

J462: Reporting II – Public Affairs Reporting
School of Journalism and Communication
University of Oregon
Fall 2015-16

Instructor	Professor Damian Radcliffe <damianr@uoregon.edu>
GTF/RA	Irene D Awing <iawino@uoregon.edu>
Office	201 Allen Hall
Office hours	12pm-2pm Wednesday, but you can also drop by or make a separate appointment.
Telephone	541-346-7643
Materials	Please bring lots of enthusiasm, your laptop and your phone.
Timing	10.00 – 11.50 Monday and Wednesday, 306 Allen Hall

Course Description: J462: Reporting II – Public Affairs Reporting

Background

This is a compulsory course, but whatever the area of journalism you want to work in, having an understanding of the rudiments of public affairs and community reporting is essential. Developing these journalistic muscles will make you a better journalist, photographer, editor and storyteller.

Approach

Over ten weeks you will undertake a range of individual and group tasks which will give you a strong foundation in the core skills expected of journalists in 2015.

In doing this, you will develop your writing skills, storygathering and storytelling ability and to be able to critically evaluate what makes good/bad public affairs reporting.

The course will explore a wide range of topics and skills, giving you a taster for different types of journalism, which can then be explored in more detail in further specialist programs. It will also ensure that you are equipped to understand - and share - examples of common everyday journalistic activity with future employers.

Learning outcomes

You can expect to learn:

- What public affairs and community reporting is and why it matters
- Sources for news - how to find and develop them
- Interviewing and writing skills

How you will do this:

Through lessons, group and individual assignments, you will cover a selection of the following areas:

- Developing a contacts book
- Where to look for a story
- Interviewing skills
- How to put your contacts and interviewing skills into action
- Inside City Hall
- Court, public health and police reporting
- Using social media to find stories

- Public data and data storytelling
- Reporting minority communities
- Obituaries
- Local sports
- Live reporting
- Extended features

To demonstrate that you have developed these skills you will also create an individual portfolio showcasing your work from this course; and contribute to a class-wide portfolio which highlights the breadth and depth of the best work produced by the group.

Estimated student workload

The course features two classes a week + assignments.

In addition to *compulsory* class attendance, you will also be set a combination of individual and group assignments. These will take 6-10 hours a week to complete outside of class.

Tasks will include: reading, identification of case studies, preparation of presentation materials and papers, fieldwork (interviewing, creation of multimedia content) and portfolio development.

Typically, each week (Monday) you will be given an introduction to a topic with a task to complete and discuss in class and/or a task to be completed in your own time over the following week.

The second class of the week (Wednesday) will often focus on feedback and discussion from previous assignments, as well as discussing any issues with current assignments.

Alongside this you will also undertake a “Big Issue” topic; a more in-depth look at a subject which matters to you and your potential audience. This work will run concurrent with other tasks. You will need to manage your time accordingly to balance competing workloads from this class and others.

How this class works

Attendance

J462 is designed to give you a foundation in some of the key skills needed in today’s job market. Attendance of classes, and completion of assignments - *on time* - is essential. Miss the first and/or second class of the term, and you will be asked to withdraw.

Non-attendance and failure to complete assignments on time will result in an F for that task.

Please notify me, with as much prior notice as possible, if you must miss a class or if work will be delivered late.

Participation

Class meetings will focus on introductions to topics, collective feedback on assignments and sharing what you have learned – and what you want to do. *Your active participation is vital.*

Our classroom is a newsroom. This means that you need to be comfortable pitching ideas, receiving – and giving – feedback, and treating everyone in the room with due respect. There are no wrong answers and bad ideas, only answers and ideas which could be developed better.

Assignments

These will be given once – and sometimes twice - a week.

They require original research, reporting and writing. This may involve meetings, events, interviews, and information-gathering that takes place off campus and a different days and times.

Like all journalists you'll find some tasks easier – and more enjoyable – than others. Sometimes, what you're looking for isn't easy to find, and you'll need to show tenacity and ingenuity to complete a task on time. Plan your time and resources accordingly.

You'll be given a brief for each assignment with clear directions of what's expected and by when.

Writing and multi-media

A number of assignments will be done twice, with the opportunity to rewrite and edit your materials following feedback from me and/or your peers. This reflects the reality of many newsrooms and will almost always result in your revised work being of a higher standard. These exercises will help you to improve your skills and news sensibilities.

