

JOUR 4212.001 & 5290.001– Science, Health, and Environmental Reporting

Fall 2025

Class meetings

Thursdays 3:30-6:20 p.m.

Sycamore 203

Textbook

This course does not have an assigned textbook. You can expect relevant reading assignments from other sources.

My contact information

Office: Sycamore 211

Office hours reserved for students:

- Tuesdays 1-3 p.m.
- Thursdays 11 a.m.-noon
- Other days and times by appointment

Email: randy.loftis@unt.edu

- Email only through Canvas or your official yourname@my.unt.edu account
- I'll reply within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays

Phone: (940) 565-3495

Welcome and learning outcomes

This might be among the most dynamic, and newsy courses you'll take at the MSOJ. Imagine a course that adapts and responds rapidly to some of the most important questions facing the world. Just open any news app today and the questions leap from the screen:

- How can journalists cover science in an often anti-science world?

- What are the stakes for human health in an age of instant global communication -- of both information and viruses?
- Can we tell stories that make people pay attention to the cooking of the planet?

I intend this course to equip you not to answer those questions definitively (that's impossible -- there are entire books, websites, videos and who knows what else devoted to those questions), but to ask them with greater insight than other journalists.

As framing, we will use several cross-cutting issues dominating world news.

By the end of the course, you'll be able to understand and interpret research in virtually any scientific field, spot policy implications early, and create compelling journalism that explains it to a general audience.

You'll learn the similarities and differences between covering science, etc., and other types of news. You'll learn how to produce stories that set new standards of accuracy and how to use the tools of investigative reporting when needed.

And you'll get a journalist's-eye-view of the topics themselves: science, health, and the environment.

Along the way, we'll keep a sharp lookout for relevant developments in the news that demand our attention. When the news says pivot, we'll pivot.

See additional learning outcomes related to the Mayborn School of Journalism's accreditation standards later in this syllabus.

Assignments and expected work

What there won't be:

- a textbook (but there will be mandatory outside readings or viewings and many suggested resources)
- term papers
- tests
- a midterm or final exam

What there will be:

- story assignments
- in-class work and workshops
- outside readings

- possibly, guest speakers

Assignments

The assignments are platform-neutral, meaning they can be written, video, audio, etc. Regardless of format, all work must meet the same standards of professionalism.

Major assignments:

- Two midsize enterprise pieces (650 words or more, or video/audio equivalent) on topics in science, health, environment, policy, etc.
- One longer enterprise piece (the semester story) (1,500-2,000 words or video/audio equivalent) on topics in science, health, environment, policy, etc.

In journalism, an **enterprise story** is one that the journalist comes up with on their own, as opposed to one assigned by an editor/news director or resulting from a news event.

The midsize stories will take a few weeks each. The semester story is due at the semester's end and will take many weeks. We'll discuss in class how the stories get done.

Other assignments:

- In-class individual or group exercises
- Out-of-class assignments as warranted by news developments
- Assigned work on how to read and understand a research journal article
- Readings and class prep
- Research proposal (graduate students only)
 - You'll conceive and write a proposal for a graduate-level research project on a question in science, health, or environmental journalism.
 - You don't have to do the actual research itself--just practice writing a research proposal as a way of sharpening your research skills and intellectual focus.

Attendance

Come to class. Your in-class contributions are important for everyone. Regular attendance signals the commitment expected and counts in the discretionary points.

Excused absences will be given for illness, personal or family emergencies, official UNT activities, and other circumstances as appropriate. More than one unexcused absence can affect your final grade.

Things happen to us all. If you're sick, just let me know. I don't ask for a doctor's note, a copy of your loved one's published obituary, or the program from their memorial service. I try to respect your privacy and dignity. If your car overheats on the way to class or there's a six-mile-long jam on 35, just let me know. Come on in when you get here.

Academic integrity / use of generative AI

This is an advanced, upper-level journalism course reflecting the ethics of a professional newsroom. We will observe, follow, and enforce the highest professional standards of journalistic and academic integrity.

All work in this course must be produced in compliance with professional journalism's rules governing truthfulness, accuracy, and fairness. Any violation, including plagiarism, fabrication, or distortion, may result in an automatic failing grade for the semester and other serious penalties in keeping with UNT policy.

