

**UNDERGRADUATE**  
**Business Journalism**  
**JOUR 4210 / JOUR 5350**  
**Fall 2015, 4:00 p.m.- 6:50 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, GAB 114**

Professor Neil Foote, M.S.J., M.B.A.  
Phone/office 214-448-3765-c; office-GAB 102;  
Office hours: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m., Tuesdays & Thursdays  
E-mail [foote@unt.edu](mailto:foote@unt.edu)  
Blackboard <http://learn.unt.edu>

\*This course is part of the university core.

**Description** In Dallas, there are 18 businesses on the Fortune magazine Top 500 companies in America list that generated nearly \$800 billion in revenue. In Texas, there are 52 companies on the list. Business news and the economy are at heart of almost every story we cover nowadays. This is a fundamental class to understand the basic concepts of how to tell stories about publicly traded and private companies as well as a grasp on how financial markets affect every aspect of news coverage – locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. You will learn how to figure how much corporate CEOs make, how to read financial statements, how the stock market work, how to write basic earnings report stories and how to do research publicly traded and private companies. If you want to become more knowledgeable about business, want to become a business writer or a director of investor relations, this class is for you.

**Required texts**

Show Me the Money: Writing Business and Economics Stories for Mass Communication (Routledge Communication Series), by [Chris Roush](#) Series: **Routledge Communication Series Paperback: 408 pages; Publisher: Routledge; 2 edition (September 30, 2010)**

**Supplemental texts (not required but may help with research and further study)**

- The SABEW Stylebook. By Chris Roush and Bill Cloud. Marion Street Press, 2012.
- Writing about Business: The New Columbia Knight-Bagehot Guide to Economics & Business Journalism. Edited by Terri Thompson. Columbia University Press. 2001.
- The Fortune Tellers: Inside Wall Street's Game of Money, Media, and Manipulation. By Howard Kurtz. Touchstone Books. 2001.

By the end of this class you will:

- Learn the fundamentals of what it takes to be a business reporter
- Understand how to research publicly traded and private companies
- Learn key business and financial terms
- Learn the key documents related to publicly traded companies
- Understand the basics of how key components of the economy work, including stocks and bonds, economic indicators, the labor market and personal finance

#### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Cell phones should NEVER be used in class, including text messaging. You may be asked to leave class for using a cell phone.

#### **USE OF LAPTOP**

You may use a laptop to take notes for the class or other activities that the professor may request. If you are found doing work for other classes, checking email, surfing the web, engaging in social media or watching a movie or TV, you will be asked to leave class immediately – and marked absent.

#### **Assignments**

Here's a breakdown of the assignments for this course:

Final Project (Company profile)	250 points
Mid-Term Company Analysis	150 points
Weekly Company Tracker	100 points
Guest Speaker Summaries	100 points (4 @ 25 points)
Case Study	100 points
Executive Compensation Analysis	100 points
Participation/Attendance	200 points
<b>TOTAL POINTS available</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>

#### **Grade Distribution**

A = 1000 – 900 points

B = 899 – 800 points

C = 799 – 700 points

D = 699 – 600 points

F = 599 - 0 points

Grading of these assignments will be focused on analysis based on prior classroom discussion and assigned reading, on thorough research, and on the skillful use of language (including grammar, mechanics, spelling). Assignments are due by midnight on the assigned date. Professional standards will be modeled and upheld for presentations and written assignments.

## **Participation – Company Updates**

Part of your grade will depend on you providing updates to the company to which you will be assigned during the first week of classes. You will be graded on **your knowledge of the company**. You will be given an outline of what you will be expected to present during those class discussions. General class information, assignments and syllabus are available on Blackboard Learn (<http://learn.unt.edu>).

## **Brief Explanation of Assignments**

- ❖ *Weekly Company Tracker*: During the first class session, you will each be assigned a publicly traded company. Every week, you will be responsible for posting in a spreadsheet the company's closing stock price on Friday, its earnings-per-share (EPS), price-to-earnings ratio (P/E) and the percentage change of the closing stock price from week-to-week. Every week, we will start each class with a discussion of your companies. You must be prepared to discuss your company's financials as well as major news happening with your company.
- ❖ *Midterm Company Analysis*: You will write a 750-word article that will discuss what's been going on with your company. You will draw from the information you've been collecting from your Weekly Company Tracker as well as the company's website and other sources we will discuss in class.
- ❖ *Guest Speaker Summaries*: We will have several speakers in our class. You will be expected to write 300 to 500 word summaries of at least four (4) presentations.
- ❖ *Case Study*: You will be charged with writing a 300-to-500 word answer to a pre-assigned question related to a case study we will be reading in class.
- ❖ *Executive Compensation Analysis*: Your 300-to-500 word analysis will discuss the salary and compensation of the key executives of your company. You will analyze the information to provide a snapshot of how these executives get paid and how their compensation has changed compared to the previous year.
- ❖ *Final Project*. You will write a 1,000 to 1,500 word in depth profile of the company you've been following all semester. You must greatly expand on your Midterm Company Analysis to do some basic financial analysis and discuss critical issues that have affected the company over the course of the semester. Additional details will be explained.

## **Syllabus**

This is a tentative outline that may change throughout the semester. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with changes in this syllabus and the assignments. Each class contains quite a bit of material since we meet only once a week. All readings listed for a class must be completed before that class because we will discuss them.

### ***(Subject to Change)***

**Week 1 – 8/25**: Course introduction; deadlines; participation guidelines; “your company” assignment. Overview of online resources available to you.

