

JOUR 280: Introduction to Online Reporting and Production

DePaul University, College of Communication

Section 501, Class 0985, Winter Quarter 2017

Room 1130 Daley, Loop Campus, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:50 a.m.-1:20 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Jill Hopke, Assistant Professor of Journalism

Contact: jhopke@depaul.edu (*I strive to respond to emails within one business day, excluding weekends*); 312-362-7641 (office)

Office location: 1123 Daley, 14 E. Jackson, Loop Campus

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays 11 to 11:30 a.m. (*and by email appointment*)

Twitter: [@jillhopke](https://twitter.com/jillhopke) Course hashtag: #JOUR280

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jillhopke>

Course description and learning objectives

This course introduces students to the principles and practices of online journalism. Students learn both conceptual and technical skills in multimedia reporting. Although the course provides groundwork in using digital tools to produce online content, the focus is on journalism. As much as possible, assignments will allow students to grasp online journalism concepts and apply them in real-world scenarios. This class uses Chicago as a testing ground for innovative reporting ideas. *Prerequisites:* JOUR 275, JOUR 278.

Goals:

The course equips students with both conceptual and technical skills in multimedia reporting. Although the course provides groundwork in using digital tools to produce online content, the FOCUS is on journalism.

Learning Objectives:

At the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Gather information, write and edit online news,
- Use digital tools for capturing and editing audio and visual material (photo, video) in a journalistic context,
- Create, design and develop content for journalism blogs and news sites,
- Incorporate social media tools into online reporting, and
- Explain important concepts, issues and trends in online journalism.

Course materials

1) **Required text** – There is one required textbook:

Briggs, M. (2015). *Journalism Next: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing* (3rd edition). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Recommended text – There is one recommended textbook (if you don't already have a copy of the *AP Stylebook*):

AP Press. (2016). *The Associated Press Stylebook 2016*. New York: The Associated Press.

You are responsible for ensuring all of your assignments conform to proper AP style and grammar as established by the stylebook.

Note: The AP also offers a [mobile version](#) for the iOS platform (iPhone and iPad).

D2L Material – Additional recommended readings and examples of online journalism will be posted to d2l during the course under weekly “content” modules. I will also make recommendations of Lynda.com training videos to supplement in-class learning through the course. These will be announced in class but you are also expected to keep up-to-date via the d2l site.

2) **Equipment** –

Portable hard drive and headphones (*required*) – You are responsible to back-up your work. Your hard drive should be at least 16 GB.

Adobe Creative Cloud (*recommended*) – A discounted subscription for a personal computer is available to DePaul students. Details:

<http://offices.depaul.edu/is/services/Software/Pages/Software-for-Personal-Computers.aspx>

The Cage – Still and video cameras and audio recording equipment is available for checkout from “The Cage” CDM Equipment Center. See D2L for the checkout policies.

3) **Software** –

WordPress
Adobe Photoshop
Adobe Audition
SoundSlides
Adobe Premiere Pro
Mashup / online tools

Software skills are taught in the Mac OS X platform. The online technology training platform Lynda.com is available FREE for DePaul Students and provides instructional videos on the software we'll cover in class to supplement your learning, as well as others. Details on access: <http://offices.depaul.edu/is/services/technology-training/Pages/online-training.aspx>

- 4) **Daily attention to news media** – In order to be successful in this class (and as a journalist) you need to become familiar with good journalism to be able to emulate it. Get in the habit of consuming a variety of news sources of local, national and international scope on a daily basis.
- 5) **Monitor and participate on class D2L site** – Regularly check the class D2L site for updates. You will turn in your assignments via the D2L dropbox.
- 6) **Professional Twitter account** – Set-up professional Twitter account (can be a previously held account, if you choose) by second week of the quarter and tweet at least four (4) times per week through the quarter (minimum requirement) using the #JOUR280 hashtag. Follow general news sources and those specific to your beat.

Graduate assistant and lab time

JOUR 280 is a hands-on course and you can expect to spend long hours in the labs working on weekly assignments and projects. A graduate student provides technical support for the course. The GA's lab hours and the lab schedule will be posted to d2l.

Grading and assignments

The conventional 10-point letter-grade scale will be used. The specific grading scale follows the recommendation of the College of Communication: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), F (\leq 59).

Late work is not accepted. One thing is for sure in journalism and that's deadlines. All assignments will be turned-in via the class D2L site and posted to your WordPress blog.