A key emphasis of Reporting II will be on turning you into stronger writers, but there will also be opportunities to use visuals, audio, infographics, photography and social media in many assignments. You're encourage to embrace these opportunities when you can.

Grading

You will be set up to 20 tasks during the term, which will each be marked using the weighting and grading outlined below. You will also be marked on your active participation in class.

It will be judged in the same way as any Editor would review the content submitted to them. I will be looking for good writing, strong images, interesting stories, clarity of message, breadth of sources used, fairness and balance, accuracy, good grammar, spelling and style.

Tasks/Weighting *(subject to revision/changes)*

Activity type	Tasks	Weighting
Writing	• I Know What You Did Last Summer	5%
	• I Know What You Did Last Summer (rewrite)	5%
	• Live Reporting	5%
	• Human interest / community feature	5%
	• Human interest / community feature (rewrite)	5%
	• "Big Issue" project	20%
	• Data Journalism story	10%
		55%
Research / Critical Thinking	• Find 3 x public affairs stories and critique them	5%
	• Health Journalism	10%
	• Police and Crime	10%
	• Zombie apocalypse	5%
		30%
Other	• Portfolio	10%
	• Class participation	5%
		15%

How Grades Will Be Determined

Grading Grid:					
Category	A	B	C	D	F
Strong lead: Informative hard (summary) news lead or compelling anecdotal opening.	Vivid, telling detail.	Provides essential information.	Essential information but lacking clarity, conciseness and/or detail.	Not a direct lead and/or important information missing.	Factual error(s).
Essential information covered. Story / Analysis logically organized.	Who, what, where, when and why answered.	5 Ws covered but story not organized clearly with most important information at the top.	Essential information provided but disorganized.	Essential information missing and/or disorganized.	Does not tell a story.
Appropriate use of quotes and attribution.	Strong use of quotes, with best quote high in story. Attribution provided when needed.	Appropriate use of quotes and attribution.	Quotes and attribution provided.	Quotes or attribution missing	Quotes and attribution missing
Clear and concise writing. Appropriate news-writing or analytical style.	Clear and concise writing. Appropriate news-writing style (i.e., short paragraphs, descriptive detail, active verbs, no first-person).	Basically clear and concise.	Thorough editing needed to meet standards.	Writing style is inappropriate for a news story.	Unintelligible.
Factually accurate. Correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.	Mechanically sound, no errors.	1-2 minor errors. Style inconsistent.	1 major error such as a fragment, run-on, comma splice, or more than two minor errors.	2 major errors and multiple minor issues.	Fatal flaws: Factual errors, misspelling of proper names, multiple grammar, spelling errors.

Course policies

Attendance

As outlined above, this is mandatory for this class.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon seeks to create inclusive learning environments. If aspects of this course result in barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You are also welcome to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346- 1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.

Crisis Center

The University of Oregon Counseling Center provides students with confidential telephone crisis intervention 24/7. The number is 541-346-3227.

Diversity

Open inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for differences are fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. SOJC is committed to upholding these ideals by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of divergent perspectives and diverse identities.

Discrimination of any kind, disrespect for others, and inequity in educational opportunity are not acceptable. Students, faculty, and staff are expected at all times to maintain the School of Journalism and Communication's high standards of ethical and compassionate conduct. Please see me if you need help or have any questions.

Academic integrity

The U of O policy on academic dishonesty will be observed throughout this course. Plagiarizing and/or cheating will result in an automatic failure of the course. To avoid this, you should read: <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>

We will also talk about the importance of proper attribution of your sources and providing credit where it is due. In the digital arena this is more important than ever, as the lifting of quotes or the creation of false content, nevermind plagiarism can all be easily identified. Careers can – and have been – destroyed as a result of breaking these rules. Don't be foolish and make the same mistakes!

Technology

Papers should be emailed so that they can be reviewed and graded through the "Track Changes" function in Microsoft Word. This is also more environmentally friendly than printed copies.

Mobile phones should be turned off in class.

Laptops are allowed, but there will be "lids down" moments throughout the course.

Questions

If you want to know more about anything mentioned here, or anything which you think is missing, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Course Schedule and Assignments

This schedule is a draft and is subject to amendment.

