

# Journalism Studies – JOU 4008, Section 02C8- Summer A 2017

## Course Information

- When: Tuesday and Wednesday – Period 6 - 7 (3:30 PM - 6:15 PM); Thursday – Period 6 (3:30 PM - 4:45 PM)
- Where: Weimer 3028
- Instructor: Stephenson (Steve) Waters
- Email: [stephensonwaters@ufl.edu](mailto:stephensonwaters@ufl.edu), I will respond as soon as possible within 24 hours Monday through Friday.
- Office Hours: Because Summer A goes by so quickly, I won't be holding regular office hours. However, I will almost always be around for an hour or two before class, and I'm more than happy to meet by appointment. My office is Weimer 2041-C, on the second floor in the graduate department. If the light is on, I'm there.

## Course Description

This course is designed as a seminar on current and historical issues and trends in the media, including but not limited to: contemporary news consumption; newsonomics; social media and journalism and the rise of the Fifth Estate; the dodgy notion of journalistic objectivity; the verification of the truth in the presentation – and construction – of reality; ethics and the question whether journalism is “morally indefensible”; ethics and the constraints on truth by market, ideological, and technological forces such as advertising, the rise of sponsored (native) ads, and the filter bubble; journalism and public relations; and, finally, the future of journalism and possible solutions to ensure its survival. We will discuss issues of gender, race, religion and class that are complex, sensitive and often personal. Be prepared to join actively in analyzing course material, discussion subjects and your own views and prejudices.

This course is a seminar. You will work individually and with other students to research and prepare class assignments. You will be given extensive readings, and will be expected to take a full and active part in class discussions. Like most journalism classes, this course is about critical thinking. Be prepared to objectively analyze and talk about any issues that arise, with tolerance, respect and an open mind.

## Course Objectives

Here is my hope for this course: That it will help you become knowledgeable and literate about journalism and the media (and notice I make a distinction here). That it will help you:

1. Become educated – and alert – consumers of journalism and media.
2. Hone your critical thinking skills to (1) distinguish between evidence and belief and (2) make connections across seemingly disparate events and contrary contentions.
3. Become knowledgeable media industry researchers. A solid understanding about how journalism and the media work and influence society will hold you in good stead in whatever career field you enter. This course will also help those pursuing advanced degrees to begin understanding research methods.

4. Learn about the connections between the media and economics in the changing world of media and media-business models.
5. To understand the vital function of journalists in a democratic society, and how that role has developed. One problem here in the digital age is how do you define a journalist?
6. Understand the ethical norms that are the fundament of journalism and how the disruption of the digital age is shaking that foundation.
7. To understand how the journalism business model is evolving
8. To understand the sociological and economic factors that have forever changed – and continue to change – journalism.

## Course Structure

Most classes will consist of case studies and discussion, video or audio, lecture material, classroom presentations by students, weekly essays, topic discussions led by a student discussion leader, and one assigned paper.

## Required Texts and Equipment

- No required text (you're welcome).
- Bring a laptop or tablet to class, but **keep it closed** unless we need it for class activity.
- Assigned required readings to include, at times, videos and audios. (See schedule below)

## Other Course Management Issues

**Accommodation for disabilities:** Please let me know immediately if you have any kind of problem or disability that would hinder your work in this course. I will do my best to help you. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> as early in the semester as possible. The center will provide documentation so appropriate accommodations can be made. The center is in Reid Hall [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/drc/Reid\\_Construction\\_Map\\_2.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/drc/Reid_Construction_Map_2.pdf), 352-392-8565 (877-983-3326 Toll Free).

**Late assignments:** No assignment can be late under any circumstances. Work turned in late will not be accepted unless you have a legitimate and documented excuse.

**Common courtesy:** For heaven's sake, turn off your cell phone! Please also observe other rules of common courtesy, such as not speaking to your classmates (or yourself) when others are making a presentation, not falling asleep in class, not scrolling the Web, etc.

**Be Good:** And I have to say this as part of our contract: You need to conduct yourself in a courteous manner both in and out of class when it comes to dealing with fellow students or your instructor. That means any rude, obstructive or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated, and manifestations of same will mean your ouster from the class. I have a zero-tolerance policy on this. Here is a link to the UF Counseling and Wellness Center <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/default.aspx>. The Center is located at 3190 Radio Road and the phone number for Appointments & After-Hour Assistance is 352-392-1575.