Ethics rules for your work in this course include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All work must be originally produced for this course. Submitted work will be checked via Turnitin and/or other plagiarism and copyright monitors.
- Any submission of text or imagery produced by generative artificial intelligence is strictly forbidden. This course requires genuine intelligence. Work submitted may be checked via AI detection systems.
 - This policy does not prohibit the use of AI-powered style or grammar assistance (Grammarly, etc.) in the **non-substantial revision** of your own original writing.
- All direct quotes or paraphrases, whether in written or video components, must be newly obtained by the student unless fully attributed to the original source. Quotes and paraphrases from other media may not be used without my advance permission, which is very rarely given. We do not use the work or other publications as a substitute for our own work. We get our own quotes from our own reporting.
- No anonymous sources, pseudonyms, or incomplete identifications of sources or photographic subjects are allowed without my advance permission, which is very rarely given.
- Quotes and paraphrases must reflect how they were obtained—in an interview, email, statement. etc.
- Work originally assigned or produced for any other purpose, including campus or professional media, another course, or employment, may not be submitted for this course. Work produced for the course may be submitted to outside media after submission for the course, but may not be submitted to another course.

Final exam

This course does not have a final exam. Your submission of your final assignment substitutes for your final exam.

Grading

The perfect semester score is 1,000 points (undergraduate students) and 1,200 (graduate students). Here's where the points come from:

- Semester story: **up to 400 points**
- Major enterprise stories: up to 150 points each, **total of 300 points**
- Research journal report: **up to 100 points**
- Miscellaneous in-class and out-of-class work: **up to 150 points**
- Professor's discretion: up to **50 points**
 - Consistent excellence or significant improvement
 - Consistent attendance
 - Class discussion contributions
 - Extra initiative
- Research proposal (graduate students only): **up to 200 points**

Penalty for late work: 10% reduction in maximum points per day late unless due to excused absences.

Semester grading scale

Undergraduate students:

- 900-1,000: A
- 800-899: B
- 700-799: C
- 600-699: D. Course must be repeated for credit
- 599 or below: F. Course must be repeated for credit

Graduate students:

- 1,080-1,200: A

- 960-1,079: B
- 840-959: C
- 720-839: D. Course must be repeated for credit
- 719 or below: F. Course must be repeated for credit

A note on a grade of I (incomplete)

- Can only be given during the last one-fourth of a semester (from the 11th week on)
- Available only if the student is passing the course at the time the difficulty arises
- Available only if the reason is beyond the student's control and is documented
- Missing work must be completed within a calendar year to replace the I with the earned grade

Week-by-week schedule

Don't take this too literally. You'll see that the weekly schedule becomes less specific as the semester goes on. This is so we can adjust for guest speakers and amazing unexpected things.

You'll see several immersions. An immersion is a journalist's rapid plunge into a fascinating area of science and science coverage.

Week 1

- Introductions and course orientation
- Overview of current developments
- Basic techniques and topics
- First immersion

Week 2

- The scientific method
- How research works
- Covering research
- Dealing with cross-cutting issues
- Second immersion

Week 3

- Science: pure, applied, and non

- Objectivity, fairness, and the public interest
- Best coverage
- Third immersion

Week 4

- Under- and over-explored stories
- Stories that didn't work out
- Fourth immersion

Week 5

- New approaches to SHER
- Enterprise stories workshop

Week 6

- Health and medical reporting intro
- The health and medical systems
- Fifth immersion

Week 7

- Covering health controversies
- Covering health in different communities
- Sixth immersion

Week 8

- Enterprise and semester stories workshop

Week 9

- Covering medicine and medical research
- Seventh immersion

Week 10

- Introduction to environmental reporting
- The environmental enterprise
- Eighth immersion

Week 11

- Covering environmental health
- Data and investigative reporting
- Ninth immersion

Week 12

- Covering ecosystem health
- Tenth immersion

Week 13

- The cutting edge in climate coverage

Week 14

- Semester story presentations
- Graduate research proposal presentations

Week 15

- Eleventh immersion

JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES (Undergraduates)

JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION

- 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 all foundational courses. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

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 one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to re-take a failed journalism course more than three times.

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.

