

The Changing World of Journalism

We are surrounded by and interact with journalism in all aspects of our life, from flipping through the photo spreads in *Cosmopolitan* to watching the traditional evening televised newscast to subscribing to an RSS feed. JRN 101A, open to both majors and non-majors, is an experimental course, designed for a generation that is redefining how journalism is practiced and consumed. It will introduce you to the historical structure of news organizations, consider the responsibilities of journalists in a democratic society, and discuss implications of an ever-increasing media marketplace. But it will also pay attention to a key element of modern journalism: the visual.

In this class, we will investigate how journalists do (and should) work, paying special attention to contemporary issues such as globalization, concentration of ownership, fragmented audiences, micro-casting, new conceptions of news, interactivity and convergence of technologies. Why is the traditional print/video journalism divide disappearing? Why are television networks worried about YouTube and citizen journalism? Is there really an “Oprah effect”? Why do the media obsess so much about Britney Spears, missing blonde women and elections as a “horse race”? Can a journalist really be “fair and balanced”? Why should you care if there is a free press or not?

Journalism courses are traditionally (and correctly) worried about words: how we use language to tell a story. But this ignores an equally important storytelling component, the visual, which is understood at a different and more elemental level than written and spoken words. This course helps will help you to improve your verbal AND visual literacy in regards to the news media, laying the foundation for a better informed journalist and news consumer. *Class meets Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:45 am, Bachelor 134.*

Professor: Dr. Kathleen Ryan
Office: 108 Williams Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12:30pm or by appointment.
Phone: 529-0838
e-mail: ryankm3@muohio.edu

Class Requirements

While this class is not a video or internet production lab, students will be expected to produce multimedia/web ready work on laptop computers. All students enrolling in the class must have either a MacBook or MacBook Pro loaded with the most recent version of iLife and iWork software (including iWeb, iLife, iPhoto, Garage Band, iMovie, Pages and Keynote). Students will use this software to post weekly assignments to the course’s website (for assignment details, see below). While no experience of shooting and editing is required, it is expected that many students will have encountered video in high school. Because this course is not supported with labs, students may need to improvise ways of recording sights and sounds from video cameras to I-Pods, from digital stills cameras to cell phones. You’ll investigate the aesthetics and ethics of storytelling in group discussions as well as in your assignments.

Required Readings

Bill Kovach and Tom Rosensteil. *The Elements of Journalism*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007.

Additional readings and videos will be assigned during selective weeks and will be placed either on electronic reserve in the library or available as online links; please see the course calendar for details.

Course Calendar

August 25-27	Journalistic Foundations and Orientation READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Introduction," "What is Journalism For?" <i>DUE August 27th - Individual online portfolio page must be posted by midnight</i>
September 1-3	The Image as Story READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Truth: The First and Most Confusing Principle"; John Filo and John Harte, "Kent State and Bakersfield: A Combined Narrative Experiment," <i>Visual Communication Quarterly</i> 15-4 (2008), 266-271.*
September 8-10	How Did We Get Here? READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Journalism of Verification" NO CLASS September 10; watch and blog on <i>The News War</i> ; Part I, "Secrets, Sources and Spin" (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/newswar/view/) <i>DUE September 10th - First Media Blog must be posted by midnight</i>
September 15-17	Aesthetics of News READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Engagement and Relevance", Herbert Zettl, "Aesthetics Theory," in <i>Handbook of Visual Communication: Theories, Methods and Media</i> , ed. Ken Smith et al (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates, 2005), 365-384*
September 22-24	The Fourth Estate READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Independence from Faction": Keith Gessen, "Letter from Moscow: The Accused," <i>The New Yorker</i> March 23 (2009), 42-53* <i>DUE September 22nd - 10-Still Assignment must be posted to website by 9:30 am; you will present it in class that day</i>
September 29-October 1	Journalistic Ethics READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Journalists Have a Responsibility to Conscience" <i>DUE October 1st - Comments (two) to blogs must be posted by midnight</i>
October 6-8	News Narratives READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Make the News Comprehensive and Proportional", Trischa Goodnow, "Using Narrative Theory to Understand the Power of News Photographs," in <i>Handbook of Visual Communication</i> (2009), 351-361* MANDATORY ATTENDANCE: "Finding Freedom Summer" Conference and Film Festival on the Miami University campus. This will be the topic of your Citizen Journalist assignment
October 13-15	The Citizen Journalist READING: Tom Felder, "Crisis Alert: Barack Obama Meets a Citizen Journalist," in <i>Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives</i> , ed. Stuart Allen and Einar Thorston (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 209-220.* NO CLASS October 15; use class time to work on your Citizen Journalist assignment
Fall Break	October 17-19
October 20-22	The Journalist at Work READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens," "Who Journalists Work For" <i>DUE October 20th - Citizen Journalist assignments must be posted online by 9:30 am</i>
October 27-29	Journalism as a Public Forum READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, "Journalism as a Public Forum"

