

**ONLINE JOURNALISM I – Fall 2010 (Mon/Wed)**  
**Department of Journalism, Rowan University**

Online Journalism I - 21863 - JRN 02321 - 1  
Monday and Wednesday  
1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Boz 134

Instructor: Mark Berkey-Gerard  
Office: Bozorth 105E

**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 production assignments.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Examine the current state of online journalism.
- Explore the unique challenges and opportunities of digital journalism.
- Gain experience reporting, writing and producing for online news publications.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of HTML/CSS and the use of a Content Management System.
- Experiment with multimedia storytelling using text, links, photos, maps, audio and video.
- Produce an online publication with original reporting and content. If done well, this publication will be suitable for internship, freelance and job applications.

**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 the topic. All assignments will be posted online and will be public for anyone to read. 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. My goal is to impart the standards and ethics of journalism while encouraging innovation in a digital medium.

**TEXTS:**

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

*JournalismNext: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing*  
By Mark Briggs, CQ Press, ISBN # 978-1-60426-560-6  
\$21.95 in Rowan bookstore, Amazon.com, and online at  
<http://cqpress.com/product/Briggs.html>

*The Associated Press Stylebook* by Norm Goldstein (editor)

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

I will also assign news articles to read and discuss during semester so we can discuss the most recent issues in online journalism. Links to articles will be posted on the class blog.

#### ACADEMIC HONESTY AND JOURNALISTIC ETHICS:

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. 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.

In addition, students are expected to adhere to the Cyberjournalist.net's Blogger Code of Ethics at <http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php>

#### 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.

#### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Attendance is graded and is worth 10 percent of the overall grade. Points are earned only if you attend the class. Points will be deducted for lateness, leaving early, or failing to participate in class. 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 religious observances, documented illness, death of family or loved-one, and pre-approved school-related activities. Students must provide official written documentation to receive an excused absence.

#### 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, email me. If you have questions about assignments, 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 computers, please refrain from unrelated multi-tasking. When we are not using the computers for in-class assignments, please close your browser and other applications. Please turn off your cell phone and mobile device before class begins.

#### ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINES:

Online Journalism I is a required course for all Journalism Majors. Students must earn at least a C- for it to count toward the major requirements.

NOTE: No late work will be accepted. If your work is not posted online by the deadline, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Quizzes	(5 X 30 points each) 150 points	See dates below
Beat Pitch/Blog Set Up	25 points	Sept 20
Twice-Weekly Blog Posts	(20 X 10 points each) 200 points	Saturdays, 8 p.m.
Photo Assignment	50 points	Oct 11
Audio Interview	75 points	Oct 18
Video	100 points	Nov 1
Map/Timeline	125 points	Nov 22
Final Project	150 points	Dec 13
Class Presentation	25 points	End of semester
Attendance	100 points	All semester
<u>Total</u>	<u>1000 points</u>	

#### GRADING SCALE:

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

#### REQUIRED WORK:

##### **Quizzes (15% of overall grade)**

There will be five quizzes on the reading and in-class course work during the semester. They will be announced ahead of time. Quizzes cannot be made up or taken early, unless you have an approved absence. (See attendance policy.)

##### **Beat Pitch/Blog Set Up (2.5% of overall grade)**

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

related to your subject. The topic must be approved by the instructor. Students will then set up a blog with required elements.

**Twice-Weekly Blog Posts (20% of overall grade)**

Two weekly blog posts are required beginning the week of Sep 19. 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. Specific kinds of posts are assigned. Posts do not need not be long, but they must be substantive and free of errors.

**Photo Assignment (5% of overall grade)**

Students will create a photo essay covering an aspect of his/her beat. Students must go somewhere and photograph an event/topic/person. Students must gather full names. Photos will be posted online.

**Audio Interview with Photo (7.5% of overall grade)**

Students will interview a person related to her/his beat, record audio, and take digital photos of the subject. The audio recording will be edited and posted online as an .mp3 with photo and text.

**Video Assignment (10% of overall grade)**

Students will choose an event or person related to his/her beat and gather video interviews and B-Roll. Video will be edited and posted online.

**Interactive Map or Timeline (12.5% of overall grade)**

Students will create either an interactive map or timeline to tell a geographic or time-based story related to her/his beat. Maps and timelines will include text, links, photos, audio and video. Maps or timelines will be posted online.

**Final Multimedia Project (15% of overall grade)**

Students will create a final project that integrates at least two of the following elements: text, photos, audio and video.

**Class Presentation (2.5% of overall grade)**

In the final sessions of the course, each student will have about five minutes to present her/his work to the class. Students will talk about the highlights, challenges and lessons learned.

**EQUIPMENT:**

Rowan University provides the lab computers installed with software needed for this course.

Students can check out a limited amount of equipment (microphones, point-and-shoot and video cameras, tripods) in the Journalism Department Office in Bozorth 105O. Equipment can be checked out on a first-come, first-serve basis and must be returned on time.

However, students are also required to have their own equipment to gather audio, photos and video. These items must be easy to carry so students can take them on all reporting assignments. (They can also be used for other journalism courses and *The*

*Whit.* The same equipment will be required for Online Journalism 2.) If you do not have the means to purchase this equipment, please talk to me in person ASAP.

For this course, students are required to have:

### **1. Digital Audio Recorder**

The audio recorder must:

- save files in WAV, WMA or MP3 format
- be capable of uploading files to a computer via USB without additional software
- have a MIC jack
- have a headphone jack

Note that recorders that require additional software or recorders made by Sony and RCA DO NOT meet the requirements.

