

**ONLINE JOURNALISM I – Fall 2009 (Mon, Wed)
Department of Journalism, Rowan University**

Online Journalism I - 42140 - JRN 02321 - 1
Monday and Wednesday
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Boz 134

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the online news landscape. Students learn which principles of traditional journalism can and should be applied to the Web, and what makes online journalism unique. Students gain this knowledge through reading assignments, class activities, and a series of reporting, writing, and multimedia assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Gain an overview of the state of online journalism today.
- Explore the unique challenges and opportunities of doing journalism on the Web.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of HTML, CSS and the use of a Content Management System.
- Use various online tools to manage text, links, photos, maps, audio, and video.
- Gain experience reporting, writing, and producing for online media
- Experiment with digital storytelling.
- Produce an online publication with original reporting, writing, photographs, interviews, audio, video, and an interactive map.

TEXTS:

Assignments, articles, quiz information, and tutorials will be posted on a blog for the course called “The South Jersey Line” at <http://mbgjjournalism.wordpress.com/>. It is also a portal to student work. Students should bookmark the class blog or subscribe to its RSS feed, and use it regularly.

Journalism 2.0: How to Survive and Thrive by Mark Briggs. This text is FREE and available online as a PDF at http://www.kcnn.org/resources/journalism_20/

The Associated Press Stylebook by Norm Goldstein (editor)

Note: All of your writing for this course must follow AP style.

Various articles will be assigned for you to read. Links to them will be posted on the class blog. The articles include:

- “Out of Print: The Death and Life of the American Newspaper” by Eric Alterman (*New Yorker Magazine*, March 31, 2008)
- Chap 1 "From Tom Paine to Blogs and Beyond" from *We the Media* by Dan Gillmore

- “Why I Blog” by Andrew Sullivan (*The Atlantic Magazine*, November 2008)
- “Exposed: Blog-post Confidential” by Emily Gould (*The New York Times Magazine*, May 25, 2008)
- “Amateur Hour: Journalism without Journalists” by Nicholas Lemann (*New Yorker Magazine*, August 7, 2006)
- “Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business” by Chris Anderson (*Wired Magazine*, Feb. 25, 2008)

TEACHING METHODS:

Students will practice online journalism in this course. Practice, in this case, means *doing* journalism, not *pretending to do* journalism just to fulfill a school assignment. Students will select a topic or beat to cover for the semester. Each student will create a blog and then report, write, edit, and create multimedia content to cover his/her topic. Students will build an audience. I will serve as an editorial advisor and give the same responses, instruction, and suggestions that I would give to professional journalists.

There are also reading assignments, quizzes, class discussions, and class activities.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is essential for academic success in this course. Students are expected to be in class on time. Students who miss class are responsible for all material covered in that class and must meet all deadlines related to that material. Excused absences include medical reasons, death in family, and pre-approved school-related activities. More than four (4) unexcused absences will drop the final grade one letter.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Do not use words, photos, or other kinds of content without proper attribution and copyright permission. This includes copying content from the Internet. Plagiarism also includes passing off another student’s work as your own or giving your work to another student. When in doubt, ask. For Rowan’s complete academic honesty policy, download the Student Information Guide from <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/infoguide/pdf/infoguide0809.pdf>. (See pages 27-28 in guide.)

Anyone caught plagiarizing could receive an F for the course.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY

If you have a documented disability that may have an impact upon your work in this class, please contact me at the beginning of the semester. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center to receive official university services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234 and is located in Savitz Hall, 3rd floor. The staff is available to answer questions about accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations.

OFFICE HOURS:

I welcome conversations with students outside of class. My regular office hours are posted on my office door at Bozorth 105E. I may also be available other times as well. If

you would like to make an appointment, feel free to email. If you have questions about assignments anytime throughout the week, please email me and I will respond as soon as I am able.

I will also email students between classes with updates on assignments, grades, and responses to your work. Please check your email throughout the week so that you receive messages.

COMPUTER LAB ETIQUETTE:

We will often use the computers for in-class assignments. When we do use the computers, please refrain from unrelated multi-tasking (i.e. web surfing, checking your email, updating your Facebook page, Twittering, IM-ing, etc.) When we are not using the computers for in-class assignments, please close your browser and other applications. Please turn off your cell phone, pda, iPhone, etc before class begins.

