

**History of American Journalism (CCJN 3396)**  
**Fall 2010**  
**2-3:20 p.m./TTh/Umphrey Lee, Rm. 287**



“For nothing is lost, nothing is ever lost. There is always the clue, the canceled check, the smear of lipstick, the footprint in the canna bed, the condom on the park path, the twitch in the old wound, the baby shoes dipped in bronze, the taint in the blood stream. And all times are one time, and all those dead in the past never lived before our definition gives them life, and out of the shadow their eyes implore us. That is what all of us historical researchers believe. And we love truth.”

**-[Robert Penn Warren](#), *All the King's Men***

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**Office Hours:** 1:30—3 p.m., Monday and Wednesday. Also by appointment.

**Course Description:** American journalism has a past. This course is designed to acquaint you with that history by examining key events and people. We'll explore the evolution of American journalism from the partisan press to the penny press to objective reporting. We'll look at the struggle by African-Americans and women to gain admittance to the nation's newsrooms. We'll meet some great reporters in print, on film and in person. We'll ask questions. What is news? What are the elements of great reporting? Does journalism matter? Does history?

**Course Objectives and Requirements:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the most significant developments in American journalism particularly the past 50 years. To meet this objective, you must write thoughtfully about the assigned readings. Students will display resourcefulness and critical thought. To accomplish this objective, you must research primary sources and write a paper exploring the life and work of a journalist who helped break the color or gender barrier at a newspaper, television station or magazine.

**Textbooks**

Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *[The Race Beat](#): The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

## Class Policies and Procedures

**The following policies have been adopted by the Division of Journalism. By enrolling in this class you are agreeing to the following terms and conditions.**

**Attendance:** I take roll every day. If you miss the first day of class, I may drop you. If you have more than three unexcused absences, I may drop you or give you an “F.”

You are responsible for contacting me within 24 hours of an absence. I will consider the absence unexcused unless you are able to provide a doctor's note or some other valid reason such as participation in a university-sponsored activity or observance of certain religious holidays.

Tardiness will not be tolerated. If you are late, you will receive an unexcused absence unless you can provide a compelling reason (after class) why you were tardy. Turn off cell phones and pagers before class. The SMU honor code governs all course work.

**Deadlines:** Cast in stone. If you fail to meet the deadline for an assignment, you will get one letter grade off for each day it is late. If you have an excused absence, you must turn in the assignment at the next class.

**Grading:** Based on several short writing assignments; three brief essays; and a research paper and oral presentation. I also will give each of you a participation grade.

There will be five short writing assignments, accounting for 10 percent of your grade.

There will be three brief essays, including two based on interviews you conduct, accounting for 10 percent of your grade.

Each of you will do a research project. This will include an oral presentation (10 percent of your grade) and a paper (50 percent).

I also will give each of you a participation grade, accounting for 20 percent of your grade.

**Participation Grade:** I will base the grade on the following: Do you come to class regularly? Are you on time? Have you read the assigned readings? Do you provide thoughtful answers when called on in class? Do you participate in class discussions?

**Research Project:** This assignment is the cornerstone of this class. Each student will write a paper and make an oral presentation about a journalist who helped break the color or gender barrier at a newspaper, television station or magazine. The paper should be 2,000 to 2,500 words (8 to 10 double-spaced pages). The best place to start is with the web site [Black Journalist Movement](#). It lists 19 men and women who were among the first to land jobs in what had been white, male newsrooms in the 1960s.

You can click on a journalist's name and get a brief bio. Most of these folks are still living, and I encourage you to choose one of them since you can interview him or her.

You can choose someone not on this list as long as you run that person by me first.

Each of you will write a paper profiling the journalist and assessing his or her coverage of an important story, preferably one related to civil rights. Once you select the reporter and the event, you are to get copies of his or her stories about it and analyze them to assess the quality of coverage. Then interview the reporter. And write.

The paper is due Thursday, Dec. 2 (the last day of class).

**Grading Scale:**

93-100=A	80-82=B-	67-69=D+
90-92=A-	77-79=C+	63-66=D
87-89=B+	73-76=C	60-62=D-
83-86=B	70-72=C-	Below 60=F

**Additional grading information:** I will judge all work rigorously. “A”s are rare. They are awarded for excellent work. Very good work receives a “B”; average work a “C”; below average a “D.” This is in accordance with university regulations. I will be happy to discuss your work with you. If you wish to protest a grade, a formal process is available.

**Plagiarism & Fabrication:** Plagiarism is stealing someone's words or ideas and passing them off as your own. Fabrication is making stuff up. Both strike at the heart of the journalistic process, where proper attribution and fact checking are paramount. If you plagiarize an assignment or fabricate information in this class, you will fail that assignment. In addition, I will refer the matter to the SMU Honors Council.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies ([DASS](#)) at 214-768-1470 to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4; an attachment describes the DASS procedures and relocated office.)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

**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.)

### Class Schedule

This schedule may change during the semester. Any changes will be discussed in class.