Week	Date	Activities
1	28 Sept	<p>Introductions. Expectations. Why this matters. <i>Task 1: Find and identify three great public affairs / community stories. Produce a short 600 word written description of why they're good, how you uncovered these stories, what you took away from them and prepare 3 x PPT slides with story highlights (Due 30 Sept)</i></p> <p><i>Task 2: I Know What You Did Last Summer. 800 word feature. (Due 23:59 4 Oct.)</i></p>
	30 Sept	<p>Share findings and lessons from home assignment. Each student to present 2 x stories in 2 minutes.</p> <p>Sources: Events and Contacts lists, reaching under-reported communities. <i>Task: Develop a group events and contact list (Due 23:59 5 Oct)</i></p>
2	5 Oct	<p>Intro to Live Reporting. In class exercise: Live Reporting x 2. <i>Task 1: Rewrite your own I Know What You Did Last Summer. (Due 23:59 7 Oct)</i> <i>Task 2: Live Reporting. (Due 23:59 12 Oct).</i></p>
	7 Oct	<p>Understanding different types of community and human interest stories. <i>Task 1: Develop "Human interest/Community" feature idea (Due 23:59 11 Oct).</i></p>
3	12 Oct	<p>Pitch and discuss your "Human interest" feature to class. Refine as required. Timed exercise: Obama's visit to Roseburg <i>Task 1: Use your event and contact list to produce a "Human interest / Community" feature. (Due 23:59 19 Oct)</i></p>
	14 Oct	<p>Life as a beat reporter. (John Baron, the Guardian.) Timed exercise: Trash is for Tossers. Launch "Big Issue" project. <i>Task 1: Begin creation of individual portfolio (Due 23:59 18 Oct)</i> <i>Task 2: Develop pitch for "Big Issue" project.</i></p>
4	19 Oct	<p>What are employers looking for? (Kevin Anderson, Gannett.) Big Issue pitches and discussion. <i>Task 1: Begin work on "Big Issue" project. (Due 23:59 11 Nov)</i></p>
	21 Oct	<p>Inside City Hall: website review NewsU: Freedom of Information (e-learning)</p>
5	26 Oct	<p>Introduction to Portfolios. Public Health Reporting. <i>Task: Why public health reporting matters (Due 23:59 09 Nov)</i></p>
	28 Oct	<p>Mid-term quiz. Court reporting.</p>

6	2 Nov	<p>Class cancelled!</p> <p>Drop-in re Big Issue progress. (You need to book an appointment!)</p> <p><i>Task: "Human interest/Community" feature rewrite (Due 23:59 22 Nov)</i></p>
	4 Nov	<p>Public Affairs journalism and Beat Reporting in Kenya (Irene Awino).</p> <p>Reading feedback: series by Nigel Jaquiss of <i>Willamette Week</i>, Portland, Oregon, for his investigation exposing a former governor's long concealed sexual misconduct with a 14-year-old girl.</p> <p>Observation exercises.</p> <p><i>Task: Zombie Apocalypse (Due 23:59 16 Nov)</i></p> <p><i>Task 2: Reading: NYT article on female incarceration (for 9th Nov class)</i></p>
7	9 Nov	<p>Reading feedback: NYT article on female incarceration</p> <p>Descriptive writing/reporting exercises.</p>
	11 Nov	<p>Reading feedback: Who'd Be a Journalist? - The New York Times</p> <p>Police and Crime stories: Part One</p> <p><i>Task 1: Police assignment (TBC). (Due 23:59 23rd Nov).</i></p> <p><i>Task 2: Complete "Big Issue" project draft and submit by 23:59 11th Nov.</i></p>
8	16 Nov	<p>Investigative Reporting (Guest speaker: Todd Milbourn)</p> <p>Police and Crime stories: Part One</p> <p>Intro to Data Journalism.</p> <p><i>Task: Produce DDJ feature. (Due 23:59 30th Nov).</i></p>
	18 Nov	<p>Police and Crime pitches</p> <p>Newsletter writing exercise</p>
9	23 Nov	<p>Guest speaker: Brent Walth</p> <p><i>Task: Complete rewrite of Big Issue feature. (Due 23:59 23 Nov.)</i></p>
	25 Nov	<p>Cancelled due to Thanksgiving.</p>
10	30 Nov	<p>Using social media as a news source.</p> <p>Student presentations: About.me, portfolio + 2 x term assignments you're especially proud of (50% of the class. The others will present on 2nd Dec).</p>
	2 Dec	<p>Student presentations part two.</p> <p>Wash-up: lessons learned from Reporting II.</p> <p>End of term evaluation. Next Steps.</p>