25% of your grade comes from weekly exercises. Expect to spend significant out-of-class time each week on these hands-on weekly assignments, as well as time in the lab.

25% of your grade comes from the individual midterm project (text, photo, map).

10% of your grade comes from in-class participation, attendance and active engagement in our shared learning community. This includes in-class activities and discussions, as well as keeping-up with course material and updates on the d2l site.

5% of your grade comes from Twitter participation. I expect that you will have set-up your professional Twitter account by the second week of class and tweet at least four (4) times per week throughout the quarter (this is the minimum requirement and doesn't guarantee full credit). Aim for at least once per weekday. Interactive engagement is encouraged and expected! For your posts to "count" towards your grade you need to include the course hashtag #JOUR280.

Note: I don't require that you follow my account. I expect you to follow the course hashtag (#JOUR280). I will use this hashtag for course-related material.

35% of the grade comes from the group final project. Students will work in groups of two (2), or individually if you choose, on a final video or audio slideshow project. It is due on the first day of finals. Late work will NOT be accepted for the final project under any circumstances.

Extra credit – You have an extra credit option to work for 14 East, Good Day DePaul (TV), Radio DePaul or *The DePaulia* this quarter in an online journalism or multimedia capacity.

Your work for the class should be original reporting (not previously published or completed for another class) and if published in a student media outlet, this should be following submission for this class.

I will verify your involvement. I strongly recommend you take advantage of this opportunity to apply the skills you're learning in JOUR 280. It is worth up to a half letter grade of your final course grade. Additional extra credit *may* be available throughout the quarter.

Late work – Late work is not accepted. I will only consider exceptions to this policy in cases that are verified as excused absences by the Dean of Students Office for a "medical, mental health or personal reason." It is your responsibility to submit documentation to the Dean of Students office.

Information on the Dean of Students Office's "absence notification" policy and the form to submit to their office can be found at: <http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/absence-notification.aspx>

You are responsible to ensure your assignments work technically. Technical issues are not an acceptable excuse for late work and will lower your grade or result in a zero, in cases where an assignment is inaccessible or doesn't work technically.

If you have a personal situation affecting your performance and engagement in our class, please contact me so that I can help identify campus resources that could be of assistance.

If you have a scheduled reason for which you need to miss class on the day an assignment is due (or something that could be reasonably foreseen), it is YOUR responsibility to complete the work and submit it IN ADVANCE of the deadline.

Grading – An overview of the grading expectations is as follows:

A-level work: Very little improvement necessary to be published. Challenging and interesting story idea executed completely as requested by the assignment. The story is thorough, informative and well written. No minor grammatical, AP style or other writing errors.

B-level work: Needs a little more retouching. Good story idea, solid reporting and writing behind the product, but more time spent on story development and revision required to improve the output. Typically, needs improvement on story focus.

C-level work: Effort and promise, but much execution must be improved in multiple categories. Commonly, repeated grammatical errors, basic style errors, lack of attention to detail and/or shoddy reporting are present. Document met only basic minimum satisfactory requirements and expectations.

Unsatisfactory-level work (D or F): Very little effort was made. Instructions were not followed. Reporting incomplete or only part of assignment completed. Major revisions necessary, did not make an attempt and/or plagiarized.

Verification

You are required to provide contact information for *every* person you interview, including phone number and e-mail address. You will include a reference list with each assignment.

Failing to include contact information for each interviewee will result in a zero (0) for the assignment.

Plagiarism and academic integrity

Plagiarism means taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. You are expected to provide sources for all material that cannot be reasonably considered common knowledge (e.g. Chicago is located in IL; Chicago has two baseball teams). This includes any idea or piece of information that is not original to you. Plagiarism will result in an "F" for the assignment and for the course. It may lead to dismissal from the university.

Failing to act with academic integrity is detrimental to DePaul's values, including the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. University academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification; misuse of academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct.

Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by university officials. Furthermore, all work done for this course should comply with the University Academic Integrity Policy available in the student handbook or at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>.

Sexual harassment

This class will faithfully follow university guidelines on sexual harassment. Such behavior will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal from the university.

Writing support

The Writing Center, at the Lincoln Park and Loop campuses, is available for consultation on all aspects of writing assignments. Writing Center tutors are specially trained undergraduate and graduate students who can help at any stage of the quarter or in your process. Visit <http://www.depaul.edu/writing> for more information.