#### **Week 1—Why study journalism history?**

1. Tues., August 24

Course intro. Syllabus. Students talk about themselves. Why the past matters.

Homework: Read “The Problem of Journalism History” by [James Carey](#). Write brief answers to these questions and turn in at next class. Be prepared to discuss.

- 1) What does Carey say should be the primary historical story of journalism?
- 2) What’s his assessment of the performance of journalism historians in telling that story?
- 3) Carey says that in examining the history of journalism, “we are principally studying a way in which men in the past have grasped reality.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

2. Thurs., Aug. 26

Discuss Carey. Turn in 1<sup>st</sup> short writing assignment. Flournoy to discuss research project. You are to email your top two choices to me no later than 1 pm on Wed., Sept. 8.

Homework: Read [Michael Schudson](#), Introduction and “The Revolution in American Journalism in the Age of Egalitarianism: The Penny Press” (pp. 3-60). Complete 2<sup>nd</sup> short writing assignment and turn in at next class.

Work on identifying your top two choices for the research paper.

#### **Week 2—The emergence of the reporter/Facts versus stories**

3. Tues., Aug. 31

Discuss reading. Turn in 2<sup>nd</sup> short writing assignment.

Homework: Read Schudson, “Telling Stories: Journalism as a Vocation after 1880” (pp. 61-87) and “Stories and Information: Two Journalisms in the 1890s” (pp. 88-120). Complete 3<sup>rd</sup> short writing assignment and turn in at next class.

Work on identifying your top two choices for the research paper.

4. Thurs, Sept. 2

Discuss reading. Turn in 3<sup>rd</sup> short writing assignment.

Homework: Read Schudson, “Objectivity Becomes Ideology: Journalism after World War I” (pp. 121-159). Complete 4<sup>th</sup> short writing assignment. Turn in at next class.

Work on identifying your top two choices for the research paper.

#### **Week 3— The NYT and objectivity/The research project**

5. Tues., Sept. 7

Discuss reading. Turn in 4<sup>th</sup> short writing assignment.

Homework: At the next class, you are to identify your top two choices for the research paper and your working thesis. Email this info to me by 1 pm on Wed., Sept. 8. Bring a hard copy to class.

6. Thurs., Sept. 9

Students to discuss their top two choices for the research paper. Flournoy to discuss instructions for research paper.

Homework: Read chapter 1 (“An American Dilemma”), chapter 2 (“A Fighting Press”) and chapter 3 (“Southern Editors in a Time of Ferment”) in *The Race Beat*. Complete 5<sup>th</sup> short writing assignment. Turn in at next class.

#### **Week 4—Reporting race**

7. Tues., Sept. 14

Discuss reading. Turn in 5<sup>th</sup> short writing assignment

Homework: Read Introduction and 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of *The Ambassador and the Activist: Reporting the South on the Eve of the Civil Rights Revolution*.

Start work on research paper outline. Electronic copy due Wed., Sept. 29 at 1 pm.

8. Thurs., Sept. 16

Discuss reading. Watch a documentary (24 minutes) on the [1955 Emmett Till murder case](#) in Mississippi. From [Eyes on the Prize](#), the best broadcast history of the Civil Rights Movement—“Awakenings, 1954-1956.”

Homework: Read chaps 6 (“Into Mississippi”) & 7 (“Till Trial”) in *The Race Beat*.

#### **Week 5— Reporting a lynching/Reporting a boycott/Reporting school desegregation**

9. Tues., Sept. 21

Discuss reading. Watch a documentary on the [1955-1956 Montgomery Bus Boycott](#) (28 mins), the nonviolent protest which marked the emergence of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a national figure. From [Eyes on the Prize](#), “Awakenings, 1954-1956.”

Homework: Read chapter 8 (“Where Massive and Passive Resistance Meet”) in *The Race Beat*.

10. Thurs., Sept. 23

Discuss reading. Watch a documentary (32 minutes) on the [1957 desegregation of Central High School](#) in Little Rock, one of the first violent attempts by whites to stop school integration. From [Eyes on the Prize](#), “Fighting Back, 1957-1962.”

Homework: Read chapter 10 (“Toward Little Rock”) and chapter 11 (“Little Rock Showdown”) in *The Race Beat*. Work on your research paper outline.

#### **Week 6—Rosie the reporter**

11. Tues., Sept 28

Discuss reading.

Homework: Read “Rosie the Reporter” in Nan Robertson’s *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* (handout). At the next class, we will watch the first half of “[The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter](#),” a 60-minute documentary that explores the impact of World War II on American women.

Finish detailed outline of your research paper. Email to me no later than 1 pm on Wed., Sept. 29. Bring a hard copy to the next class.

12. Thurs., Sept. 30

Discuss research project outlines. Watch the first half of “[The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter](#).” Discuss World War II, women and the media.

