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JRNL 105X.80: Global Current Events

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JRNL 105X Global Current Events

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m-10:50 p.m., in DAH 210

Instructor

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406-243-6825

Office Hours

Tu-Th 11 a.m. – 12 p.m in DAH 409
Or by appointment

Course description

If you're not already a news junkie, this class aims to turn you into one. By the end of the semester, you'll be confident that when you point to Iran on a map you won't hit Iraq by accident. You will be conversant in international news, know what Brexit represents and understand why the world is watching countries like North Korea, Ukraine and Pakistan.

The skills and information you learn in Global Current Events will inform how you understand the world around you. You will connect the dots between seemingly unrelated events, track stories that will let you chime in when talk turns to politics and explore how journalists cover international developments. Your knowledge of other cultures will expand as you learn about the historical, socioeconomic and geostrategic forces behind today's news.

The Economist magazine will be our required textbook. I will distribute a fresh copy each week in class and assign a dozen or more articles to read from each issue.

The readings will be the focus of weekly quizzes and class discussion. They require a substantial commitment of time and attention on your part, but will get easier to grasp as you become familiar with the issues and the writing style.

By Thursday, January 17, please bring to class a personal check or money order for \$30 made out to UM Foundation/Journalism. This will buy you (at a student discount) one Economist magazine each week for the semester. They come to me in a box and I will hand them out in class, and you will also receive log in info for the digital version.

Course Structure

On Tuesdays, class will typically include a 10-question quiz on that week's reading and the presentation from the previous week. Most quizzes will include questions about maps, so please pay attention to any maps included in the readings, or those we discuss in class. The quiz will be followed by a brief discussion of the quiz questions and a review of information from the week before. Occasionally, time will also be set aside for presentation team meetings and dress rehearsals.

On Thursdays, a class presentation will examine an event or trend in the news. It will consider the historical, social, economic and cultural forces behind the issue and a vocabulary for discussing it. Presentations will introduce the current cast of characters and provide a sense of what may happen in the near future. There will be time after each presentation for discussion.

Teams of students will each prepare and present a 45-minute presentations on a predetermined topic. Teams will meet with me individually as they develop presentations.

It is essential you meet all deadlines associated with your presentation. Your teammates depend on you getting your work to them on time and in good shape. Your classmates in the audience – and you – deserve a top-notch presentation each week. Once deadlines are established, for each day a deadline is missed your grade will be reduced by one letter grade increment. For example, a B will become a B-, then a C+, C, C-.

At first, I (along with guests) will give the presentations. But by the sixth week of class or so, you will take over. Teams and topics will be chosen/assigned on Jan. 17, when you will also receive detailed guidelines on how to succeed as a team and as a member of a team.

Student presentations are a major emphasis of this class. Focused and thorough, they should demonstrate the ability of each individual to be a responsible and responsive team member.

Learning outcomes

Successful students in this class will:

- Understand a wide range of contemporary global news stories.
- Discuss global geography and how it affects regional conflicts.
- Know the names and background of global leaders who appear in the news.
- Articulate common factors linking otherwise disparate global conflicts.
- Recognize how geostrategic forces affect different segments of society differently, including the poor, minorities, women and children.
- Improve their ability to work as part of a team.
- Report, produce or present an in-depth study of a current global issue.

Assessment

Weekly quizzes, two exams and a team presentation help determine whether students have achieved the learning goals. All quizzes and exams are closed book.

- A quiz will be given most weeks on Tuesdays. It will mostly cover the reading, with one or two questions drawn from the previous week's presentation. Quiz grades will be averaged; the lowest quiz score will be dropped.
- The midterm exam will be administered Tuesday March 10, during regular class time. It will cover material in presentations to that date. (There will be no quiz that week.)
- The final exam date will be announced. It will cover all presentations, with an emphasis on those given after the midterm.
- Your presentation grade will be based 50 percent on my assessment and 50 percent on the assessment of your peers and teammates.

Grading

Quizzes: 25 percent

Class Presentation: 30 percent

Midterm: 15 percent

Final: 15 percent

Discussion and Participation: 15 percent

The grading scale is:

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	0-59

Professionalism

Journalism is competitive and collaborative; you must act professionally at all times to succeed. What's true for the newsroom is true for this classroom:

- Don't be late.
- Mute your mobile devices during class and abstain from using them during class.
- Laptops and tablets may be used for note taking only during class. You are responsible for paying attention in class. If I notice that you are online during the session, it will affect your grade for class participation.
- Notify me in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- Unexcused absences and showing up late will negatively affect your grade.
- If you are uncommunicative or uncooperative in scheduling or meeting with classmates it will severely and negatively affect your presentation grade.
- Missing one third of classes (10 of 30) will automatically result in failing the course regardless of why you missed class.

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](#) will assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process.

After Hours Access to Don Anderson Hall

Don Anderson Hall is open 8am-5pm Monday-Friday. Students requiring after hours access to Don Anderson Hall should [sign up here](#).

Academic Honesty

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](#).