Attendance

Doing well in this class requires you to be in class and actively participate. Class attendance is mandatory, except in the case of university-authorized absences. More than two (2) absences will negatively impact your course grade. In addition, “phoning” (see below) in class will result in you being counted absent for the class period.

Your attendance and active participation are expected and required. Participation grades are factored by considering how often you participate in class and how that participation advances our overall learning (i.e., I will consider how your questions help lead us to a greater understanding of concepts and technical skills, as well as how your contributions further discussion). If you miss very few classes and your participation level is excellent, you can expect an “A” for this portion of your grade. If you miss very few classes and your participation level is above average (i.e., you participate during most class sessions rather than every class session), you can expect a “B” for this portion of your grade. If you miss very few classes and your participation level is average (i.e., you contribute sometimes or your contributions don’t elevate our thinking enough), you can expect a “C” for this portion of your grade. If you miss a significant number of class meetings and your participation level is average, you can expect a “D” for this portion of your grade.

If you miss class, please talk with me to follow-up on what you have missed.

Classroom etiquette

No *phoning* (aka, non-course related device usage) in class! It is a distraction to your classmates and disrespectful to me—the instructor—and will lower your course grade.

In the interest of supporting a focused, engaged learning community this quarter ALL devices (computers, tablets, mobile phones) are to remain in your backpacks, bags, etc. (i.e. in silenced mode, out of your hands and out of sight) throughout each class period, unless specifically required for a classroom activity. Disregarding this rule will negatively impact your grade.

For background on my rationale for banning non-classroom activity usage of electronic devices, and the ways in which multi-tasking impedes learning, please read this *Medium* piece by NYU professor Clay Shirky:

Shirky, C. (2014, Sept. 4). Why I just asked my students to put their laptops away. Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@cshirky/why-i-just-asked-my-students-to-put-their-laptops-away-7f5f7c50f368>

Professionalism

Remember that out in the Chicago community you are representing DePaul and our Journalism Program. My expectation is that you will conduct yourself appropriately and professionally wherever your reporting takes you this quarter.

Academic accommodations

Students who require accommodations for any type of disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your individual situation, it is preferable if you contact me during the first week of class. Also, make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities. They are located at (and reachable via email at csd@depaul.edu):

Lincoln Park

Center for Students with Disabilities
2250 North Sheffield Avenue - Student Center 370
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3673
773.325.1677 main phone
773.325.3720 fax
773.325.7276 TTY

Loop

Center for Students with Disabilities - Lewis Center 1420
25 East Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-2287
312.362.8002 main phone
312.362.6544 fax

On a personal note, I am hard-of-hearing and may request that you speak-up during classroom discussions, because I want to hear from you!

JOUR 280 Course Schedule (*subject to change with advance notice*):

WEEK 1 – Course Overview and Introduction to Online Journalism

Reading(s):¹

Briggs: “Introduction: Journalism is about people, not technology” and Chapter 1: “We are all Web workers now” (pp. 7-20; 32-42).

Tuesday (1/3):

Getting to know each other, course overview, review syllabus and assignments. Field trip to “The Cage” to learn about equipment available for checkout.

Core questions: Where do you go for news and information? What does it take to be a journalist today? What is “online” journalism?

Thursday (1/5):

Introduction to online journalism and crowdsourcing in reporting.

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 1:** Locate three examples “online journalism” and choose one to analysis in assignment write-up. Share examples via Twitter using #JOUR280 hashtag + one-page (~250 word) write-up due via d2l before class Tuesday, January 10.
- Fill out and turn-in Twitter handle via d2l. Due before class Tuesday, January 10.

WEEK 2 – Introduction to Blogging with WordPress Content Management System (CMS)

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 2: “Blogging and microblogging: Publish, distribute and connect” and Chapter 3: “Crowd-powered collaboration.”

Tuesday (1/10):

Blogging vs. reporting, plus workshop WordPress content management system (CMS) and students set-up WordPress blog.

DUE:

- **Exercise 1:** “Locating and Analyzing Online Journalism.”
- Turn-in filled out Twitter handle information sheet.

Thursday (1/12):

Writing and editing for online platforms and social media distribution.

¹ Please complete the assigned readings *before the Tuesday class meeting of each week* so that we can build on this material in our discussions and in-class activities.

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 2:** “WordPress CMS and Blogging.” Due via d2l before class Tuesday, January 17.

