

## **Journalism for the Web**

### Syllabus and Course Policies

Department of Media Study  
University at Buffalo  
State University of New York

#### **Summer 2010**

TR, 6:00pm - 9:40pm CFA 244

Instructor: Al Larsen  
alarsen@buffalo.edu

#### **Overview:**

In this hands-on course students learn to produce multimedia news content for distribution on the web. The course is aimed at those with an interest in pursuing journalism, social activism or web-based non-fiction media production. Students will create content for an interactive web platform, gaining experience in: shooting and editing simple video news pieces, uploading material to a content management system, integrating with social web platforms for distribution or promotion and creating other media content for the web, such as slideshows or audio programs. Students will engage the web as a participatory medium and explore the relationship between print and online editions of a publication. Topics such as database journalism, transmedia storytelling, participatory journalism, "hyperlocal" news and data mashups will be addressed.

#### **Course Numbers**

This course is listed as DMS 415, DMS 516, COM 490 and COM 615  
Students enrolled in DMS 516 may apply this class toward the new media Design certificate:  
<http://newmediadesign.buffalo.edu>.

#### **Course Website**

<http://www.propertyistheft.com/courses/journalism-for-the-web/>

#### **E-Mail**

Be sure to check your UB email account regularly. When sending me email please always include the course number at the beginning of the subject line ie "DMS 415".

#### **Office Hours**

Tuesdays, 5:00 - 6:00, CFA 263 and by appointment.

#### **What You'll Do in this Class**

While journalism outlets struggle with a crisis of the print-based business model, the maturity of web publishing tools open up new opportunities for reporting. Journalism on the web is more than just text available on a computer screen. Video content, online discussions, reader contributions, data visualizations, interactive maps, photo slideshows, links to updated information and off-site commentary are all part of the online news environment. Students in this class will explore this emerging news environment through producing a public web project. Its is a "learn by doing" course that teaches skills and concepts through hands-on practice.

This term the class will develop "HOW THE CAMPUS WORKS," a web project focusing on work and

workers on the University at Buffalo North Campus. The project will include reporting on subjects such as the hiring freeze, the impact of UB on the local economy, student employment and commuting.

students can expect to:

- research and write stories about employment and labor issues
- craft profiles of diverse campus workers (video + text)
- take photos and make slideshows
- format and publish content to the web
- launch the project and promote it on social networking sites
- update the site
- manage comments
- work as a team - brainstorming story ideas and critiquing each others' work

tools and technology:

- video cameras
- still cameras
- Wordpress (web content management system)
- iMovie or FinalCut Pro (video editing)
- Soundslide (web slideshows)
- Photoshop (basic photo editing)

skills:

- writing, interviewing and research skills
- shooting video
- sound and video editing
- shooting still images
- using content management system

topics:

- web as delivery platform
- web as participatory medium
- relationship between print and online editions
- current issues in journalism

## **Materials, Equipment and Textbooks**

- **Materials**

You may wish to purchase a removable USB drive ("jump drive" or "thumb drive"). You will need to back up your work frequently. It is your responsibility to keep your work safe and accessible (for turning in or sharing during class). You may also wish to back up your work to an online server or invest in an external drive. Do not depend solely on your USB drive as it can fail, be lost or stolen.

- **Equipment**

We have a small number of video "flip cameras" available for our use through the Media Study equipment room. These are handy because they offer very decent quality video while being exceptionally portable and easy to use. Since they record directly onto a memory card you will not need to deal with tape and the process of transferring video from tape to computer for editing. Instead, you plug the camera directly into a computer and transfer the video files.

Because we only have a small number of these cameras, students must be vigilant about returning them to the equipment room in a timely way so that others can have access. You may also coordinate to work in pairs or small groups. If you already have a camera (or phone) that takes decent quality video I encourage you to use it for assignments.

Also, if you are able to purchase a camera like this for your own use during the course, I highly recommend it.

There are also have a small number of digital still cameras available through the equipment room.

- Equipment Room Summer Hours

Monday through Thursday: 10:00AM to 6:30PM

Friday: CLOSED

- Textbooks

There are no required texts for the class. Readings will be available on the web or handed out in class. You may be required to print readings.

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change and revision by the instructor.

### **Lab Fee**

This course carries a \$100 lab fee which will appear on your bill.

### **Course Work**

Unless otherwise specified, assignments and projects must be handed in at the beginning of class the day they are due. On days that projects are due you must be in class that day and ready to present your work to the class.

**AS THERE ARE ONLY SIX WEEKS IN SUMMER TERM IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT WORK BE TURNED IN WHEN IT IS DUE.** Late work may be docked points and may not be accepted unless you have a reasonable excuse and make arrangements in advance. If you are having trouble turning in work due to circumstances beyond your control let me know.