**U Matter, We Care:** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member

of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

**Syllabus Changes:** The instructor reserves the right to alter, with notification, the syllabus or course schedule as the need arises. This might include the latest research and readings from popular literature and the possibility of guest speakers and special presentations, some of which may be scheduled outside of class time.

**CAVEAT:** At times a class such as this will deal with controversial topics, so be warned words that may be considered offensive or ideological may be spoken in the context of subjects we are discussing. Despite what those higher-ed bashers on the left and right say, as a teacher I have no political or social agenda, so do not try to answer in a way you believe might comport with what I want to hear or read. Feel free to advocate any position as long as you remain respectful of others' opinions, and always be able to defend your point of view. There is nothing I dislike more than unevidenced assertions that often begin with "Well, in my opinion ... ."

## On Writing & Research

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:** For the communications professional, there hardly exists a graver crime than plagiarizing another writer's work. In short, it is YOUR responsibility to make certain you understand what constitutes plagiarism and to ensure that you give proper credit any time you draw on someone else's writing. When in doubt, always cite. I will run work through a plagiarism detector.

- You are required to read both the UF Academic Honesty policy <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx#honesty>
- and the Journalism Department's Academic Honesty document
- Do not rely on what you think you've learned before. Prof. Mindy McAdams has put together an excellent guide: <http://www.macloo.com/cheat/index.htm>.
- If you're still not certain you understand what's acceptable and what isn't, check out this oft-cited website: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
- If you have questions, ASK ME! There's no penalty for asking questions, but the penalties for plagiarism are severe, including dismissal from the program.
- Treat Internet sources like any other book, journal article or other print source. Make CERTAIN you copy down citation information when you copy material from a website, EVEN if you're paraphrasing.
- DO NOT turn in to me ANY work you previously have submitted to another instructor or that you plan to submit for any other class at UF or any other institution. If you want to write on a topic you have worked on before, that might be acceptable IF you discuss it with me and get permission IN ADVANCE.
- Finally, all students are bound by the university's Honor Code Policy at <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code> **Anyone who**

**violates these policies in this course will receive a failing grade in this course and face further sanctions from the college and university.**

## Class Participation & Attendance

**Participation:** Since this is a capstone course, students are expected to attend every class and to participate in class discussions. You are expected to play an active part in shaping this course and keeping it focused on the broad objectives. Obviously, this means you are expected to attend class regularly, to be in the classroom by the time class begins, to contribute to identifying relevant readings and other resources, and to participate meaningfully in class discussions. In addition to being physically present in class, I expect you to be mentally present. That means you will NOT be texting, emailing or using your laptop or phone to Web-surf, work on assignments for another class or interact with any social networking site during class time. Unless there's a specific need for someone in the class to get online, leave your laptop closed and your phones turned off during class. Again, students are expected to participate in class discussions. Windy verbosity with no point and hushed passivity will not go unnoticed and will figure in your grade. Try to find the balance.

**Here is part of how I also think about and evaluate your class participation re discussion:**

- You add significant, insightful content to each class discussion. But you do not dominate the conversation.
- You speak from time to time, but look for more opportunities to add to our discussions.
- Your perspective is important and makes up a significant part of your grade. I'd like to hear more from you!

**Attendance:** Excuses for absences must be legitimate – and I need to see evidence for why you missed class and then I will decide it is legitimate. More than one absence will affect your final grade. **Students will receive a failing grade for missing 3 or more classes without a legitimate excuse.** Excused absences include documented medical excuses and religious observances (with advance notice). **Please contact me before class.** University-approved absences must be documented (in advance, if for an approved university activity) according to official university policy. Obtaining written verification for an excused absence is your responsibility, as is arranging to complete any missed work. If you cannot be in class, please send me an email to that effect. That is the professional thing to do. Not doing so is rude and disrespectful.

## Assignments

### Discussion Leader Presentations

Assigned groups – or individuals depending on size of class – will offer the rest of class a primer on the readings for the class. The primer should include **a one- to two-page worksheet** for each fellow student summarizing readings. Discussion leaders will need to do additional readings on their topics and prepare materials for the class to discuss. You can draw from the assigned readings, from previous lectures and/or discussions, from the lists of recommended readings, and from your own readings in journalism.

Creativity will be rewarded here. The discussion will take place near the beginning of class. You have no more than 1 hour. Use a PowerPoint presentation and come in early to set up. And make sure it is in a readable style and that you follow the 10-20-30 rule. Expect the instructor to jump in and contribute to the discussion. Organization and Presentation will weigh heavily in your grade.