November 3-5	<p>Concentration of Ownership, Globalization & the Digital Future READING: Project for Excellence in Journalism, <i>State of the News Media 2008</i> (http://www.stateofthenewsmedia.com/2008/); read “Introduction” and “Major Trends” in the “Overview” plus “Introduction” for each type of media* <i>DUE November 3rd: Celluloid Journalist Podcast must be posted to your website by 9:30am</i> <i>DUE November 5th: Comments about your classmates reviews/presentations must be posted by midnight</i></p>
November 10-12	<p>New Conceptions of News READING: Kovatch and Rosenstiel, “Monitor Power and Offer Voice to the Voiceless”, Michiko Kakutani, “Is Jon Stewart the Most Trusted Man in America?”* NO CLASS October 12; watch and blog on <i>The News War</i>, Part I, “What’s Happening to the News” (http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/newswar/view/) <i>DUE November 12th - Second Media Blog must be posted by midnight</i></p>
November 17-19	<p>Visual Ethics READING: Julianne H. Newton, “Visual Ethics Theory,” in <i>Handbook of Visual Communication</i>, 429-444;* Sheila Reaves, “A Survey of Reactions to Photographic Manipulation,” in <i>Handbook of Visual Communication</i>, 445-454*</p>
November 24	<p>Signs, Symbolism & Understanding READING: Roland Barthes, “Myth Today”* <i>DUE November 24th - Comments (two) to blogs must be posted by midnight</i></p>
Thanksgiving Break	November 25th-29th
December 1-3	<p>Audio/Visual Storytelling SHOOT IN CLASS as a group: Audio/Video assignment, with in-class time to work on individual editing</p>
December 8-10	<p>Interactive Presentation Sessions During the final week, you will be responsible for showing your website and projects (including the Audio/Visual Assignment) to your classmates, professor and other visitors during an interactive research presentation session. If you are not presenting on a day, you must still attend, because you are expected to comment about the presentations on your classmates web pages. <i>DUE December 8th - Audio/Visual Assignment posted online; you will be assigned presentation dates by Week Five</i></p>
December 17	<p><i>DUE December 17 - Take home final exam “If I Were a Journalist” assignment must be posted to your website with appropriate links by 12:15 pm</i></p>

Assignments

Individual Web Page

In this assignment, you create a web page, where you will post all of your class assignments and provide a link to your Twitter account. You will be assigned to follow and blog about a specific national media organization. In the first day of class, each student will sign up for one media organization which you will analyze throughout the term, using concepts discussed in class. Each week a blog is due we will discuss in class the week's entries, looking at what media organizations did well and discuss concerns you may have about how something was covered. Students are expected to be familiar with fellow students entries and must respond to three entries over the course of the term.

The entries (blogs, comments and tweets) are due throughout the term. Tweets are due for every reading (20 Tweets total). Dates blogs and comments are due are noted on the course calendar (2 blogs and 4 comments total). Each blog should be the equivalent of 2-3 paragraphs of a traditional paper (approximately 300 words). Comments are 150-200 words. Even though this is a blog, remember that you are writing for an academic assignment (i.e. proper spelling and grammar).

