CCJN 2380-801: Digital Journalism
Spring 2011 Syllabus
Class Sessions: T/Th 9:30-10:50 a.m. Room 288 Lab: Mon 1:00-2:20 p.m.

Professor: Vanessa de Macedo Higgins Joyce, Ph.D.
Office: 210
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 p.m. and Wednesday 10 a.m.- 12 noon, or by appointment
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Required text:

- *Journalism Next* (CQ Press, 2010), by Mark Briggs.
- *Writing for digital media* (Routledge, 2010), by Brian Carroll.
- Case study (US$ 5.95) Charting a Course for Change (instructions on how to buy this multimedia text will be given later in the semester, just be aware of the cost for now).
- Additional (free) reading materials will be posted on Blackboard.

Other requirements:

- USB to save materials from labs
- Headphones to be used during labs
- One CDR for recording project

Learning objectives:

- Identify key elements of digital journalism and how to use the format to present quality journalism;
- Locate examples of successful digital journalism organizations and critique their coverage of current events;
- Be familiar with the trends in the industry and envision how digital journalism may evolve;
- Discuss how journalism can advance its core principles with the use of technology;
- Understand the audience, how to connect with it, how to produce journalism that is relevant to it, how to increase engagement with your story and news site;
- Compare different writing styles on the web, and be able to produce news in these different styles;
- Create and post news content on your individual blogs;
- Apply social media resources to develop your stories;
- Learn about and produce digital audio, photos, slideshows, video, text and maps;

Course description:

For the past several years, newspaper circulation has declined sharply while audience for digital media has risen steadily. While traditional media struggle to maintain their relevance and economic viability, digital media operate in an exciting new scenario. This course aims to introduce you to key concepts in digital journalism, how it has developed and how, with the aid of future journalists like yourself, it might evolve. We will also analyze how new technological

tools bring value to journalism and to citizens, and how digital journalism can maintain and elevate the standards of excellent journalism. In the first part of the course, you will become familiar with the main elements of digital media, and how to use text to its highest potential on the web. In the second part of the course, you will become familiar with and practice multimedia storytelling for digital media.

This course, then, aims to give you the tools to practice digital journalism. You will tell compelling and relevant stories with text, audio, photos, slideshows and maps. You will also practice using social media to develop your stories. You will create a blog for this course and will publish lab and assignment stories in that blog. Digital journalists are also expected to understand how to maximize a story's exposure on the web, and create engagement with their news site, and you will learn techniques to do that. You will also consider the future, envisioning potential new models of journalism and how to improve digital journalism. During class, we will discuss digital journalism concepts. We will examine several current examples of digital journalism and discuss how to improve the quality of journalism. During our lab sessions, we will put into practice some of those concepts.

We will be using blackboard throughout the course. There you will find additional reading materials for our class, announcements, discussion areas and much more. I will be keeping you posted as to what resources we will be using on blackboard as the course progresses, but please be ready to access it. Also, I will be sending emails to you, from time-to-time, with important information, so please be sure to access your email on a regular basis.

Course requirements and evaluation:

Participation:	15%
Labs:	10%
Digital news critique:	10%
Assignment 1- two-way story:	15%
Midterm exam:	10%
Case questions:	5%
Assignment 2 - audio slideshow:	15%
Assignment 3 -multimedia story, group project:	15%
Final essay:	5%

<u>Participation (15% of grade):</u>

This part of the grade will be based on your presence, contributions to the classroom discussions, questions asked and answered, engagement with guest speakers and class presentations and any other activities performed during class time. This grade will assess not only how much you have participated in the class but also the quality of that participation. The success of this class depends on your participation; therefore, you are expected to actively engage in the class. This means you should be present, prepared and ready to contribute to the class activities. Missing class excessively will result in a failing participation grade. If you must miss class let me know in advance or present your explanation by the next class day. You will still be responsible for any due material and materials covered during absences. Disruptive

behaviors will not be permitted. Using the computer in the class for anything that is not class related is considered a disruptive behavior. If anything you are doing is disrupting your classmates (texting, cell phones, etc), your participation grade will be penalized.

Labs (10% of grade, 10 points each, one extra, total 100):
We will have 11 formal labs in class. In each of these labs, you will be assigned a specific exercise. You will receive up to 10 points for each lab exercise. This grade is based on completion. If you partially complete the lab exercise, than your grade will be partial, too. At the end of the semester, your lowest grade of the labs will be dropped. Late lab assignments will have a two points deduction for every day late, unless you have proper documentation in excuse for your absence (in which case you must make arrangements with me). If you miss a lab, you are responsible for finding out what the assignment was with a classmate and come get it with me personally.

Digital news critique (10% of grade; 20 points each, total 100):
On five weeks, you will write a brief critique on digital journalism produced by some of the top online news sites. I will assign the specific website and you will critique an element of your choosing on that website: its design, writing, use of multimedia, coverage of a specific story, etc. The critique will be one page long and should include an assessment of the news quality of the chosen story. Late critiques will have a five points deduction for every day late, unless you have proper documentation in excuse for your absence (in which case you must make arrangements with me). Critiques are due at the beginning of class, and will be considered late if handed in at any other time. Critiques must also be handed in paper form (either to me, if on time, or in the bin outside my office), they cannot be handed in by email.

