

University of North Texas
Department of Journalism
Online Journalism - JOUR 3340
Semester: Fall 2009

Instructor: Neil Foote, Senior Lecturer, GAB 109

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Office hours: By appointment.

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

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

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/)

Recommended Reading: *"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 for a potential career in electronic media, 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 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 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>
- NewsDirectory.com: <http://assignmenteditor.com>
- Poynter Institute: <http://poynter.org>
- American Press Institute: <http://www.mediacenter.org/> and <http://www.mediacenter.org/convergencetracker/search/>
- Editor & Publisher: <http://mediainfo.com>
- 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

August 27	Classes start
Aug. 27 – Sep 2	Add/Drop **
Oct. 15	Mid-term @ 11am
Oct. 20th	Final Project Proposal Due
Final Presentations:	December 1

** Consult with School of Journalism office or Registrar for refund details.

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Course Outline

Week 1:

Aug. 27

Introduction: Review syllabus, grading, class format. Course goals.

HOMEWORK DUE Sept. 1:

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

- Overview: http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2009/narrative_overview_intro.php?media=1
- Online Journalists Survey: http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2009/narrative_survey_intro.php?media=3
- Newspapers: http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2009/narrative_newspapers_intro.php?media=4
- Online: http://www.stateofthemedial.org/2009/narrative_online_intro.php?media=5

Week 2: Sept. 1 & 3

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

Create your class blog / The "Daily News" Website Analysis / Online Journalism Twitter

What makes a good news website? News Websites: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly / Analyzing/Critiquing websites.

Writing for the Web – Part 1

Sept 3 - Blog Assignment #1: Based on today's lecture on websites, go to 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: Sept. 8 & 10

How news organizations have changed. Twittering the News.

Types of Convergence/Characteristics of Online News

Components of the Online News Story

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"

Week 4: Sept. 15 & 17

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 - Sept. 17:

READ: Technorati's "State of the Blogosphere", <http://technorati.com/blogging/state-of-the-blogosphere/>

And "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>

Based on these readings and our class discussion, define the role of a blog on a news website? What would make it most effective?

Week 5: Sept. 22 & 24

Reporting for Web: Crowdsourcing, Content Aggregation. New models for news.

GUEST SPEAKER

Blog Post Due Sept. 24: For your blog Assignment, read the following articles:

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>

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.

HOMEWORK READING DUE SEPT. 29:

- "The Elite Newspaper of the Future," By Philip Meyer, American Journalism Review, <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4605>
- "Adapt or Die," by Rachel Smolkin, American Journalism Review, <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4111>
- "The Newspaper Industry Today – 10 Ways Newspapers are Preparing for Tomorrow," by Morton Goldstrom, Newspaper Association of American, <http://www.naa.org/Resources/Articles/Advertising-Presentation-Newspaper-Industry-Today/Advertising-Presentation-Newspaper-Industry-Today.aspx>

Week 6: Sept. 29 and Oct. 1

More on new models for news.
Storyboarding/Story Structure
Creating a Slide Show

Oct. 1: Blog Assignment: #4 due

Week 7: Oct. 6 and 8

"Online Journalism Daily News" – Putting theory to practice
Defining the Audience: Who's Reading/Viewing/Clicking?
Hooking Your Readers/Viewers/Social Bookmarking/RSS Feeds

Week 8: Oct. 13

Final Project Discussion

Oct. 15 - Mid-Term Exam

Week 9: Oct. 20 & 22

OCTOBER 20TH: DUE FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Defining/Discussing Digital Storytelling
Tools of the Digital Journalist

OCT. 22: User-Generated News: Blogs, Twitter, Podcasts, Facebook, Myspace, NING
GUEST SPEAKER

Week 10: Oct. 27 & 29

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

Oct. 29: Blog Assignment: #5 due

Week 11: Nov. 3 & 5

Politics & the Web: Role of news websites and the elections process. An analysis of the 2008 presidential campaign.
Nontraditional News Websites

Week 12: Nov. 10 & 12

Ethics: Doing the Right Thing
Legal/Copyright: Knowing What's Right
GUEST SPEAKER

Week 13: Nov. 17 & 19

Future Trends: What's New, What's Next
Innovation & Ideas – Mobile Technology
Blog Assignment: #6 due

Week 14: Nov. 24

Job Search: Using the Web / Final Project Workshop

Nov. 26: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING.

DECEMBER 1 - Final class presentations

Week 15: Dec. 8 & 10

Final Class presentations

GRADING:

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

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – 25%	
BLOG ENTRIES – 15%	
MID-TERM EXAM – 20%	
FINAL PROJECT – 30%	
<u>TEACHER EVALUATION – 10%</u>	
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 ASSIGNMENTS

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 21s 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.**

MID-TERM EXAM

This exam will include questions over the text, 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.