#### Discussion Questions

For each class meeting, you must bring two to three **written (typed)** questions about the readings to use in class discussion. These questions must be submitted to me at the end of class for credit. You can use these questions to help you during class discussions. If you are the discussion leader that day, you do not need to submit written questions.

#### Reaction Essays

Reaction Essays of at least three pages (double-spaced) dealing with readings of the previous week will be due at the start of class the following week. (So, for example, Week 1 reaction essays are due on May 16). Your essays are your way of intellectually struggling with the material. Essentially, I do not want to see an essay that is **description only** and fails to offer analysis and to leap off from the readings into a brief discussion reflecting critical thinking, creative ruminations, and some interpretations about the subject matter of the week. I also believe, at heart, that editing oneself is the key to good writing, so a reaction essay that is poorly written and/or edited can garner a grade of zero or slightly better depending on the degree of the failures of writing and/or editing.

Your essay should be about the essence of the assigned readings/screenings in which you also respond to any questions I might ask. This is followed by your explorations of the texts and would include your own experiences if relevant, lecture material – take notes – and anything you have read earlier both inside and outside class that would help inform your essay. Critical thinking is making connections. This needs to reflect your deep thinking about the readings. Points off for being superficial or perfunctory; overly long, complex, and convoluted; or redundant to fill space. Sometimes you will need to do some research to respond fully on these essays. **Note:** At times I might ask individual students to offer a summary of their essay in class. **Format:** 12 pt. Times-Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.

#### Specifically, here is a general rubric for the essays:

- **10 points:** Exceptional. The essay is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. The entry reflects in-depth engagement with the topic.
- **8 points:** Satisfactory. The essay is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The entry reflects moderate engagement with the topic.
- **6 points:** Underdeveloped. The essay is mostly description or summary, and contains few connections between ideas. The entry reflects passing engagement with the topic.
- **4 point:** Limited. The essay is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays no evidence of engagement with the topic.
- **2 to 0 points:** No Credit. The essay is missing or consists of disconnected sentences?

## Paper Draft Presentation

At about midway through the semester, you and your partner will present to the class what you have done so far in terms of your final project. This is an opportunity to receive feedback from the instructor and the rest of class.

**Presentation format:** Use a readable PowerPoint presentation and follow the 10-20-30 rule. You should have 10 slides, you should take no more than 20 minutes, and all slides should employ a readable 30-point font. Organization and Presentation will weigh heavily in your grade. In other words: Were handouts and outlines used? Were they helpful? Were you articulate and professional? Were audio-visual aids used appropriately? Were you well-versed in the topic? Does the presentation have a clear, well-focused introduction, a solid middle, and a convincing conclusion? Is it audience centered, e.g. good eye contact, clear diction, and meant to be heard, not read? Did you generate discussion and answer questions?

**Objective:** The purpose of this presentation is to: (1) Encourage you to focus on your topic and eliminate the extraneous. (2) Impel you to think on your feet. (3) Develop your skills at oral presentation – a skill required of nearly every career field. (4) Hone your skills at PowerPoint Presentations.

## Portfolio-Quality Final Paper Proposal and Presentation

### Portfolio-Quality Final Paper

Teams of 2 will write a final paper. It will be a 15-page paper on an issue surrounding media management and/or the future of the media industry. Consider this a **White Paper**. This paper is intended to explore trends, problems, challenges, and even solutions using examples and evidence from many situations and perspectives. Papers will be graded on the quality of the conceptualization of variables and the soundness of key points. **Note:** All writing is an argument to one degree or another. And arguments require evidence – not airy assertions. Because the paper should be of professional quality, grammar also matters. The paper should have a minimum of 15 citations from academic journals and additional citations from other media sources – all in a recognized style.

## Grading

Activity	Percentage
1. Class Participation & Attendance	10% (100 points)
2. Class Questions	10% (100 points)
4. Discussion Leader Presentations	10% (100 points)
5. Reaction Essays – 20 points each (Includes Assignment 1)	20% (200 points)
6. Draft Paper Proposal & Presentation	10% (100 points)
11. Final Paper Presentation	10% (100 points)
12. Portfolio-Quality Final Paper	30% (300 points)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (1000 points)</b>

**Note:** There is no final exam.

## Final Grades Based on These Standard Break-Points

A	936+	B-	800-835	D+	671-699
A-	900-935	C+	771-799	D	636-670
B+	871-899	C	736-770	D-	600-635
B	836-870	C-	700-735	E	599 or lower