Assignment 1: two-way story (15% of grade):
In this individual assignment, you should conduct original reporting on a theme of your choice relating to the Southern Methodist University community or, alternatively, on the specific theme of your blog. The assignment should include two distinct texts: the first one will be a traditional, objective news story; and the second one will be a commentary, offering a personal perspective. Both texts should be posted on your blog. You will present a copy of both texts and the links to those posts by the assignment's due date.

Midterm exam: (10% of grade):
The midterm exam will consist of a combination of closed-ended questions (multiple-choice; true-false, etc.) and open-ended questions (short answers) on digital media concepts. The exam will also include an analysis of headlines and writings in digital media.

Case questions: (5% of grade; 50 points each: total of 100 point):
We will cover two case studies relating to digital journalism and news decision making process. For both of those cases, you will receive questions that must be answered, using the case as a guide, prior to our class discussion. These questions will be answered in a couple of paragraphs/ For each of these cases, you will get up to 50 points (total of 100 points), and it will be 5% of your total grade. These questions will require your own personal input, but should be based on

the reading. Late case answers will have a ten points deduction for every day late, unless you have proper documentation in excuse for your absence (in which case you must make arrangements with me). Case answers are due at the beginning of class, and will be considered late if handed in at any other time. Case answers must also be handed in paper form (either to me, if on time, or in the bin outside my office), they cannot be handed in by email.

Assignment 2: audio slideshow (15% of grade):
Create an audio slideshow covering an original subject matter of your choice. This could be related to the theme of your blog or another subject matter. Both photos and audio must originate from your own reporting. Photos and audio should be compiled from previous exercises, from class and labs prior to the assignment. Create the audio slideshow using SoundSlides. Post the slideshow on your blog and make a copy of it in a CD. Present a link to your post by the assignment's due date and bring the SoundSlide in the CD. It is your responsibility to ensure that it plays properly. Points will be deducted for failure to save the project correctly. You will be graded on the quality of your photos, the quality of your audio and the quality of the storytelling through the slideshow. Late assignment will have a five points deduction for every day late, unless you have proper documentation in excuse for your absence (in which case you must make arrangements with me).

Assignment 3: multimedia story, group project (15% of grade):
In groups of two, create a multimedia story that employs three of the formats covered during the semester (text, audio, photo, audio slideshow, video, data visualization or map mashup). The package must comprise original reporting on a theme of your choice. You will create a storyboard anticipating the organization and structure of the package. You will also present the final project to the class. The total grade for your group's project will be based on the storyboard, the multimedia story and the presentation. Late storyboards will receive 5 points off per day late, and late final project and presentations will not be accepted (and will receive a 0).

Final essay: (5% of grade):
In place of the final exam, you will write an essay with in-depth critique of a website that you will be assigned to, where you will write about specific points we will have discussed throughout the semester. This essay will also include some points relating to the your classmate's final presentation. The essay may be turned in early, but it may not be turned in after the deadline (it will receive a 0 any time after deadline). The essay can only be turned in paper, to me personally or in the bin outside my office. The essay is worth 100 points, and 5% of your final grade.

Extra credit (one point each on final grade, up to three points maximum):
You have four options for extra credit. You may:

- Comment on your classmate's blog posts. These comments must be constructive and polite. For every five comments on your classmate's blog posts you will get one point on your final grade. You must turn in a sheet of paper containing the links to the comments (either throughout the semester or at the end of it).

- Report from your cell phone. Post a newsworthy photo, text, audio or video taken from your mobile device to your blog. For every mobile post you get one extra credit points. You must turn in a sheet of paper containing the links of the post.
- Publish your story. If any of your assignments or lab exercises are published in the Daily Mustang or any other cleared news organization you get three extra-credit points. You must turn in a copy or a sheet of paper with the link to the published story.
- Bookmarks. Include entries in our class' blackboard of excellent resources related to our course materials. For every three entries your will get one extra-credit point. Include your full name next to the entry and give me a list of all your entries at the end of the semester.
- Participate in journalism related workshops. If you do participate and present a small description of what you've learned to the class, you get 3 extra credit points. Any workshop must be cleared with me first before being submitted for extra-credit.

Grades:
Final course grades will be assigned along the following guidelines:

94-100=A	73-76=C
90-93=A-	70—72=C-
87-89=B+	67-69=D+
83-86=B	63-66=D
80-82=B-	60-62=D-
77-79=C+	Below 60=F

Academic integrity: I expect you to meet SMU's Honor Code and avoid academic sabotage, cheating, fabrication, facilitating dishonesty, and plagiarism. The violation of SMU's Honor Code will result in a failing grade in the assignment and I will bring your case forward to the SMU Honor Council. More information and definitions of SMU's Honor Code can be found at http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_05_HC.asp.

