
FEATURE AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM in Fall 2020 (CM3012)

Course Code	CM3012	Professor(s)	Matthew Fraser
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	06 89 26 32 47
Class Schedule	M: 18:10-19:45 in Q-A101 R: 12:40-14:15 in Q-A101	Office Hours	By appointment in Grenelle building
Credits	4	Email	mfraser@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	06 89 26 32 47

Course Description

This course helps prepare students for careers in journalism with focus on researching and writing long-form feature and investigative articles. Students will gain a historical and critical understanding of the tradition of investigative journalism. Issues such as journalism ethics and objectivity/subjectivity will be examined and discussed. Most of the course functions as a “newsroom” in which students pitch feature and investigative story ideas, conduct research, source with interviews, edit and curate their stories, and publish them online. Stories will be written, either individually or in teams, for publication on the Peacock Plume site and/or their own Medium pages. Students will receive in-class training on how to come up with story ideas, research, find data, interview subjects, and structure their stories for publication. Students will complete the course with portfolio work in feature and investigative writing that will be useful in careers in journalism, digital media, and jobs requiring research skills.

Course Learning Outcomes

- gain a critical and historical understanding of the tradition of investigative journalism, and how it has evolved, from its emergence in the late nineteenth century to today
- learn conceptual and practical approaches to different forms and styles of feature and investigative journalism fit for a multimedia distribution
- learn to formulate questions, and test hypotheses, in story ideas and their development into long-form pieces of journalism
- learn advanced research techniques, including databases searches, in producing feature and investigative journalism
- learn to work collaboratively in teams and adhere to ethical standards of journalistic responsibility

General Education

Course Outline

This schedule is flexible and subject to change.

September

Week I – 23rd – 25th

Introduction and overview. History of investigative journalism. Practice and ethical issues for investigative journalists today.

TOPICS Newsroom – story ideas and pitches. Launching a Medium page; using Twitter and social media as journalism tools.

READINGS Jill Lepore, “Does Journalism Have a Future?” New Yorker: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/01/28/does-journalism-have-a-future>

Week II – 28th – 2nd

TOPICS: Researching a story — research techniques for investigative journalism.

READINGS: Tools for researching your stories:
<https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2016/01/13/using-google-for-researching-stories/>;
Investigative journalism toolbox:
<https://investigativejournalismaup.wordpress.com/2018/09/06/investigative-journalist-toolbox/>

September 30th – last day to drop/add courses online

October

Week III – 5th – 9th

TOPICS: **Pitching your story.** How to sum up and pitch your story idea at news meetings.

READINGS: Pitching stories to editors:

<https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2018/02/05/pitching-stories-to-professional-editors/>

Week IV –12th – 16th

TOPICS: Feature writing techniques – structuring your story.

READINGS: “Nearly 100 Fantastic Pieces of Journalism”, *The*

Atlantic <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2011/05/nearly-100-fantastic-pieces-of-journalism/238230/>

Week V – 19th – 23rd

TOPICS: Interview techniques, how to approach interview with research and preparation, interviewing in-person and remotely.

READINGS: Interviewing principles:

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/journalism/isaacs/edit/MencherIntv1.html>: 9 remote interviewing tips for journalists: <https://ijnet.org/en/story/9-remote-interviewing-tips-journalists?utm>

Week VI – 26th – 30th

TOPICS: Creating posts and sourcing images that respect copyright.

READINGS: How to find free images and graphics:

<https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2018/01/17/how-to-find-free-images-and-graphics/>

October 28th, Mid-semester

November

Week VII – 2nd – 6th

TOPICS: Newsroom: Review of stories before final publication deadline.

Week VIII – 9th- 13th

TOPICS: Newsroom: Review of published stories.

November 11th to 13t, fall break (no classes)

Week VIII – 16th- 20th

TOPICS: Newsroom: Second story pitches.

READINGS: Pitching stories to editors:

<https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2018/02/05/pitching-stories-to-professional-editors/>

November 16th, Mid-semester grades due

Week IX – 23rd – 27th

TOPICS: Using Social Media — Twitter as journalism platform.

READINGS: Social media tools: <https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2019/01/27/journalism-social-media/>

November 27th, last day to withdraw from a course

last day to choose credit/no credit option

Week X - 30th – 4th

TOPICS: Personal branding for digital journalists, building your portfolio with websites and Medium pages.

READINGS: Personal branding tools:

<https://journalism2aup.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/personal-branding-for-journalists/>; Building your portfolio:

<https://ijnet.org/en/resource/don%E2%80%99t-bury-lead-mindset-building-journalist%E2%80%99s-portfolio>

December

Week XI – 7th – 11th

TOPICS: Newsroom: Review of stories before deadline.

December 11th, last day of classes,

December 12th - 15th, reading days

December 16th – 22th, Final Exam

January 4nd, all grades due

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are still expected to attend ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example, when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

- **60% — Evaluation of Published Work**

This portion of the final grade will be based on evaluation of work produced and published on Peacock Plume and/or posted on Medium.com. Evaluation will be based on the output quantity and quality of published work, including writing ability, depth of research, use of data, sourcing, photos, and multimedia. The number of articles produced over the course of the term will be discussed with each student, depending on the length and scope of story ideas. A minimum expectation is **one feature article** and **one investigative piece** (or in exceptional circumstances, an ambitious long-form investigative piece over the entire term)

- **40% — Attendance & Participation**

Every student will be evaluation on attendance, participation, and teamwork. Also, students will (either individually or in groups) give a short in-class assessment of their feature and investigative piece, outlining their challenges in working on the piece and offering an assessment of the published article.

Other