Throughout the term your work will be presented and discussed in class. You must be prepared to show your work and to participate in critique and discussion of the work turned in by other class members.

### **Academic Integrity**

You may not turn in work for this course which you will also use for credit in another course. If you have a question about this policy, discuss it with me.

### **Course Policies**

NOTE: If you begin to experience inordinate difficulties with the course, or have issues regarding the class that you want to discuss, please see the instructor as soon as possible. If notifying the instructor does not seem appropriate, seek assistance from the Academic Advisor for the Department of Media Study. If you wait until the end of the semester, the possibilities of being helped are less promising.

### **General:**

- Students who require special accommodations because of a diagnosed disability should bring

relevant documentation to the instructor and/or to the Chair, who will oversee arrangements with assistance from the Office of Disabilities.

- Student athletes must provide an official letter with the dates of their meets and travel days during the first weeks of classes. Make up quizzes and exams that fall during those days must be rescheduled with the instructor at least 3 days before departure. As a rule of thumb, we will administer make-ups and move work deadlines to the day before the student leaves town.
- Students are expected to turn off and put away cell phones, pagers, iPods, CD players and computers before entering class.
- Students are not permitted to enter the classroom with any type of food. Please eat before or after class.
- Students are expected to follow the guidelines for appropriate behavior outlined in the University Catalog. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.
- If you need to depart early, do so quietly after having cleared it with your instructor at the beginning of the class session.
- The grade of incomplete will be given only to students who have some serious, well-documented medical condition or in cases of family tragedy, etc. and who have satisfied the attendance policy and are missing only one major assignment. No incomplete will be given to substitute for a poor or failing grade or for any other reasons. A written agreement must be drafted and signed by the instructor and the student. The instructor reserves the right to request completion of the incomplete prior to the 12 months set by the University.
- Final grades are final. Once grades are submitted, they will not be changed. Thus, students should refrain from cajoling instructors (via email, phone, in person, etc.) into changing the final grade, which goes against University policy.

### **Attendance**

**Class is not the same without you!** Since we will be relying on each other, being present is extremely important. You are expected to be here each day, on time and ready to go. You are expected to have completed any assigned readings and to participate in discussions, critiques and the work at hand. Participation in class will account for part of the course grade.

- Regular attendance is required for the development of proficiency skills.
- Attendance means attentiveness, cooperation, and active participation in class.
- In order to remove an absence mark, students must bring OFFICIAL documentation detailing the extraordinary circumstance which prevented the student from being present in class (based on University Catalog guidelines). This documentation is due no later than one week after the absence.
- Students are responsible for the material covered and the homework assigned on the day/s they were absent.
- In case of an ongoing problem, such as a personal crisis or chronic illness, the student should resign from the course and retake it when circumstances allow for fulfillment of the requirements.
- Tardiness: arriving after class has started may count as an absence or partial absence.
- Leaving the classroom for a considerable period of time will be considered an absence.

## **Class work**

- Students are expected to do their own work on all assignments and course work. **In the case of group projects, students must make clear what their role in the project was.**
- Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F and disciplinary actions by the university. Examples of academic dishonesty are: copying the work from the internet or a book, having someone else do the work for you, or copying during an exam or quiz.
- Be prepared for class each day by having done the assigned readings, etc.
- Homework will be assigned during each class by the instructor.
- It is the student's responsibility to bring any questions on the homework to the attention of the instructor.
- Homework will be turned in to the instructor on the designated date.
- Each student will be required to meet with the instructor for a progress report before the end of the resignation period. Students who are failing the course will be encouraged to resign the course before the deadline designated by the university. **YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING TRACK OF THIS DEADLINE AND ARRANGING TO MEET WITH THE INSTRUCTOR ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS IN THE COURSE.**

## **Attendance**

We will only meet 12 times. **You may miss two classes without penalty to your grade. After that each class missed will result in an automatic reduction of your final grade by 5%.** If you are more than a few minutes late or leave class early expect it to be counted as an absence or a partial absence.

## **Offensive Material**

In class we will examine a broad range of media. There may be selections which some students will find offensive in content or tone. In such cases, students are permitted to leave the room without penalty, at their own discretion.

## **Evaluation**

The classroom performance grade will be awarded based on each individual instructor's criteria. In general, the student can expect an:

A if the student volunteers to participate frequently, is always prepared for class, shows interest and motivation, works well with others in groups, and comes to class regularly.

B if the student is prepared and alert, however, does not volunteer as often to participate, or sometimes shows that s/he has not prepared for the day, and comes to class regularly.