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 [UNT Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements) (<https://financialaid.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 have been unknowingly 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.

UNT FALL 2025 Semester Calendar

Academic Calendar is subject to change

| <u>KEY SEMESTER DATES</u> | Full Semester AUG. 18-DEC. 12 | 8 week I Session AUG. 18-OCT. 10 | 8 week II Session OCT. 13-DEC. 12 |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT | Mar. 3 | Mar. 3 | Mar. 3 |
| Registration Opens for specifics by student group/class: https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register | Mar. 17 | Mar. 17 | Mar. 17 |
| Regular Registration Ends | Aug. 14 | Aug. 14 | Oct. 9 |
| Late Registration—For Students not Registered for the Term Students registering late will incur a late registration fee of \$75. | Aug. 15-Aug. 22 | Aug. 15-Aug. 22 | Oct. 10-Oct. 17 |
| Last Day to Withdrawal from Entire Term on myUNT Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdrawal from the entire term. | Aug. 17 | Aug. 17 | Oct. 12 If only 8 week II |
| Classes Begin | Aug. 18 | Aug. 18 | Oct. 13 |
| Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections A swap is switching sections of the same course in the same session. | Aug. 22 | Aug. 22 | Oct. 17 |
| Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W Courses dropped before this date will not appear on official transcript. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.) | Aug. 29 | Aug. 23 | Oct. 18 |
| Drop with a Grade of W Begins Course appears on the transcript with a grade of W and tuition and fees remain. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.) | Aug. 30 | Aug. 24 | Oct. 19 |
| Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads) | Sept. 26 | Sept. 5 | Oct. 31 |
| Midpoint of the Semester | Oct. 10 | Sept. 12 | Nov. 7 |
| Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W. | Nov. 7 | Sept. 26 | Nov. 21 |
| First day to request a grade of Incomplete | Nov. 8 | Sept. 27 | Nov. 22 |
| Pre-Finals Days | Dec. 3-4 | N/A | N/A |
| Last Regular Class Meeting | Dec. 4 | Oct. 9 | Dec. 11 |
| Reading Day—No Classes | Dec. 5 | N/A | N/A |
| Final Exams | Dec. 6-12 | Oct. 10 | Dec. 12 |
| Last Day of Session | Dec. 12 | Oct. 10 | Dec. 12 |
| University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm | Dec. 15 | Oct. 13 | Dec. 15 |
| Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript | Dec. 17 | Dec. 17 | Dec. 17 |
| Labor Day - No Classes - University Closed | September 1, 2025 | | |
| Thanksgiving Break - No classes | November 24-November 30, 2025 | | |
| University Commencement | | | |

Last Modified: December 20, 2024

ACCREDITATION

The Mayborn, which is one of over 100 journalism programs across the world that are accredited, is renewing its credentials this year. Accreditation is important to you because it means your degree is more valuable than one that comes from an unaccredited school.

Accreditation has profound benefits. Accredited programs may offer scholarships, internships, competitive prizes, and other activities unavailable in non-accredited programs.

Accreditation also provides an assurance of quality and rigorous standards to students, parents, and the public. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, appropriate resources and facilities, and a competent faculty.

Accreditation is our promise to our students that you will receive the best education possible in journalism and mass communication. With today's technology, anyone can present information to a mass audience. But not all are trained in the creation of ethical messages that reach and serve diverse audiences that our standards uphold. What you learn in an accredited program makes you more marketable and your degree more valuable!

The Mayborn School's accreditation is determined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) through an extensive evaluation process. Accreditation by the ACEJMC council means we embrace the value of a broad, multidisciplinary curriculum that nurtures critical thinking, analytic reasoning and problem-solving skills that are the essential foundation for all mass communication education.

ADOBE ACCESS

UNT has a contract with Adobe. The following link contains all the information that students will need to purchase a subscription, and opt-out of an existing agreement that is at a higher price: <https://cvad.unt.edu/cvad-it-services/it-services-adobe-cloud-access.html>

The email address for students to ask questions or report problems is adobe@unt.edu.

JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT

Checkout length for the **Canon Mirrorless Camera, Batteries, Lighting Gear, Mirrorless Tripods, Individual Lenses, and Accessories** can be checked out up to 72 hours.