GRADING:

Journalism is a craft best learned through a process of trial and error. My goal is to impart the standards and ethics of journalism while encouraging innovation and ingenuity in a digital medium.

Each student will select a news beat (i.e., a subject, a neighborhood, or a focused topic). Your topic must be something that you can access on a regular basis: you must be able to attend events, interview people, and gather original audio, photographs, and video on your subject. The topic must be approved by the instructor. Students will then set up a blog and post all assignments on it.

Two weekly blog posts are required beginning the week of September 26. A total of 20 posts are expected over the course of the semester. Weekly blog posts are due by 8:00 p.m. each Saturday. Each post will be graded on content and execution and when specific kinds of posts are assigned, if they meet the stated objective of the assignment.

In addition, students will perform specific reporting, writing, and multimedia assignments, including:

- slide show
- audio or video interview
- interactive map or timeline
- a final multimedia project.

Please plan ahead. Use the full time given for each assignment.

All writing for this course must follow AP style.

No late work will be accepted. If your work is not on your blog by the deadline, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

There will be five quizzes on the reading and course work during the semester.

At the end of the semester, each student will do a brief presentation of her/his class work, and each student will receive an overall assessment of his/her body of online work.

Each student will receive a class participation grade for attendance and interaction.

EQUIPMENT:

I have a limited number of digital cameras and audio recorders for students to check out. They are in my office and are available on a first-come-first served basis. If you want to use equipment, please plan ahead. The use of these items depends on properly caring for the equipment and returning it on time.

Since students do not have to purchase a textbook for the class and we do not have enough equipment for everyone to use, I recommend that you consider purchasing some equipment. These will be useful in *Online Journalism II* course and other courses in the Department of Communications.

Here are some suggestions:

Headphones

Headphones or ear buds are helpful to bring to class when we are working with audio. Over the year headphones work best, but any will do.

Digital Audio Recorder

If you purchase a digital audio recorder, make sure that saves files in WAV, WMA or MP3 format

- has a MIC jack
- has a headphone jack
- can upload files to a computer via USB without additional software.

I recommend the Olympus WS series

There is a WS-321 (listed for \$61) and a WS-110 (list for \$84) on Amazon.com

Do not purchase a recorder that requires you to download software or that creates its files in a format other than WAV, MP3, or WMA. They will not work in our classroom. And beware: Not all recorders are the same. So shop carefully. And talk to me before you purchase anything if you are unsure.

Digital Camera

Many of you already have **digital cameras**. If you have one, take it with you when you go out to report. If you are looking to buy a new camera anyway, now would be a great time. You can use it to shoot both still photos and short videos.

If you do purchase a digital camera, make sure that it meets or exceeds the following specifications:

- 7 megapixels or better
- Image stabilization (essential)
- Video at 640 x 480 at 30 fps; video must include audio
- 3x OPTICAL zoom or better
- 2 GB (gigabyte) high-speed SD card or larger
- USB 2 output

Cameras in this range start out at around \$150.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Blog Set Up	25 points	Sept 26, 8 p.m.
Quizzes	(5 X 20 points each) 100 points	See dates below
Twice-a-Week Blog Posts	(20 X 10 points each) 200 points	Saturdays, 8 p.m.
Slide Show	100 points	Oct 19
Interview	100 points	Nov 2
Interactive	100 points	Nov 16
Final Project	150 points	Dec. 14
Presentation	25 points	End of semester
Overall Blog Assessment	100 points	End of semester
Class Participation	100 points	End of semester

GRADING SCALE:

Total 1000 points

A	940- 1000
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	600-669
F	0-599

CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE – FALL 2009

The following schedule is a guide for the semester. Deadlines and specific assignments are subject to change. Check the class blog for any changes.

Week 1

Wed, Sept 2

In Class: Introduction and cover syllabus

Read "Out of Print" by Eric Alterman, *New Yorker* Magazine

Explore the Web sites listed under "Six Unique Aspects of Online Journalism" on the class blog.

Week 2

Mon, Sept 7 – NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

Wed, Sept 9

What Is Online Journalism? What's the Big Deal? Why the Internet Is Wreaking Havoc on the News Industry?