**Week 2 – 9/1:** Getting information about public companies / Analyzing a public company / Doug Campbell. Basic SEC documents.

>>>> READ: Roush, “Financial Numbers Can Be Your Friend,” Chapter 9

**Week 3 – 9/8:** Executive Compensation & Getting Comfortable with Numbers: Key Tools for Analysis

>>>> READ: Roush, “The Corner Office”, Chapter 10

>>>> Handouts provided. In-class exercises.

**Week 4 – 9/15: Telling great business stories**

>>>> READ: Roush, “The Ins and Outs of Company News Stories,” Chapter 6

>>>> DUE: Your company’s Executive Compensation Analysis.

**Week 5- 9/22: Macro: Financial News in the Headlines.** How these major stories have affected your lives. Economic indicators

>>>> READ: Roush, Chapter 3

**Week 6 – 9/29:** Stocks & Bonds - Top 10 things you need to know

>>>> READ: Roush, Chapter 8

**Week 7 – 10/6: Your Money Matters: Personal Finance**

>>>> READ: Roush, Chapter 5. In-class exercises.

**Week 8 – 10/13: Local Business News –**

>>>> READ: Roush, “Small in Size, Large for News”, Chapter 11)

>>>> DUE: Midterm Company Analysis

**Week 9 – 10/20: Industries In depth –** Real estate, Housing & the Automobile industry

>>>> READ: Roush, “Bubble, Bubble, Real Estate in Trouble,” Chapter 14.

**Week 10 – 10/27: Industries In depth –** Technology, Energy/Oil & Gas, Hospitality & Tourism

>>>> READ: Articles available on Blackboard

**Week 11 – 11/3: Dissecting Nonprofits**

>>>> READ: Roush, “No Profits, but Lots of Money”, Chapter 12

**Week 12 – 11/10: The Nitty Gritty: Regulatory issues**

>>>> READ: Roush, “Government Issue”, Chapter 15

**Week 13 – 11/17: Globalization/International Markets –** The BRIC Nations

>>>> READ: Articles available on Blackboard Learn.

## **Week 14 – 11/24: Diversity & HR issues**

>>>> READ: Articles available on Black Board Learn

## **Week 15: Final Presentations / Wrap-up**

### **JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES**

#### RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES

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.

#### 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.

#### FIRST CLASS DAY ATTENDANCE

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

#### **OFFICE HOURS**

I'll be in my office from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Appointments are available. Contact me via email. I'll try to respond to your emails within 24 hours.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

#### **FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

**If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility.** Please visit <http://financial.aid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

#### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

- It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. **Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.** Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

### IMPORTANT FALL 2015 DATES

#### FALL 2015

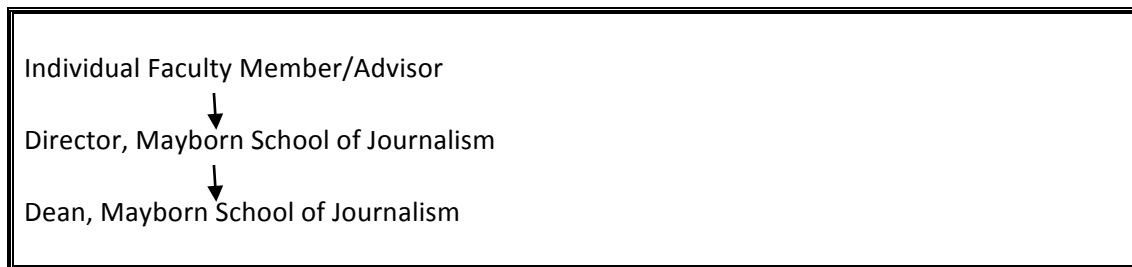
August 24 2015	First Class Day
September 7, 2015	Labor Day
September 8, 2015	Beginning this date, a students may drop a course only with written consent of instructor.
October 2, 2015	Last day for student to receive automatic grade of W for nonattendance. Last day for change in pass/no pass status. Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university with a grade of W for courses a student is not passing. After this date a grade of WF may be recorded.
October 3, 2015	Beginning this date, instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance.
November 2, 2015	Last day to drop with either W or WF. Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.
November 9, 2015	Beginning this date a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.
November 26 – 29, 2015	Thanksgiving Break (no classes; university closed).
December 3, 2015	Last Class Day

December 4, 2015      Reading Day (no classes).

December 5 – 11, 2015      Final Exams.

### **ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:



### **OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make 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.

### **COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS**

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention

at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook

### **MSOJ 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.

### **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student\\_conduct/index.html](http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html).

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

## **STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS (SETE)**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide students a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course.

## **FINAL EXAM POLICY**

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

## **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please do so, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

## **COURSES IN A BOX**

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to insure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES**

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

**Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email [international@unt.edu](mailto:international@unt.edu)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.**

## **DROPPING AN ONLINE COURSE**

A student needing to drop an online course should send their instructor an email with their name, student ID#, reason for dropping a course, and date you are sending the email. This *must be done prior to the UNT deadline to drop a course*.

If approved, the instructor will contact the MSOJ Undergraduate Office in GAB 102 where you may obtain a signed drop form. **It is your responsibility to turn in the completed drop slip to the UNT Registrar's office before the deadline to make sure you have been dropped from the course with a "W".** If you are taking only online courses and your instructor approves the drop, please contact the MSOJ Director of Advising for instructions.

### **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

## **Statement of Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and to criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
2. Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
3. Demonstrate and understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
4. Think critically, creatively and independently;
5. Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
6. Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
7. Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work and to understand a digital world.