Homework: Interview a woman about the impact of WWII on women and the role of the media. Write at least one page summarizing your findings.

Begin preparing for your reporter interview. Email your questions to me no later than 1 pm on Wednesday, Oct. 13. I encourage you to send them earlier.

### **Week 7—Gayle Reaves**

13. Tues, Oct. 5

Discuss your World War II interviews. Turn in your essay. Watch the second half of “[The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter](#).”

Homework: We will have a guest speaker at the next class—[Gayle Reaves](#), a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter and the current editor of *The Fort Worth Weekly*.

Work on your questions.

14. Thurs., Oct. 7

Presentation by Gayle Reaves.

Homework: None . . . except to email your research paper questions to me by 1 pm on Wed., Oct. 13.

Enjoy fall break.

### **Week 8—Fall break**

Tues., Oct. 12 -- No class (fall break)

15. Thurs., Oct. 14

Discuss your research paper questions.

Homework: Read Thomas Johnson’s “[A Graduate of the Black Press](#)” and parts of the [Caldwell Journals](#) by Earl Caldwell, one of the first black reporters at the *New York Times*. Write a brief essay about the two.

Interview the reporter you will be focusing on in your research paper. The deadline to have this done is 1 pm on Mon., Nov. 1 or Wed., Nov. 3.

### **Week 9—Black reporters, white newsrooms/John McCaa**

16. Tues., Oct. 19

Discuss reading. Turn in essay.

Homework: At the next class, we will have a guest speaker, [John McCaa](#), who anchors the 6 and 10 pm newscasts for WFAA Channel 8.

Interview your reporter.

17. Thurs., Oct. 21

Presentation by John McCaa.

Homework: At the next class, we’ll watch the 1<sup>st</sup> half of “[JFK: Breaking the News](#),” a documentary about Kennedy assassination coverage & why it was a milestone.

**Week 10—Television**

18. Tues., Oct. 26

Watch the first half of [JFK: Breaking the News](#).

Homework: Interview someone about the Kennedy assassination and the role of television. Write at least one page summarizing your findings.

Interview your reporter.

19. Thurs., Oct. 28

Watch the second half of [JFK: Breaking the News](#). Discuss your Kennedy interviews. Turn in your essay.

Homework: Reporter interview assignment for half the class: email me your interview no later than 1 pm on Mon., Nov. 1. I will send the interviews to the class. We will discuss each interview on Tues., Nov. 2.

**Week 11—Your interviews**

20. Tues., Nov. 2

Discuss interviews.

Homework: Reporter interview assignment for the other half of the class: email me your interview no later than 1 pm on Wed., Nov. 3. I will send the interviews to the class. We will discuss each of these on Thurs., Nov. 4.

21. Thurs., Nov. 4

Discuss your interviews.

Homework: Read Chapter 14 (“Black Muslims) in [The Autobiography of Malcolm X](#). Watch this excerpted [interview](#) with Malcolm X.

Work on the first two pages of your research paper. The electronic copy is due no later than Wed., Nov. 17 at 1 pm.

**Week 12—Reporting black nationalism**

22. Tues., Nov. 9

Watch part of “[The Hate that Hate Produced](#),” a 1959 documentary about the Nation of Islam. Watch a 1990 documentary about [Malcolm X](#) (32 minutes), the nation’s articulate firebrand (from [Eyes on the Prize](#), “The Time Has Come, 1964-1966”). Discuss media coverage of Malcolm X as compared with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Homework: Work on the first two pages of your research paper.

23. Thurs., Nov. 11

Watch a documentary on the emergence of [Black Power](#) (28 minutes), which marked a new stage in the civil rights revolution for activists and journalists (from [Eyes on the Prize](#), “The Time Has Come”). Discuss the emergence of black separatism and what this meant for reporters.

Homework: Read the Summary and Chapter 15 (“The News Media and the Disorders”) in [Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders](#).

Work on the first two pages of your research paper.

**Week 13—Reporting a riot/Preparing a presentation**

24. Tues., Nov. 16

Watch a documentary on the [1967 Detroit riot](#) (25 minutes), which left 43 people dead and hundreds injured (from [Eyes on the Prize](#), “Two Societies, 1965-1968”).

Discuss media coverage of riots and, more generally, race.

Homework: Finish the first two pages of your research paper and email to me no later than 1 pm on Wed., Nov. 17. Work on your oral presentation.

25. Thurs., Nov. 18

Discuss research papers. Discuss oral presentation.

Homework: At the next class, some of you will deliver your oral presentations.

**Week 14—Telling a story**

26. Tues., Nov. 23

Oral presentations.

Homework: None. Enjoy the holiday.

Thurs., Nov. 25 -- No class (Thanksgiving)

**Week 15—Writing a paper**

27. Tues., Nov. 30

Oral presentations.

Homework: Complete research paper.

28. Thurs., Dec. 2

Oral presentations. Turn in research paper.