## Tentative schedule

### Week 1

#### **CLASS 1: 5/9 – Introductions, Intro to op-eds, polemics and news coverage.**

##### **READINGS FOR CLASS 2:**

- Read NYT's READERS' GUIDE  
<http://www.nytimes.com/content/help/site/readerguide/guide.html>
- Read NYT'S The Blur Between Analysis and Opinion  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/13/opinion/13pubed.html>
- Read A DEFENCE OF POLEMICS  
<https://nickcohen.net/2007/06/14/time-out-essential-polemics/>

#### **CLASS 2: 5/10 – Discussion of readings and upcoming assignment**

- **Discussion of readings**
- **John Oliver on journalism**
- **ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS 3:** Choose a polemical article or op-ed AND a straight news piece on the same topic published in the past week and compare and contrast them in a 1-page paper (single-spaced) due 5/11 before or at the beginning of class. Be prepared to discuss your ideas in class.

#### **CLASS 3: 5/11 – Discussion of news stories chosen for analysis**

- Sign-up form for class discussion leading.
- Discussion of assignments and previous week's readings.
- **CLASS 3 ASSIGNMENT DUE**

##### **READINGS FOR CLASS 4:**

- Journalism Essentials – Read all links:  
<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/>
- Theories of Journalism  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/r8jcoxz5uezwkys/Theories%20of%20JournalismLinked.pdf?dl=0>
- Normative theories of journalism  
<https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/006/246/Benson%20Normative%20Theories.pdf>

- The Marketplace of Ideas by Robert Schmuhl and Robert G Picard from The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/xto2oewyfsbbkx8/The%20Marketplace%20of%20Ideas%20-%20Linked.pdf?dl=0>

## Week 2

### **CLASS 4: 5/16 – Elements, Theories & Functions of Journalism**

- **REACTION ESSAY 1 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 4: \_\_\_\_\_
- **READINGS FOR CLASS 5:**
- Objectivity in Journalism Has Some Serious Pitfalls  
<http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2016/04/objectivity-journalism-has-some-serious-pitfalls>
- The Truth About ‘False Balance’  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/11/public-editor/the-truth-about-false-balance.html>
- The Crisis at The Times And That Public Editor Piece  
<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/the-crisis-at-the-times-and-that-public-editor-piece>
- Objectivity Norm in American Journalism (on Canvas)
- Hunter S. Thompson on Objectivity  
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/07/18/hunter-s-thompson-journalism-politics/>

### **CLASS 5: 5/17 – False Balance-False Equivalency-Objectivity**

- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 5: \_\_\_\_\_
- **READINGS FOR CLASS 6**
- How to Spot Bullshit: A Primer by Princeton Philosopher Harry Frankfurt  
<http://www.openculture.com/2016/05/how-to-spot-bullshit-a-primer-by-princeton-philosopher-harry-frankfurt.html>
- The Baloney Detection Kit: Carl Sagan’s Rules for Bullshit-Busting and Critical Thinking  
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/01/03/baloney-detection-kit-carl-sagan/>
- How to recognize a fake news story [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/fake-news-guide-facebook\\_us\\_5831c6aae4b058ce7aaba169](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/fake-news-guide-facebook_us_5831c6aae4b058ce7aaba169)
- The lost meaning of 'objectivity' <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/lost-meaning-objectivity/>
- Objectivity and the decades-long shift from “just the facts” to “what does it mean?”  
<http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/05/objectivity-and-the-decades-long-shift-from-just-the-facts-to-what-does-it-mean/>

- “He Said, She Said Journalism: Lame Formula in the Land of the Active User,”  
<http://pressthink.org/2009/04/he-said-she-said-journalism-lame-formula-in-the-land-of-the-active-user/>

#### **CLASS 6: 5/18 – Objectivity & The Presentation of Reality**

- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 6: \_\_\_\_\_
- **READINGS FOR CLASS 7**
- Civic journalism (also known as public journalism) is the idea of integrating journalism into the democratic process. The media not only informs the public, but it also works towards engaging citizens and creating public debate. This movement arose in earnest in the 1990s. Wikipedia gives a solid roundup of the movement:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic\\_journalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civic_journalism)
- On the Relevance of Standpoint Epistemology to the Practice of Journalism: The Case for “Strong Objectivity” (On Canvas).
- Journalism and the Public Interest by Daniel Schorr excerpted from The Institutions of American Democracy: The Press  
<http://niemanreports.org/articles/journalism-and-the-public-interest/>
- A Brief History of Public Journalism (On Canvas)

#### Week 3

#### **CLASS 7: 5/23 – Journalism & the Public Interest**

- **REACTION ESSAY 2 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 7: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **CLASS 8: 5/24 – Paper Draft Presentations**

