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JRNL 433.01: Marketing Your Work

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Journalism 433 Marketing Your Work

"No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money." – Samuel Johnson

Meets Wednesdays, 3:40 to 5:30, in DAH 316

Instructor

Joe Eaton
DAH 409
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Office Hours

Monday and Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
And by appointment

Course Description

To succeed in media, it's sometimes necessary to go it alone. A certain type of journalist has always taken to freelancing, both out of a desire to be their own boss and the freedom to work on the stories they care about. Rather than toiling at the mercy of newsroom management, the freelancer is a lone wolf who most often sells work by the piece. It's about freedom and independence and a ton of hard work. But increasingly, being able to go it alone (either during stints between jobs or as a career) has become a financial imperative.

While many traditional career opportunities exist for journalists, the market is rapidly changing. Much has been made of the impact of changes in the media landscape to job security, and those drawbacks are real. Much has also been made of the future of journalism and the unique opportunities that exist for journalists to shape how news will look (and be paid for) in the coming decades. Those opportunities are equally real, and you should be excited to take advantage of them.

This class will focus on entrepreneurial journalism, the business of going it alone, with lessons ranging from making it as an old-style freelancer to launching media and commercial start-ups. Think of it as a weekly discussion on creative ways to put the skills you have gained in journalism school to work for profit. And make no mistake, interviewing, writing and making photographs and video can be highly profitable. But to take advantage of the opportunities, you'll need to think like a business school graduate

as much as a journalist. This class aims to help you begin doing just that.

We will concentrate on learning to write effective pitches, how to market yourself and best business practices including developing a budget, negotiating contracts, writing invoices and managing your taxes. Our time will be split between lectures and discussions. There will be lots of great reading, often by people who have figured out how to make independent journalism pay. And there will be a number of guest speakers – most of whom work for themselves as freelance writers, photographers and independent producers. We will also hear from speakers who have set up independent businesses doing commercial work. Most of the speakers will visit via Skype.

This class will succeed or fail based on your engagement and participation. Students are expected to engage in deep reading (and thinking) between each session. The class is large, so I look forward to excellent participation and intriguing discussions.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will feel confident working at some level as an entrepreneurial journalist. You will also:

- Learn to research and write a salable pitch for specific markets.
- Learn to research media organizations in order to effectively pitch.
- Identify and secure alternative funding for journalistic work.
- Learn to use journalism skills in commercial settings.
- Learn to negotiate a contract and invoice for work.
- Learn to market your work and your business.
- Learn to promote your work using social media and other tools.
- Learn how to turn your start-up idea into a business.
- Learn to develop a budget and manage your expenses and taxes.

Class Structure

Class will consist of lectures and discussion. In addition, we will have a number of guest speakers. There is also potential requirement to attend outside events.

Grading

Participation: 25 percent. (This means attending class prepared with reading completed and participating *in a thoughtful way* in class discussion and group work.)

Assignments and in-class work: 40 percent

Final project: 35 percent

All writing for this class must be original. As stated in the University of Montana Student Conduct Code, you may not submit for this course any assignment that you have submitted or will submit for another class or publication unless you receive prior approval from me. To do so without permission will result in an F for the assignment and could result in an F for the course. You may not recycle pieces previously written for publication. You must be able to identify the sources of all information you use. Upon request, you must provide story notes and contact information for all sources. Published stories will win the reporter 100 percent on the assignment.

Rules of integrity. Cheating will not be tolerated. All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

Plagiarism. Submitted work *must* be entirely original; you may not copy or borrow phrasing or sentence structure, unless you attribute clearly. *If you are uncertain about what is or is not appropriate, ask me.* Submitting the work of someone else as your own is a serious violation of journalistic ethics and the University of Montana Student Conduct Code. An act of plagiarism will result in an F for the course and possible disciplinary sanction by the university.

Collaborative efforts. Discussing stories among colleagues often helps you generate better story ideas, work through reporting challenges and improve your reporting and writing. Feel free to discuss your ideas and writing and seek feedback from other people. But the writing for this class must be your own.

Texts

All reading will be distributed in class and/or placed on Moodle.

Deadlines

Journalism is deadline-driven. A late assignment is a failed assignment. In rare instances involving documentable extenuating circumstances, such as hospitalization, I may grant an extension or make an alternative assignment.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. [Disability Services for Students](http://life.umt.edu/dss) (<http://life.umt.edu/dss>) will assist in the accommodation process.