To checkout a **Canon Mirrorless Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Checkout length for the **Panasonic Video Camera, Batteries, SDXC, and Tripods** can be checked out up to 24 hours.

To checkout a **Panasonic Video Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Please send extended reservations approval from the Professor to the following email: mayborn-equipment@unt.edu

Journalism Equipment Room - Location and Contact Information

The Journalism equipment room is located at **Chilton Hall 410 S. Ave. C, Room 155.**

Equipment room phone number is **940-565-3580**.

Equipment room email is mayborn-equipment@unt.edu.

Equipment room supervisor can be reached at ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu

Journalism Equipment Room - Operating Hours

Monday/Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sat-Sun: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Journalism Equipment Room - Agreement Form

Anyone who plans to check out equipment during the semester must complete the checkout agreement form found below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/q9fakNFTM8>

This form should be completed prior to checking out equipment and only needs to be done once per semester.

Journalism Equipment Room - Late Returns/Abuse of Checkout Policy

For every hour the student is late; a ban will be placed on the student's account accumulating the same amount of time.

A **ban** restricts the student from checking out any equipment within the Journalism Equipment Room.

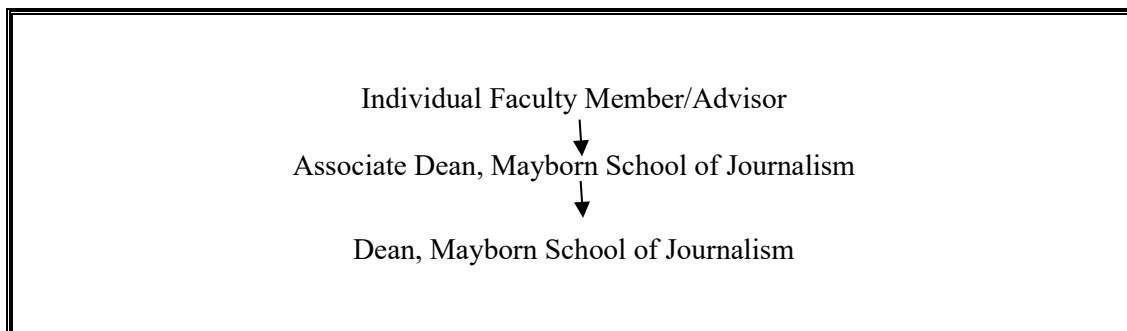
For example, if the student returns equipment 2 hours late, a 2 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If the student returns equipment 72 hours late, a 72 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If you are going to be late or unable to return equipment that you checked out on time, please email mayborn-equipment@unt.edu or ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu

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 steps outlined below:



OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCESS

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 Access (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 website for the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) (<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.

See “Academic Integrity” near the beginning of this syllabus for additional information about this class.

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 06.003 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.

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.

This course uses your project submission or end-of-semester report in lieu of a scheduled final exam.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

COURSES IN A BOX

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to ensure 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) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

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). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. If Canvas is not accessible during the emergency, contact me via email or phone for more information. Students should confirm that their Eagle Alert contact information is correct via the myUNT portal.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://www.spot.unt.edu) (www.spot.unt.edu) or email spot@unt.edu. Spots survey dates:

| Term | Survey Administration Dates |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Regular Academic Session | November 11 - December 04 |
| 8W1 | September 30 - October 09 |
| 8W2 | December 02 - December 11 |

ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR

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 Dean of Students 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 classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the [Dean Of Students website](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu) (www.deanofstudents.unt.edu).

CLASSROOM POLICIES

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).

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support

you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

[UNT's Dean of Students' website](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0) (http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0) offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNT provides mental health services to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

1. [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center#programs>)

1800 Chestnut St. (Chestnut Hall)

940-565-2333

M-Th, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

2. [Counseling and Testing Services](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)

801 N. Texas Blvd., Suite 140 (Gateway Center)

940-565-2741

M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

3. [UNT CARE Team](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)

Dean of Students, University Union

940-565-2648

careteam@unt.edu

4. [Psychiatric Services](#)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)

940-565-2333

5. [Individual Counseling](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

940-369-8773

If at any time you are feeling alone or in jeopardy of self-harm, reach out to any of the following:

- National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255

- Denton County MHMR Crisis Line 800-762-0157
- Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (family or intimate partner violence) 940-382-7273
- UNT Mental Health Emergency Contacts
 - During office hours, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m: Call 940-565-2741
 - After hours: Call 940-565-2741
 - Crisis Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
 - [Live chat](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org): (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>)

STATEMENTS OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Mayborn School of Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 4212.001, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, _Randy Lee Loftis.