WEEK 3 – Search Engine Optimization (SEO) + Writing and Editing for Online Platforms

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 9: “Building a digital audience for news.”

Tuesday (1/17):

Search engine optimization (SEO) and how to package content for the Web, create links, tag posts, write headlines and embed photos and multimedia content.

DUE:

- **Exercise 2:** “WordPress CMS and Blogging.”

Thursday (1/19):

More on writing and editing for online platforms and social media distribution. Overview midterm project (Exercise 5).

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 3:** “Writing and Editing for Online Platforms.” Due via d2l before class on Tuesday, January 24.
- Pitch for midterm project (Exercise 5). Due via d2l before class Tuesday, January 24. Midterm project needs to be a new story idea.

WEEK 4 – Online Mapping Concepts and Tools

Reading(s):

- Briggs: Chapter 8: “Data-driven journalism and digitizing your life.”

Tuesday (1/24):

Introduction to online mapping and mashups concepts and tools. Start working in GoogleMaps.

DUE:

- **Exercise 3:** “Writing and Editing for Online Platforms.”
- Pitch for midterm project (Exercise 5) via d2l dropbox.

Thursday (1/26):

More on online mapping and practice with GoogleMaps, plus experiment with other available tools (e.g. CartoDB).

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 4:** “Mapping.” For this assignment you will use GoogleMaps using suggested Chicago-related datasets, or a dataset of your choosing that builds on your Exercise 3 topic. Due via d2l before class Tuesday, January 31.
- Work on midterm project.

WEEK 5 – Photography

Readings:

Briggs: Chapter 5: “Visual storytelling with photographs.”

Tuesday (1/31):

Introduction to digital photography and DSLR cameras.

DUE:

- **Exercise 4:** “Mapping.”

Thursday (2/2):

More on design and composition for better digital photography.

WEEK 6 – Audio Storytelling

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 6: “Making audio journalism visible.”

Tuesday (2/7):

What makes for good audio storytelling and basic skills in audio newsgathering, plus ethical considerations.

DUE:

- Midterm project (Exercise 5) is due before class via d2l.

Thursday (2/9):

More on audio journalism and introduction to Adobe Audition.

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 6:** “Audio storytelling.” Due via d2l before class on Thursday, February 16.

WEEK 7 – Audio Slide-shows and Video for Web I

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 7: “Telling stories with video.”

Tuesday (2/14):

Putting it photography and audio together in SoundSlides.

Thursday (2/16):

Introduction to digital video for online and mobile platforms. Best practices for shooting video.

DUE:

- **Exercise 6:** “Audio Storytelling.”
- Pitch for group final project.

WEEK 8 – Video for Web II

Readings:

Watch several examples from the *New York Times* video section and be prepared to discuss with colleagues in class: <http://www.nytimes.com/video>

Tuesday (2/21):

More on best practices for shooting video and practice with mobile videography for social media.

Assignments:

- **Exercise 7:** “Video for Web.” Due via d2l before class on Tuesday, February 28.

Thursday (2/23):

Workshop on editing video in Adobe Premiere Pro and uploading to Web and social platforms.

WEEK 9 – Introduction to Web Design and HTML / CSS

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 1: “We are all Web workers now” (sections on Web design, how Web pages work, HTML, CSS and XML).

Tuesday (2/28):

Introduction to best practices for Web page design, plus introduction to HTML / CSS basics.

DUE:

- **Exercise 7:** “Video for Web.”

Assignment(s):

- **Exercise 8:** “HTML / CSS.” Due via d2l before class on Tuesday, March 7.

Thursday (3/2):

Continue on HTML / CSS basics. Time to work on final projects.

WEEK 10 – Putting it All Together for Mobile and Peer Review Final Projects

Reading(s):

Briggs: Chapter 4: “Going mobile.”

Tuesday (3/7):

Mobile journalism and online interactive tools. Time to discuss and/or work on final projects.

DUE:

- **Exercise 8:** “HTML / CSS.”

Thursday (3/9):

Present group final projects and get peer review feedback. Course wrap-up, evaluations and questions for turning-in final projects.

Core questions: What will you take-away from this course? What do you wish we’d spent more/less time on? What are your thoughts on the future of “online journalism”?

FINAL PROJECTS DUE by 11:59 p.m. Monday, March 13: Turn in final reporting project via D2L dropbox by 11:59 p.m., plus post to WordPress blog. No late work will be accepted.