You must create your portfolio web page by the end of the first week. You can change the page over the course of the term, using iWeb, but you must have at least a basic shell done by the end of the first week. (30 points)

A Tweet is due by Thursday at midnight for each of the course readings. Think of Tweets as headlines. You're limited by the number of characters (150 characters). The best Tweets will offer a summary and link to a related on-line concept from your media organization (a story, discussion, etc.). You should not only have your own Twitter account, but should follow the Tweets of your classmates. We'll discuss in class how to set this up. (40 points)

Two weeks (as noted in the syllabus), you will blog about your media organization on your personal website. Your entries will focus on your media organization, reflecting what has been discussed in class and the readings you have done for the course that week. Over the course of the term, you should investigate not only news media content, but also media ownership. Who owns the media organization you are following? How does media ownership impact the coverage you see either over the airwaves, in print or on the web? If a news organization has both "new" and "traditional" media presence, you will need to look at both over the course the the term. (25 points per blog/50 points)

You also are required to make comments on blogs created by three of your classmates. You must make two entries for two different people the weeks the blogs are due. Remember, you entries can be read by anyone, so keep comments civil (no profanity). If you disagree with a point someone raises do it in a polite way. If you agree with a person's blog, explain what about it makes it work for you. (10 points per comment/40 points)

Reading Summary: One week during the term, you will be responsible for summarizing a starred reading. You will sign up for your reading during the first week of class. You should write and post to your web site a brief summary of the argument, list examples as evidence and then offer an individual opinion as to if the argument "works" or not. It can offer comparisons to discussions we've had in class, and can also offer examples from the media entity you are following. Your summary should be approximately 250 words long. (50 points)

Discussion Sections: You will also, with a small group of fellow students, lead a course discussion on your reading during the week the reading is due. Your fellow students are expected to have read your summary before the class session. During class, you should bring concrete examples and help the class to understand the ideas in the reading. In essence you (and your fellow group members) are the experts, teaching the rest of the class about the readings. HELPFUL HINT #1: the group should talk via e-mail to coordinate how their examples will work together, and may want to each take a portion of the essay for explanation. HELPFUL HINT #2: Your group should talk with me before your

presentation (either before/after class time or during office hours) to help coordinate the presentation and to help better understand the reading (50 points)

Portfolio: Throughout the term, you will be creating an on-line portfolio. The last week of class, we will have an informal in-class research presentation, where you will show your portfolio to fellow students and professors. You should come to the session prepared to talk about the terms' blogs and projects. (40 points)

10-Still Story

In this assignment, you will make your first attempt at journalistic storytelling. You will tell a story with visuals only, in ten stills. You should use iPhoto, Keynote or the PDF viewer to show your stills. You are allowed one graphic element -- the title of the story and your name at the beginning in a single (non-photographic) slide/page. The rest of the assignment is made up of 10 photographs -- no more, no less. Photos can be taken with a digital camera, the built-in Mac camera or a cell phone camera.

Make sure you pick an appropriate topic/format. You should pick a story which can be told in pictures only, with no graphics other than a single title page. The story must be journalistic in nature, but it can be a very simple story (a profile of the ultimate fan? an on campus protest?) (30 points)

Tell your story effectively. Production values count (to a degree), as does evidence that you have taken into account ideas discussed in class. You will want to think about aesthetics of each photograph, framing and lighting. You can choose to tell your story in color or black and white, as is most effective for the piece. (30 points)

Post your material so your classmates can see it. The assignment should be posted to your course website/portfolio by the deadline. (15 points)

Show your work to class and discuss your choices. A component of journalism is talking about your story to others -- either in a pitch session with editors or to your audience. We'll take a look at the 10-still assignments in class and you should be prepared to talk about what works and what doesn't. (25 points).

Due: Posted online by September 22nd, 9:30 am. Presentations in class that same day.

Citizen Journalist Assignment

In this assignment, you will work as a journalist covering a story, which will be edited during class time. You will need to use some sort of multi-media technology to cover the story. Should you use cell-phone video? A series of digital photographs? An iPod audio entry? The Flip camera? You should pick the technology that best enables you to tell the story. We will work together to pick an appropriate on-campus story and discuss how to best cover it. You will then bring your material into class to be edited on October 13th and 15th.