Assignment: Read Chap 1 "From Tom Paine to Blogs and Beyond" from We the Media by Dan Gillmore

Beat Idea Due Next Week

Week 3

Mon, Sept 14

Due: Beat Idea

Watch portion of "News War: What's Happening to the News," Frontline Documentary

Read Briggs Chapter 1 - FTP, MB, RSS, Oh My

Read Briggs Chap 2 -Web 2.0

Wed, Sept 16

Quiz 1 on Reading

In Class: A Tour of the Best Journalism Blogs

In Class: Making Sense of Blogs, Feeds, and Web 2.0

Assignment: Blog Pitch to Class

Week 4

Mon, Sept 21

Due: Bring your Blog Pitch to Class

In Class: Setting Up Your Blog

Assignment: Read "Why I Blog" by Andrew Sullivan, *The Atlantic Magazine*

Read Briggs Chapter 5 - How to Blog

Get your blog up and ready to go by next week

Wed, Sept 23

In Class: Setting Up Your Blog

Read Briggs Chapter 4 New Reporting Methods and 6 - How to Report News for the Web in J2.0

Blog Set Up and Blog Post 1 Due by Saturday, Sept 26 8:00 p.m.

Week 5

Mon, Sept 28

In Class: Reporting and Writing for the Web and Managing a Link Economy: Traffic, Social Networking, Twitter

***NOTE: Twice-Weekly Blog Posts Begin This Week**

Wed, Sept 30

In Class: A Few Legal and Ethical Issues to Consider

Read "Exposed" by Emily Gould, *New York Times Magazine*

Due: Blog Posts 2 and 3 Due by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

Week 6

Mon, Oct 5

Quiz 2 Today

In Class: Digital Storytelling

Read Briggs Chapter 3 - Tools and Toys

Read Briggs Chapter 8 - Shooting and Managing Digital Photos

Wed, Oct 7

In Class: Trouble Shooting Day

Due: Blog Posts 4 and 5 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

Week 7

Mon, Oct 12

In Class: Photos and Slideshow Work

Wed, Oct 14

Slideshow Work

Read "Amateur Hour" by Nicholas Lemann, *New Yorker Magazine*

Due: Blog Posts 6 and 7 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 8

Mon, Oct 19

Due: Slideshow

In Class: Audio

Assignment: Read Briggs Chapter 7 - Digital Audio and Podcasting

Wed, Oct 21

Quiz 3 Today

In Class: More on Audio

Due: Blog Posts 8 and 9 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 9

Mon, Oct 26

In Class: Video

Assignment: Read Briggs Chapter 9 and 10 -Shooting Video for News and Feature Stories and Read Briggs Chapter 11 - Writing Scripts, Doing Voice-Overs

Wed, Oct 28

In Class: Working on Online Interview/Profile

Due: Blog Posts 10 and 11 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 10

Mon, Nov 2

Due: Interview Due

In Class: Basic HTML and CSS

Read "Free! Why \$0.00 Is the Future of Business" by Chris Anderson, *Wired Magazine*

Wed, Nov 4

In Class: Basic HTML and CSS continued

Due: Blog Posts 12 and 13 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 11

Mon, Nov 9

Quiz 4 Today

In Class: Interactives (Map and Dipity)

Wed, Nov 11

In Class: Interactive Work Day (Map and Dipity)

Due: Blog Posts 14 and 15 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 12

Mon, Nov 16

Due: Interactive Due

In Class: Final Project Tour

Assignment: Read Briggs Epilogue - Putting It All Together

Wed, Nov 18

In Class: What's the Big Deal? Why the Internet is Wreaking Havoc on Journalism?

Revised

Quiz 5: What is Online Journalism (3 questions I will give ahead of time)

Due: Blog Posts 16 and 17 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 13

Mon, Nov 23

Due: Final Project Pitch

Wed, Nov 25

Working on Final Project

HAPPY THANKSGIVING – NO BLOG POSTS DUE THIS WEEK

Week 14

Mon, Nov 30

In Class: What Do I Do With My Blog at the End of the Semester?

Wed, Dec 1

Working on Final Project

Due: Blog Posts 18 and 19 by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday

Week 15

Mon, Dec 7

Working on Final Project

Wed, Dec 9

Working on Final Project

Week 16

Mon, Dec 14

Due: Final Project Due

Blog Presentations (Session 1)

Finals Schedule Dec 15-18 TBA

Blog Presentations (Session 2)

Due: Blog Post 20 by Dec 18, 8:00 p.m.