**CLASS 9: 5/25 – NO CLASS. Instructor at a conference. Use this time to work on your final papers.**

- **READINGS FOR CLASS 10:**
- Need a refresher on media ethics? Wikipedia has some useful information.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_ethics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_ethics)
- Three Essays on Journalism and Virtue (On Canvas)
- Why We Need a Radical New Framework for Media Ethics  
<http://mediashift.org/2015/08/why-we-need-a-radical-new-framework-for-media-ethics/>
- Paul Johnson’s Ten Commandments for a More Moral Media  
<http://jacklimpert.com/2016/06/ten-commandments-for-a-more-moral-media/>
- CAJ Ethics Committee: Sponsored content craze not journalism <http://www.j-source.ca/article/caj-ethics-committee-sponsored-content-craze-not-journalism>

- The Independent's hiring writers to do both native ads and edit content  
<http://digiday.com/uk/independent-building-native-ad-team-tapping-journalists/>

## Week 4

### **CLASS 10: 5/30 – Ethics of Journalism – Legacy & Digital**

- **REACTION ESSAY 3 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 10: \_\_\_\_\_

### **READINGS FOR CLASS 11**

- The Enduring Whiteness of the American Media  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/25/enduring-whiteness-of-american-journalism>
- Why Journalism Has a Rural Diversity Challenge  
<http://mediashift.org/2016/11/journalism-rural-diversity-challenge/>
- Most blacks and Hispanics think the media does not cover their ethnic community well  
<https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/publications/reports/survey-research/african-american-and-hispanic-perceptions-coverage/>
- What Happened When I Pushed Myself to Interview More Women  
[https://motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/what-happened-when-i-pushed-myself-to-interview-more-women](https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/what-happened-when-i-pushed-myself-to-interview-more-women)

### **CLASS 11: 5/31 – Diversity (& Its Relationship to Objectivity)**

- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 11: \_\_\_\_\_

### **READINGS FOR CLASS 12**

- Inside Churnalism PR, journalism and power relationships in flux (On Canvas)
- How P.R. Is Killing Journalism <http://www.takepart.com/feature/2015/02/13/pr-jobs-journalism-jobs/>
- Writing about think tanks and using their research: A cautionary tip sheet  
<https://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/think-tanks-writing-research-journalists>
- 'We are professional manipulators' - PR pros, are we lying to ourselves?  
<http://www.prweek.com/article/1359922/we-professional-manipulators-pr-pros-lying-ourselves>

### **CLASS 12: 6/1 – The Problem of Journalism v. PR**

- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 12: \_\_\_\_\_

### **READINGS FOR CLASS 13**

- At the Minneapolis Star Tribune, a newsroom that's gone from surviving to thriving  
<http://www.poynter.org/2016/at-the-minneapolis-star-tribune-a-newsroom-thats-gone-from-surviving-to-thriving/434478/>

- This is a useful collection of links and diagrams on what a 21st century newsroom might look like <https://onlinejournalismblog.com/21st-century-newsroom/>
- Community: A New Business Model for News  
<http://niemanreports.org/articles/community-a-new-business-model-for-news/>
- Journalism Partnerships: A New Era of Interest  
<http://www.journalism.org/2014/12/04/journalism-partnerships/>
- Journalism isn't dying. But it's changing WAY faster than most people understand.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/04/18/journalism-isnt-dying-but-its-changing-way-faster-than-most-people-understand/>

## Week 5

### **CLASS 13: 6/6 – Seeking Solutions**

- **REACTION ESSAY 4 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS**
- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 13: \_\_\_\_\_

### **READINGS FOR CLASS 14**

- Hierarchy of Influences (On Canvas)
- Shifting Circles: Reconceptualizing Shoemaker and Reese's Theory of a Hierarchy of Influences on Media Content for a Newer Media Era  
<https://www.scripps.ohiou.edu/wjmcr/vol29/29.html>
- 113 Journalists Surveyed on Why They're So Despised  
<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/07/media-survey.html?mid=twitter-share-di>

### **CLASS 14: 6/7 – Influences & Constraints on Journalism**

- Discussion leader for Readings for Class 14: \_\_\_\_\_

**CLASS 15: 6/8 – NO CLASS. Use this time to work on your final papers.**

## Week 6

**CLASS 16: 6/13 – Final paper presentations.**

**CLASS 17: 6/14 – Final paper presentations.**

**CLASS 18: 6/15 – FINAL PAPERS DUE.**