Make sure you pick an appropriate topic/format. You don't want attempt an in-depth investigative piece, or a story which requires interviews with dozens of experts. Instead, think about a story that can be told simply and effectively. We'll talk about different options in class, but you might want to consider telling a story in stills and music for a piece on a day in the life of the competitive figure skating team. However, a story on a chorale group might be better told as an audio podcast, while another story may be more suited to a video podcast (20 points)

Bring your material to class for editing and feedback. Behind every journalist is a great editor. In class, we'll work together to best help you tell your story. Plan on working in class at least one day on your assignment (20 points)

Tell your story effectively. Production values count (to a degree), as does evidence that you have taken into account ideas discussed in class. Make sure that you don't do anything to detract from your story being told (odd pauses, mispronounced words, video we can't see). Allowances will be made for non-traditional formats (cell phone films/ photoessays) as long as the work can be seen/analyzed (20 points)

Post your material so your classmates can see and comment on it. Part of being a citizen journalist is sharing your work with others. You'll post your material to your website, and provide it to class members through iTunes at Miami course podcast. (20 points)

Offer feedback on the work of others. Part of being a citizen journalist is being aware of what others are doing. Take a look at at three of your classmates projects and offer comments on-line, using concepts we have discussed in class and in the readings to analyze the work. Remember, your entries can be read by anyone with access to the entry, so keep comments civil (no profanity). Constructive criticism is always most helpful. (20 points).

Due: Posted online by October 20th at 9:30 am.

Celluloid Journalists Podcast Review

In this assignment, you will watch a feature film which turns its lens on journalists. You will create a short podcast review of the film (1:30 or less), and then listen to and offer online comments on the reviews of students who watched the same film you did. You can sign up in class for one of the following (all available in the King Library): *All the President's Men*, *Good Night and Good Luck*, *Citizen Kane*, *Network*, *His Girl Friday*; *Capote*, *The Killing Fields*. If students have access to the following films and can share them with fellow students, groups can also select from: *Talk Radio*, *Anchorman: The Story of Ron Burgandy*; or *To Die For*.

Your review should analyze the pros and cons of the film or television program. It should be structured like a review found in a major newspaper (look at the Friday Arts section of the *New York Times* or at NPR for good examples of reviews).

Reviews typically give a brief summary of the story, list the pertinent personnel (actors, directors, etc.) and then offer an individual opinion as to if the film/program "works" or not. It can offer comparisons to either related media and/or discuss how faithful the media representation is to reality. It also usually includes a clip from the film. Your review should be 1:30-1:45. Reviews allow you to write in a non-academic voice -- have fun! (50 points)

Your critiques should discuss how your fellow students understood the film, and contrast it with your understanding of it. In essence, this is a written "review" of the review. What did students get right? What did they miss? Did they reveal any points which you hadn't considered? Remember that you should offer constructive criticism in approximately 100 words. (50 points)

Due: Review must be posted on-line to your webpage and sent to the class via iTunes at Miami course podcast by November 3rd at 9:30 am. Critiques are due November 5th at midnight.

Audio/Video Story

In this assignment, you will work in class from video we shoot together to create a news story. The story can have no narration. It can use music, natural sound, and interviews in order to tell the tale.

Determine how you are going to tell your story. You will need to choose which video package you will use, log the tape and write a script. Remember, your interview may not provide you with all of the information; you may need to research some additional material to be tell your piece. (15 points)

Come to class with a rough cut for revision and comments. Behind every journalist is a great editor. In class, we'll work together to best help you tell your story. Plan on working in class at least two days on editing and posting your assignment (25 points)

Tell your story effectively. Production values count, as does evidence that you have taken into account ideas discussed in class. Make sure that you don't do anything to detract from your story being told (odd pauses, music too loud, video we can't see). You're starting with well shot video -- don't do anything that distracts from that. This doesn't mean you shouldn't experiment -- just make sure the experiment works! (30 points)

Bring to class prepared discussion points about the exercise. You should make notes about how this assignment relates to ideas we've discussed in class to date. How does your practice of media relate to the elements of journalism as discussed by Kovatch and Rosenstiel or to visual communication theories we've investigated? If you do not speak up in class, you will get 0 points for this portion of the assignment. (15 points)

Your story needs to meet certain rules. The edited story must be posted on-line to your webpage. It should stream easily (check your file size) and should last between 1:30-2:00. (15 points)

Due: Project must be posted on-line to your webpage by December 8th, 9:30 am.

Take Home Final Examination: "If I Were a Journalist"

In this assignment, you will use one of the events you covered this term (10-Still Assignment, Audio/Visual Story, or Citizen Journalism Assignment) to compare with with professional news coverage of the event, incorporating concepts we have learned in class. Your results will be posted in an online web page, which make use of links, photographs and other multimedia elements. You must find at least three multimedia sources which cover the event you attended in a minimum of two different formats (for instance, a newspaper's online coverage, a local television station's link to a video story and NPR's online audio archive of newscasts).

