**HOMEWORK:**

- \* Read Chapters 5 (How to Blog) & 6 (How to Report News for the Web) of “Journalism 2.0”
- \* Technorati’s “State of the Blogosphere”, <http://technorati.com/blogging/state-of-the-blogosphere/>
- \* “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>

**Week 4: Feb. 9 & 11**

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?

**BLOG ASSIGNMENT #2 – Feb. 11:** 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:**

**READ:** Jeff Howe’s website on “Crowdsourcing”, <http://crowdsourcing.typepad.com/> and his original article on “Crowdsourcing”: <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/crowds.html>

**BLOG ASSIGNMENT #3:** Based on the articles, find an article in a local newspaper (outside of Dallas), and discuss how you may have used crowdsourcing to report the story.

**Week 5: Feb. 16 & 18**

Reporting for Web: New roles, new responsibilities. Social Media. Crowdsourcing, Twitter.

**HOMEWORK READING DUE TUESDAY (will be included in quiz):**

- \* 10 Ways newspapers are using social media  
<http://mashable.com/2009/03/11/newspaper-industry/>

- Digging Into Social Media to Build a Newspaper Audience  
<http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=100697>
- \* Social media influence on UK newspapers  
<http://socialmediatrader.com/social-media-influence-on-uk-newspapers/>
- Teens Know What They Want from Online: Do You?  
<http://www.naafoundation.org/Research/Foundation/Youth-Content/Teens-Know-What-They-Want-From-Online-News.aspx>

## **Week 6: Feb. 23 and Feb. 25**

### **QUIZ – Feb. 23**

More on new models for news. Writing/reporting for the web. “Online Journalism Daily News” – Putting theory to practice;

**HOMEWORK: Article Due March 4. Details will be explained in class.**

## **Week 7: March 2 & 4**

Planning Online stories / Storyboarding/Story Structure/ Creating a Slide Show

## **Week 8: March 9 & 11**

***March 9: Final Project Discussion***

### **March 11: Quiz No. 2**

## **Week 9: March 23 & 25**

**FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE: March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Defining/Discussing Digital Storytelling; Tools of the Digital Journalist; Analyzing online slideshows.

**HOMEWORK:** Blog Assignment: Go to NewsVoyager.com and choose a local newspaper or TV news website. Choose a multimedia package, e.g. audio and/or video slide show.

**Week 10: March 30 & April 1:** Video news. Creating your YouTube News channel.

## **Week 11: April 6 & 8**

Adding Dimension to Online News; Using Graphics and Links/Cool sites & tools; maps, timelines, polls. Location-based news

### **April 8: Blog Assignment**

## **Week 12: April 13 & 15**

Nontraditional News Websites ; Politics & the Web: Role of news websites and the covering government.

## **Week 13: April 20 & 22**

Ethics: Doing the Right Thing

Legal/Copyright: Knowing What's Right

**Week 14: April 27 & 29**

Job Search: Using the Web / Final Project Workshop

Future Trends: What's New, What's Next

Innovation & Ideas – Mobile Technology

**Week 15: May 4 & 5**

Final Class presentations