

Course: Scholarship in Journalism, JOU4930
Time/place: WEIM 3020, Tuesday at 10:40-11:30
Instructor: Kristine Crane
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Office hours: by appointment

About the course: This will be a crash course in scholarship, focused on how journalists can use scholarship and some tools of scholars in telling stories. We'll talk about the basics of scholarship and research, translating scholarship for stories, interviewing scholars and researchers, and developing story ideas that use scholarship. We will also read authors who weave scholarship into their nonfiction and journalism. Finally, we will take a look at how media scholars study the media and how their work informs journalistic practice.

About me: I worked as a journalist in Italy and in Washington D.C. and Florida, mainly covering health and science. I worked for U.S. News & World Report and received the Sunshine State Award for health reporting in 2014. I'm currently a fourth-year Ph.D. student in the CJC, where I do qualitative and critical cultural research, with a focus on feminist methodology. I'm also a published essayist and poet, and have an MFA in nonfiction from Pacific University. Other degrees are from Northwestern University (history and Italian) and Columbia University (science reporting). I'm excited to navigate the world of scholarship from inside the trenches—for the purpose of telling good stories.

Course objectives

In this course, we will:

- Learn the basic language and purpose of scholarship
- Learn the tools of qualitative research
- Learn how to translate studies into story
- Learn how to interview scientists and scholars
- Learn useful tools of research for journalism (interviewing techniques)
- Learn how to develop story ideas based in scholarship
- Read authors who use scholarship in their reporting and writing
- Understand how media scholars study journalism and how that could help journalists
- Craft one long-form piece—reported essay or narrative nonfiction article—that uses scholarship

Course Policies

Attendance & participation

- Your attendance and participation are crucial to you getting the most out of the course. It's a short course, so every minute matters!

- Please do the assigned readings before class and be prepared to discuss them. It's better if you can print them out and bring them to class, but laptop is also fine.
- Please bring a notebook and pen to every class.
- Excused absences include family emergencies, illness, jury duty, military service and professional conferences where you are presenting work, speaking on a panel, or accepting an award. Please document such cases and submit documentation to instructor.
- Regardless of the reasons for being absent, a student who misses too many classes risks not mastering the coursework. In such a case, he or she may be withdrawn from the course per UF policy:

UF Attendance Policies — <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Inclusivity and Respectfulness

- This is an inclusive environment, so please listen mindfully to each other as you provide and receive feedback. Exposure to different perspectives, values, ideals and experiences through story will make us all better, more compassionate and understanding writers and thinkers.
- Ask questions freely.
- Please respect deadlines.

Readings: The instructor will provide all readings in photocopied form on Canvas. Readings will be kept short but interesting. Tentative readings include excerpts from the following:

- “Theory as Liberatory Practice,” by bell hooks
- “Why Everyone Feels Like They’re Faking It,” by Leslie Jamison
- “How to Read a Book,” by Edward N. Edwards
- “What is Qualitative Research?” by Sharan Merriam
- “Designing a Qualitative Study,” by Joseph Maxwell
- “Interviewing Planning and Design” by Sarah Tracy
- “The Foundations of Social Research,” by Michael Crotty
- The Beak of the Finches and My Brother’s Keeper, by Jonathan Weiner
- Story Craft: The Complete Guide to Writing Narrative Nonfiction, and Word Craft: The Complete Guide to Clear, Powerful Writing, by Jack Hart
- Girlhood, by Melissa Febos
- Touched Out: Motherhood, Misogyny, Consent and Control, by Amanda Montei
- The Body: A Guide for Occupants, by Bill Bryson
- Don’t Kill the Birthday Girl: Tales from an Allergic Life, by Sandra Beasley

Grading: Fifty percent of your grade will come from the final project. The other fifty percent will be equally divided between class participation and short, weekly assignments.

Assignments:

Final paper: A 1,500-3,000-word piece of narrative nonfiction, or reported essay, on a topic that is either based in scholarship, or uses elements of scholarship (studies, expert interviews, etc.) You'll have the opportunity to submit a rough draft (highly encouraged) for instructor and peer feedback.

Translation: Provide a brief (500-750-word) translation of an academic study that interests you. Your translation must demonstrate that: you read the entire study, not just the abstract; that you understood the study; and that you can put the study's design and findings in your own words.

Interview guide: Write a list of interview questions for the researcher of your study.

Story pitch (100-250 words): Write a brief pitch as if pitching an editor, about an in-depth article or reported essay that you'd like to write, which uses scholarship.

Reflective Memo (500-750 words): Write a research memo, often called a self-reflexivity statement, which shows how you are engaging with, or invested in your story topic, specifically the elements of scholarship in it.

Reading log: Pick an author whom you admire (either from our reading in this class or elsewhere) and reflect on how the author is using scholarship in story—and anything else that you like about the writing and storytelling craft!

Media scholar question: Develop a question about journalist practice or an issue that you think is either overlooked or covered poorly in the media, for a media scholar to study.

Schedule (subject to slight changes)

Week 1: Introductions to course and each other

Week 2: What is research? What is scholarship?

Week 3: How to read/translate scholarship

Week 4: How to interview scholars/researchers

Week 5: How journalists can use qualitative research interview methods

Week 6: Getting back to story: choosing topics worthy of deep inquiry

Week 7: Doing background research for stories (guest lecturer April Hines)

Week 8: The role of self-reflection in research

Week 9: Reading writers who use scholarship, part 1: reported essays and narrative nonfiction

Week 10: Spring break

Week 11: Reading writers who use scholarship part 2: book-length works

Week 12: Media studies: what does it mean to study the media?

Week 13: Critical cultural methodology: critiquing the media as an institution of power

Week 14: Using media scholarship to shape journalism

Week 15: Story exchange (reading each other's rough drafts)

Week 16: Wrap-up and revision/editing

Final projects due on the Tuesday of finals week