Begin your online posting by describing the event you attended. You should reference (and link to) your appropriate assignment. HELPFUL HINT: Don't wait until final exam week to try and find multimedia coverage of your event. You'll do better on the final assignment if you plan in advance and save (or post links on your web page) to multimedia stories throughout the term. (20 points)

Describe how the media covered the event. You should analyze each of your three sources, noting the differences between the various media. Which areas were most effective for each outlet? Which was the least? You must include links to each media report. HELPFUL HINT #2: You may want to include the media you are following in your blog as one source for analysis. NOTE: your sources should not be from the same parent company; if you are analyzing coverage of a Red Hawks game, you cannot use ESPN's Sportscenter and ESPN.com. (20 points)

Be sure to incorporate ideas we have discussed throughout the class. Concepts like mediation of experience, convergence, multiple media platforms, concentration of ownership, ethics, citizen journalism, audience fragmentation, interactivity ,

visual aesthetics, or community building all may be a part of your comparison of what you saw with how the story was reported. (30 points)

Draw conclusions based upon your observations and argument. You should, in two to three paragraphs, clearly summarize your findings and describe how you would do things differently if you were a journalist. (15 points)

Your posting should meet certain standards. It should be 1000-1500 words. You must credit work/ideas through a link to a full citation of the sources in Chicago style (a separate web page). Use RefWorks to assist in formatting <http://www.lib.muohio.edu/refworks/>. (15 points)

Due: December 17th, 12:15pm (late assignments will not be accepted)

Grade Distribution	25%	Individual Web Page
	15%	10-Still Story
	15%	“Celluloid Journalists”
	15%	Audio/Video Story
	15%	Citizen Journalist Assignment
	15%	“If I Were a Journalist”

Grading will be weighted to reflect the above percentages. Individual grades will be available on the Blackboard site.

Grade Scale	95-100%	A
	90-94.9%	A-
	87-89.9%	B+
	84-86.9%	B
	80-83.9%	B-
	77-79.9%	C+
	74-76.9%	C
	70-73.9%	C-
	67-69.9%	D+
	64-66.9%	D
	60-63.9%	D-
	Below 60%	F

Other Course Information

Course Conduct This course requires the in-class use of a computer (Mac with iLife Suite highly recommended). Students are expected to attend each class session with their laptop. Surfing, instant-messaging and other non-class use of the laptop during course time is inconsiderate to both the professor and fellow students. Students found doing this will be asked to leave the class. A second offense and the student’s final grade will be lowered by one grade.

The University’s rules on Academic Dishonesty (e.g. cheating, plagiarism, furnishing false information) and Student Conduct will be strictly enforced; please familiarize yourselves with

these rules, which are published on the Web at: http://www.units.muohio.edu/secretary/policies_guidelines/student_handbook/code_of_conduct/

- Disability** If you require any special assistance as a result of a documented disability, please see the professor at the start of the term.
- Course Attendance** Course attendance at Miami University is mandatory. If a student is not present on the first day of class, he or she may be dropped from the class roster in favor of a student who is present. Enrolled students are allowed two unexcused absences per term; additional absences will result in a student dropping one grade per missed day. Students are allowed excused absences for verifiable illnesses/family emergency or scheduled activities for MU sporting teams or organizations. **ILLNESSES/FAMILY EMERGENCY:** Please notify the Professor via e-mail in advance of class that you will not be attending; when you return to class provide a doctor's note or other verification of your absence. **SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES:** Please notify the Professor a minimum of two weeks in advance of the scheduling conflict and provide a note from your coach or advisor regarding the activity date(s).
- Late Assignment Policy** In a newsroom, if you miss your deadline, your story doesn't run. We'll follow a similar policy in the class. Late assignments will not be accepted except with prior consultation with the professor. If you are sick or have a family emergency on a day an assignment is due, for it to be accepted you **MUST** e-mail the professor in advance of class time **AND** provide proof of your illness once you return to class. If you do not do both of these things, your assignment **WILL NOT** be accepted.

Please ask for clarification if you have any questions or concerns.