C if the student is prepared for class but needs a "push" to participate and help to answer questions in class, and comes to class regularly.

D if the student fails to prepare adequately for class, does not contribute to the class, does not cooperate with group work, does not show interest, and does not attend class regularly.

**This is my grading scale (in percentages)**

- 93-100 A
- 90-92 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 65-69 D
- 0 - 64 F

**Assignments and Due Dates**

This is a tentative schedule to give you an idea of how the term will unfold. Information about the assignments will be given in class and may differ from what is listed here. Due dates will be announced when assignment instructions are given in class.

topic research and writing (10%) - THURSDAY OF WEEK 2

worker profile - text and photo (10%) - THURSDAY OF WEEK 2

media collection (photo/video) assignment (10%) - THURSDAY OF WEEK 3

final project proposal (5%) - TUESDAY OF WEEK 4

photo slideshow (10%) - TUESDAY OF WEEK 4

video assignment (10%) - TUESDAY OF WEEK 5

final project (25%) - THURSDAY OF WEEK 6

site maintenance, promotion, and special projects (10%) (throughout term)

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, PREPARATION (10%) (throughout term)

**MANDATORY SYLLABUS STATEMENTS**

**RE: STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) which may make it difficult for you to carry out the course work as outlined, and/or requires accommodations such as recruiting note takers, readers, or extended time on exams and assignments, please contact the Office of Disability Services, 25 Capen Hall, 716-645-2608, <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/> , and also your instructor during the first two weeks of class. ODS will provide you with information and will review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodations.

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**RE: PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is literary theft and a betrayal of trust. The term is derived from the Latin word for

kidnapper and refers to the act of signing one's own name to words, phrases, or ideas which are the literary property of another. Plagiarism comes in many forms, all to be avoided: outright copying, or paraphrase, or a mosaic or disguised use of words and phrases from an unacknowledged source. To avoid plagiarism, make it your habit to put quotation marks around words and phrases, or to isolate and indent longer passages that you are using from someone else's writing. And be sure to cite the source, in a footnote or endnote or within parentheses in your text. The penalties for plagiarism can be severe: from an F for the particular assignment, to an F for the course, to referral of the case to the Dean of Education for administrative judgment.

If you are unsure about how to use and document sources, please consult with your instructor.

**PLAGIARISM ALSO INCLUDES THE UNAUTHORIZED USE OF VIDEO / AUDIO / DIGITAL IMAGES OF OTHERS! FOR THIS CLASS, YOU MUST PRODUCE ORIGINAL MATERIAL!**

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**RE: WEAPONS AS PROPS**

**WARNING!!!**

If you are planning a student production which involves using any prop which could be interpreted to be a weapon [toy gun, BB gun, knife, etc.] AND you are planning to shoot on the UB campus or any other public place, you MUST obtain WRITTEN permission from the University Police or the equivalent authority before you shoot.

If you do not, you will face serious problems, including possible expulsion from the University.

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**RE: SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual Harassment of employees and students, as defined below, is contrary to University policy and is a violation of federal and state laws and regulations.

Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement;
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual;
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

No university employee of either gender shall impose a requirement of sexual cooperation as a condition of employment or academic advancement, or in any way contribute to or support unwelcome physical or verbal sexual behavior.

Any member of the university community who requires additional information or who wishes to make a complaint or receive a copy of the University procedures to be followed for complaints arising from matters related to the policies outlined above should contact the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action Administration, 406 Capen Hall, 716-645-2266.

## Examples of Sexual Harassment

Sexual advances

( Touching of a sexual nature

Displaying or distributing of sexually explicit drawings, pictures, written materials and/or computer (digital) images

Sexual gestures or looks

Sexual jokes or comments

Pressure for sexual favors

% Touching oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in the presence of others

; Spreading rumors about or rating other student's sexual activity or performance

## What to do if you are harassed

Do:

M Trust your instincts.

a Tell harasser that their behavior is unacceptable.

y Document the incidents in detail. Keep a journal with dates, times, possible witnesses, and other concise details.

Tell someone about the incident and get emotional support.

Seek advice or counseling.

Inform school if behavior continues or of any threatening, intimidating, or retaliatory behavior.

Don't:

Assume the behavior will go away if you ignore the harasser.

a Try to deal with the harassment alone – get help.

**State University of New York at Buffalo**  
**Department of Media Study**

I have read the Journalism for the Web (DMS 415, DMS 516, COM 490, COM 615) syllabus and I am aware of the program's requirements and policies including the attendance policy. I understand that I should keep the syllabus and course policies for my records.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: SUMMER 2010

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Student person number: \_\_\_\_\_