Special needs: If you need academic accommodations for any disability or other special needs influencing your success in this class, please let me know as soon as possible to make special arrangements. According to University Policy (No. 2.4), you must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. You may call 214-768-1470 or visit http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to begin the process. Once registered, you should schedule an appointment with me to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

How to earn an "F" on a project: Miss a deadline. Misquote or misrepresent someone. Rewrite or submit a paper that was produced for another class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The reading materials indicated below are from the required textbooks and materials on blackboard, unless otherwise noted. The book *Journalism Next* will be indicated as "jnext," *Writing for digital media* will be indicated as "writingdm" and texts coming from Blackboard will indicate so. I will announce guest speakers in class. Schedule is subject to change.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/ Homework
		Concepts and text in Digital Media	
1	01/18	Course introduction, your online life	
	01/20	Industry overview	Read: jnext, Introduction and Ch.1
	01/24	Organizing your digital life: email, RSS, source organization	Lab Read: jnext, p.14-21; 244-253
2	01/25	Digital vs. Analog	Read: writingdm, Ch.2 HW: Critique 1
	01/27	Online style and techniques	Read: writingdm, Ch.3
	01/31	Practice basic digital writing: text	Lab
3	02/01	Blog and microblog writing	Read: jnext, Ch.2; Ch.4 Read: Lyons Newsweek; Blackboard
	02/03	Creating class blog: Wordpress	Lab In Class: Wordpress tutorial
	02/07	Blogging's role in journalism	Read: writingdm, Ch.7
4	02/08	The audience: knowing and growing	Read: writingdm, Ch.5 Read: jnext,Ch. 11 HW: Critique 2
	02/10	Online journalism core value	Read: writingdm, Afterword Read: Kovach & Rosenstiel Ch.1, Blackboard
	02/14	Practice blog posting: text	Lab
5	02/15	Headlines, hypertext and captions	Read: writingdm, Ch.4
	02/17	Citizen journalism	Read: writingdm, Ch.8 Assigment 1 due: two way text
	02/21	Practice headlines, hypertexts and captions	Lab
6	02/22	Interacting with your audience	Read: jnext, Ch.10 Read: writingdm, Ch.9 HW: Critique 3
	02/24	Collaborative journalism	Read: jnext, Ch.3
	02/28	No lab: study for exam	
7	03/01	Midterm exam	
	03/03	The Facebook Conundrum: The New Haven Independent and the Annie Le Murder	Read: Facebook Case, Blackboard Read: Getting started with Facebook for Journalists, Blackboard HW: Case question

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/ Homework
		Multiplatform storytelling in Digital Media	
8	03/07	Audio journalism	Read: Ganter & Ganter Visual Edge, Blackboard Read: Bradshaw, Blackboard
	03/08	Practice audio script and gathering (these audio will go in your slideshow)	Read: jnext, Ch.7 Lab
	03/10	Guest Speaker Nick Lemann, dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism at UL 241	Reading: to be announced
9	**03/14 – 03/17 No class – Spring Break**		
10	03/21	Practice audio editing: Audacity/ Final cut pro	Lab In Class: Audacity tutorial
	03/22	Mobile journalism	Read: jnext, Ch.5 HW: Critique 4
	03/24	Photojournalism	Read: jnext, Ch.6
11	03/28	Photo shooting and editing – Photoshop (these photo will go in your slideshow)	Lab
	03/29	Publishing photo	
	03/31	Audio slides	Read: jnext, p.174-175 Read: McAdams p.20-27, Blackboard
12	04/04	Creating audio slideshow – Soundslides	Lab In Class: Soundslides tutorial
	04/05	Video journalism	Read: jnext, Ch.8
	04/07	Data driven journalism	Read: jnext, Ch.9 Read: Yau, Blackboard Assignment 2 due: audio slideshow
13	04/11	Map mashups – Zee Maps or Google maps	Lab In Class: Zee Maps and Google maps tutorials
	04/12	Storytelling with maps; Multimedia storytelling	Read: Herzog Ch.8, Blackboard Read: Using Maps to Promote Health Equity, Blackboard Read: Knight Digital Media Center, Blackboard
	04/14	Case study: Charting a Course for Change	Read: Knight Charting a Course for Change, Blackboard HW: Case questions
14	04/18	Practice: Storyboard for final project	Lab

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/ Homework
	04/19	In-class consultation final project	HW: Critique 5
	04/21	What's next in digital media	Watch: The Future of News: "Web 3.0": The Impact of Technology, Blackboard Storyboard for assignment 3 due
15	04/25	Brainstorming session future of digital media	Bring at least 2 ideas to class
	04/26	Class presentation final project (groups)	Assignment 3 due: group multimedia story
	04/28	Class presentation final project (groups)	Assignment 3 due: group multimedia story
16	05/02	Class presentation final project (groups)	Assignment 3 due: group multimedia story

Deadline for final essay (in lieu of Final exam): Thursday, May 5, 11:00 a.m. You may turn it in prior to deadline to me personally or in the bin outside my office – NO EMAILS. Projects turned in any time after this deadline will receive a 0.