Each graduate must:

- ☐ Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC 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 criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- ☐ Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- ☐ Think critically, creatively and independently

- ☐ Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work
- ☐ Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve
- ☐ Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness
- ☐ Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts
- ☐ Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES (Graduate students)

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 one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director of graduate studies and graduate academic advisor (“the director” in the following) to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to re-take a failed journalism course more than three times.

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.

FILL IN YOUR OWN INFORMATION HERE. Office Hours and Attendance Policy are mandatory sections but the wording here is suggested and should fit your requirements:

OFFICE HOURS

My office is Sycamore 211. Office hours reserved for walk-in student conferences are 1-3 p.m. on Tuesdays and 11 a.m.-noon on Thursdays. We can meet at other times by appointment. You can also send an email anytime to randy.loftis@unt.edu or send a message through the Canvas I’ll respond within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. See the full attendance policy at the beginning of this syllabus.

FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) GRADUATES

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.67 cumulative GPA first term of enrollment and a 3.0 for all subsequent semesters. SAP will be measured according to graduate student classification, whether or not a bachelor’s degree has been earned. The maximum timeframe cannot exceed the

published length of the program measured by the number of years at UNT. For more information, visit the [UNT Financial Aid web page](https://financialaid.unt.edu/sap). (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/sap>)

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Students must meet with the director 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 have been unknowingly 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.

UNT FALL 2025 Semester Calendar

Academic Calendar is subject to change

| <u>KEY SEMESTER DATES</u> | Full Semester AUG. 18-DEC. 12 | 8 week I Session AUG. 18-OCT. 10 | 8 week II Session OCT. 13-DEC. 12 |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT | Mar. 3 | Mar. 3 | Mar. 3 |
| Registration Opens for specifics by student group/class: https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register | Mar. 17 | Mar. 17 | Mar. 17 |
| Regular Registration Ends | Aug. 14 | Aug. 14 | Oct. 9 |
| Late Registration—For Students not Registered for the Term students registering late will incur a late registration fee of \$75. | Aug. 15-Aug. 22 | Aug. 15-Aug. 22 | Oct. 10-Oct. 17 |
| Last Day to Withdrawal from Entire Term on myUNT Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdrawal from the entire term. | Aug. 17 | Aug. 17 | Oct. 12 If only 8 week II |
| Classes Begin | Aug. 18 | Aug. 18 | Oct. 13 |
| Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections A swap is switching sections of the same course in the same session. | Aug. 22 | Aug. 22 | Oct. 17 |
| Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W Courses dropped before this date will not appear on official transcript. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.) | Aug. 29 | Aug. 23 | Oct. 18 |
| Drop with a Grade of W Begins Course appears on the transcript with a grade of W and tuition and fees remain. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.) | Aug. 30 | Aug. 24 | Oct. 19 |
| Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads) | Sept. 26 | Sept. 5 | Oct. 31 |
| Midpoint of the Semester | Oct. 10 | Sept. 12 | Nov. 7 |
| Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W. | Nov. 7 | Sept. 26 | Nov. 21 |
| First day to request a grade of Incomplete | Nov. 8 | Sept. 27 | Nov. 22 |
| Pre-Finals Days | Dec. 3-4 | N/A | N/A |
| Last Regular Class Meeting | Dec. 4 | Oct. 9 | Dec. 11 |
| Reading Day—No Classes | Dec. 5 | N/A | N/A |
| Final Exams | Dec. 6-12 | Oct. 10 | Dec. 12 |
| Last Day of Session | Dec. 12 | Oct. 10 | Dec. 12 |
| University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm | Dec. 15 | Oct. 13 | Dec. 15 |
| Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript | Dec. 17 | Dec. 17 | Dec. 17 |
| Labor Day - No Classes - University Closed | September 1, 2025 | | |
| Thanksgiving Break - No classes | November 24-November 30, 2025 | | |
| University Commencement | | | |

Last Modified: December 20, 2024

JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT

Checkout length for the **Canon Mirrorless Camera, Batteries, Lighting Gear, Mirrorless Tripods, Individual Lenses, and Accessories** can be checked out up to 72 hours.