Recommended models:

- *Olympus VN-5200 – Approx \$39 on Amazon*
- *Olympus VN-6200 – Approx \$44 on Amazon*

### **2. Digital Camera for Photos/Video**

Your digital camera must meet or exceed the following:

- 8 megapixels or better
- Image stabilization (essential)
- Video at 640 x 480 at 30 fps (essential); video must include audio
- 4. 3x OPTICAL zoom or better
- USB 2 output
- 2GB+ memory card (purchased separately)

Recommended models:

- *Canon Powershot A1000IS 10MP Digital Camera with 4x Optical Image Stabilized Zoom – Approx \$193 on Amazon*
- *Olympus FE370 8MP Digital Camera with 5x Optical Dual Image Stabilized Zoom – Approx \$169 on Amazon*

### **3. Headphones**

Headphones or ear buds are required for working with audio and video. Over the ear headphones work best, but any will do.

If you already have equipment and you are not sure if it will work for this course, find out what digital format(s) your recorder or camera uses and check with the instructor.

## **CLASS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE – FALL 2010**

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

Week 1

**Wed, Sept 1**

In Class: Introduction and overview

Read “Out of Print” by Eric Alterman, *New Yorker Magazine* at <http://bit.ly/BWm1>

Read JournalismNext - Forward (p.xiv to xix) and Intro (p. 1-8)

Week 2

**Mon, Sept 6 – No Class – Labor Day**

**Wed, Sept 8**

In Class: What Is Online Journalism? Why is the Internet Wreaking Havoc on News?

Read JournalismNext Chapter 1 – We are all Web workers now (p. 9-22) but skip section on Web design (p. 23-39)

Read the Cyberjournalist.net's Blogger Code of Ethics at

<http://www.cyberjournalist.net/news/000215.php>

Week 3

**Mon, Sept 13**

**Quiz 1**

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

Read "Why I Blog" by Andrew Sullivan, *The Atlantic Magazine* at <http://bit.ly/blaY1q>

Bring Blog Pitch to Class on Wednesday

**Wed, Sept 15**

**Due: Blog Pitch**

In Class: Setting Up Your Blog

Get your blog up and ready to go by next week

Week 4

**Mon, Sept 20**

**Due: Blog Set Up and Post 1 Due**

In Class: Reporting and Writing for the Web

Read JournalismNext Chapter 2 – Advanced blogging (p. 40-67)

Read JournalismNext Chapter 4 – Microblogging (p. 93-118)

Read JournalismNext Chapter 3 – Crowd-powered collaboration (p. 68-92)

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

**Wed, Sept 22**

In Class: Copyright, Fair Use Creative Commons and some Legal and Ethical Issues to Consider

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

Week 5

**Mon, Sept 27**

**Quiz 2**

In Class: Managing Links, SEO, Social Networking and Building an Audience

Read JournalismNext Chap 11 – Building a digital audience for news (p. 310-334)

Read JournalismNext Chap 10 – Managing news as a conversation (p. 277-309)

**Wed, Sept 29**

In Class: Digital Photography (Day 1)

Read JournalismNext Chapter 5 – Visual storytelling with photographs

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

Week 6

**Mon, Oct 4**

In Class: Digital Photography (Day 2)  
Read "Look at Me!" by Maureen Tkacik, *CJR* at <http://bit.ly/aKnjcZ>

**Wed, Oct 6**

**Quiz 3**

In Class: Trouble Shooting and Work Day

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

Week 7

**Mon, Oct 11**

**Due: Photo Essay**

In Class: Audio (Day 1)

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chapter 7 – Making audio journalism visible (p. 177-205)

**Wed, Oct 13**

In Class: Audio (Day 2)

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

Week 8

**Mon, Oct 18**

In Class: Audio (Day 3)

**Due: Audio Assignment Due at end of class**

**Wed, Oct 20**

In Class: Video (Day 1)

Read JournalismNext Chapter 8 – Telling stories with video

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

Week 9

**Mon, Oct 25**

In Class: Video (Day 2)

Read "No Secrets" by Raffi Khatchadourian, *The New Yorker* at <http://bit.ly/b7yueB>

**Wed, Oct 27**

**Quiz 4**

In Class: Video (Day 3)

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

Week 10

**Mon, Nov 1**

**Video Project Due**

In Class: Basic HTML and CSS (Day 1)

Read JournalismNext Chap 1 - Section on Web design (p. 23-39)

**Wed, Nov 3**

In Class: HTML and CSS (Day 2)

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

Week 11

**Mon, Nov 8**

**Quiz 5 on HTML and CSS**

In Class: Data driving journalism, maps, and timelines

Assignment: Read JournalismNext Chap 9 – Data driven journalism (p. 243-276)

**Wed, Nov 10**

In Class: Data driving journalism, maps, and timelines

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

Week 12

**Mon, Nov 15**

Multimedia: Putting it all together

**Wed, Nov 17**

Multimedia: Putting it all together

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

Week 13

**Mon, Nov 22**

**Due: Map or Timeline**

**Wed, Nov 24**

**NO POSTS DUE THIS WEEK – HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

Week 14

**Mon, Nov 29**

In Class: Final Project Discussion

**Wed, Dec 1**

In Class: Where do we go from here? The future of online journalism and you.

Week 15

**Mon, Dec 6**

Final project work day (in class)

**Wed, Dec 8**

Final project work day (in class)

Week 16

**Mon, Dec 13**

**Final Project Due**

Blog Presentations (Session 1)

FINALS WEEK

**Due: Blog Post 20 - TBA**

**Blog Presentations (Session 2) - TBA**