To checkout a **Canon Mirrorless Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Checkout length for the **Panasonic Video Camera, Batteries, SDXC, and Tripods** can be checked out up to 24 hours.

To checkout a **Panasonic Video Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Please send extended reservations approval from the Professor to the following email: mayborn-equipment@unt.edu

Journalism Equipment Room - Location and Contact Information

The Journalism equipment room is located at **Chilton Hall 410 S. Ave. C, Room 155.**

Equipment room phone number is **940-565-3580.**

Equipment room email is mayborn-equipment@unt.edu.

Equipment room supervisor can be reached at ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu

Journalism Equipment Room - Operating Hours

Monday/Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sat-Sun: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Journalism Equipment Room - Agreement Form

Anyone who plans to check out equipment during the semester must complete the checkout agreement form found below:

<https://forms.office.com/r/q9fakNFTM8>

This form should be completed prior to checking out equipment and only needs to be done once per semester.

Journalism Equipment Room - Late Returns/Abuse of Checkout Policy

For every hour the student is late; a ban will be placed on the student's account accumulating the same amount of time.

A **ban** restricts the student from checking out any equipment within the Journalism Equipment Room.

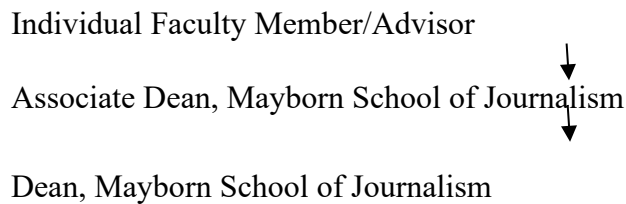
For example, if the student returns equipment 2 hours late, a 2 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If the student returns equipment 72 hours late, a 72 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If you are going to be late or unable to return equipment that you checked out on time, please email mayborn-equipment@unt.edu or ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu

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 steps 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 website for the [Office of Disability Accommodation](http://www.unt.edu/oda) (<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.

See “Academic Integrity” near the beginning of this syllabus for additional information about this class.

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 06.003 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.

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.

This course uses your end-of-semester submissions in lieu of a scheduled final exam.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the [My.UNT 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 so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. Visit the [Eagle Connect website](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/) for more information (<http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>) including tips on how to forward your email.

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) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

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 MyUNT.edu (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.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://www.spot.unt.edu) (www.spot.unt.edu) or email spot@unt.edu. Spots survey dates:

| Term | Survey Administration Dates |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>8W1</u> | November 11 - December 04 |
| <u>8W2</u> | September 30 - October 09 |
| <u>Reg Fall Term</u> | December 02 - December 11 |

Acceptable Student Behavior

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 Dean of Students 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 classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the [Dean Of Students website \(www.deanofstudents.unt.edu\)](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu).

Classroom Policies

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).

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's [Dean of Students' website \(http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0\)](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0) offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648.

You are not alone. We are here to help.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNT provides mental health services to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

1. [Student Health and Wellness Center](http://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center#programs)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center#programs>)

1800 Chestnut St. (Chestnut Hall)

940-565-2333

M-Th, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

2. [Counseling and Testing Services](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)

801 N. Texas Blvd., Suite 140 (Gateway Center)

940-565-2741

M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

3. [UNT CARE Team](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)

Dean of Students, University Union

940-565-2648

careteam@unt.edu

4. [Psychiatric Services](#)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)

940-565-2333

5. [Individual Counseling](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

940-369-8773

If at any time you are feeling alone or in jeopardy of self-harm, reach out to any of the following:

- National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255
- Denton County MHMR Crisis Line 800-762-0157
- Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (family or intimate partner violence)
940-382-7273
- UNT Mental Health Emergency Contacts
 - During office hours, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m: Call 940-565-2741
 - After hours: Call 940-565-2741
 - Crisis Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
 - [Live chat: \(http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org\)](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

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- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society
- ☐ Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information
- ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
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