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### JRNL 411.80: Reporting Native News Honors Project

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# Native News Honors Project J410/411

Spring 2019 • M 3:30-5:20 p.m./W 3:30-4:20 p.m. • Rooms: DAH 301/210

## JRNL 410 • J620

### Jeremy Lurgio

Office: DAH 434 Phone: 243-2601

E-mail: [jeremy.lurgio@umontana.edu](mailto:jeremy.lurgio@umontana.edu)

Office Hours: Mon. 11:15-12:30, Tues. 3-4  
by appointment

## JRNL 411 • J620

### Jason Begay

Office: DAH 410 Phone: 243-2191

E-mail: [jason.begay@umontana.edu](mailto:jason.begay@umontana.edu)

Office Hours: Mon., Wed. 12-1 p.m.  
or by appointment

## INTRODUCTION

You have been selected to participate in Native News Honors Project because you are among the school's best students. As such, we expect you will be intelligent and aggressive in researching story ideas and proposing stories that are unique and that show or tell readers about people whose lives illustrate an important issue in the Native American community.

We're confident in your abilities to research, write, photograph, produce and design. This is your chance to put that to work in a project with major scope. We'll be your coaches and editors, as will your partner and peers.

## EXPECTATIONS

- ***Attendance at each class***

We'll meet together twice a week to share story ideas, learn from experts and get progress reports. Many meetings outside class will take place with your partner, your editor and one or both of the professors. Later in the semester reporters/editors and photographers/designers will meet separately.

- ***Solid research***

Know where your story is going. Know everything you can about the topic before you do your first interview. Document your facts. Share your ideas.

- ***Consistent work***

Don't neglect your work and try to whip this story out in a week. Though you'll have only a few deadlines, you must work consistently to meet them.

- ***Class participation***

You'll need to come to class each week prepared to discuss the status of your story idea or coverage. You'll also need to prepare yourself to make helpful suggestions about the projects other reporters and photographers are working on.

- ***Teamwork***

You'll be assigned a partner (reporter or photographer) and an assigning editor. All members of the team are equally responsible for research, story ideas and coverage. Never move ahead on a story without consultation with the other member of your team and your assigning editor.

- ***Adherence to deadlines***

This is crucial. The project must be completed by the last day of final exams. This project publishes in one of the state's newspapers and must be finished on deadline. That means reporters and photographers must have their stories and photographs in by the deadline. You must leave adequate time for the editors to line-edit or photo-edit, for the designers to design the pages and website. **If you don't meet deadlines, your grade will be severely affected.**

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Work as part of an editorial team that produces an in-depth project about issues in the Native American community.
- To collaborate with a writer or photographer in producing a compelling project.
- Research and analyze traditional and historical news coverage of Native American communities.
- Apply solid research skills to find, research and pitch innovative story topics.
- To learn apply crucial reporting skills for accurately and objectively covering stories in the Native American community.
- Hone your ability to produce publishable writing, photography and multimedia work on deadline.
- Refine your ability to shoot, write and produce concise, thorough and effective multimedia projects and print stories for the web.
- Refine your visual reporting and storytelling skills.
- Juggle the demands for producing content for both the print and web editions.

## THE PROJECT AND TOPIC

### Missing and murdered Indigenous women

In 2018, the Urban Indian Health Institute published a report that showed Montana as having the fifth highest rate of missing Native American women in the country. Billings was also listed as the fifth highest rated city. Although this report seemed to legitimize, in the eyes of the American media, the phenomena of Native American women going missing with no resolution, tribal communities have been clamoring for attention on this issue for years, if not decades. Politicians, both tribal and colonizer, law enforcement, health pundits, grassroots organizers have all attempted to explain the reasons that Native American women are targeted, underprotected and ultimately ignored. However, there is still no clear reason that explains the rate of Indian Country's missing women.

If you have been following news trends affecting Native American communities at all in the past few years, the phrase "Missing and murdered Indigenous women," – as well as the ensuing hashtag #mmiw or #mmiwg – will no doubt sound familiar. You might also recognize that this topic has recently been saturated by local, regional and national press. This topic is going to be tough. We are **not** looking to prove that this phenomenon exists. Readers already know that. A series of case studies is not going to shed any light on this issue. As a fully functioning unit, we have to use our news teams to research with both delicacy and confidence what is going on beneath this issue and reveal at least some illumination for the public. These stories will require thought, strategy and a level of both confident reporting and sensitivity.

This means teams will be expected to pour through previous editions of the Native News Honors Project to see what has been done and build from there. Teams will be required to target tightly their ideas early in the semester, working very close with editors and professors. In addition, teams will need to become even more familiar with several layers of tribal life on their assigned reservations. None of us is an expert in this issue, but we'll learn about it together by doing what journalists do.

## **SELLING YOUR STORIES**

The Native News Honors Project is evolving heavily. We will not publish a printed tabloid this year, breaking a nearly 30-year tradition. Instead, we intend to extend our reach beyond the statelines. In addition to collecting all of the 2019 stories, photos and videos on the Native News website, students will be required to draft memos pitching your project to a number of news outlets throughout the region. The goal is to find homes for our stories in any number of outlets, either in-state or throughout the country. Note that this is a requirement, which we will discuss more in-depth in the coming weeks. We will continue our social media for this project as well as our robust website .

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

We will meet on Mondays from 3:30-5:20 in DAH 301 or 316. On some Wednesdays from 3:30-4:20 the reporters will meet together as a team, as will the photographers, photo editor, and designers. Many times we'll be together.

Share your contacts with one another. This project stresses teamwork. Your work will be published in a newspaper tabloid and online.

Individual team meetings need to be arranged before you leave for the reservation and immediately upon your return. Travel to the reservations can take place anytime during the month of March but no earlier than the first of the month. Most teams end up traveling to the reservation during Spring break. Spring break is March 30-April 3, which is VERY late. That means you'll have to get stories, photos and multimedia done under deadline pressure because we must be ready for publication by the last day of finals week. Make sure to be on assignment when public offices are open as well.

*Class Time:* Attendance during all class periods will be essential to the progress of the team and the project. Class will consist of lectures, discussions, student presentations and guest speakers. In addition the classroom will also serve as our newsroom and as such we will be doing budget meetings, story proposals, story editing and development, web and print design discussions. When teams return from their designated reservation we will be meeting in small teams and those editing sessions may occasionally run longer.

*Staff Responsibilities:* you will be working on a two-person reporting team or you will be working as a photo-editor, editor, social media editor, print designer or web designer. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines that pertain to your chosen role in the project. Those deadlines are essential to the project's completion.

*Student presentations:* You will be required to make presentations on your research, proposals and projects throughout the semester. Photographers will present and incorporate class feedback into your multimedia projects. Designers will present and incorporate class feedback into your final design packages.

## TEXTBOOKS (on reserve) and Web links

Unlike many classes the reading list for this class changes each semester to pertain to the topic at hand. Many of the readings are from selected texts, but throughout the semester there will be assigned readings from guest lecturers, newspapers, magazines, and online publications. Those readings will help you develop your understanding of reporting on Native American communities and about the topic. Your goal is to become an expert on the topic and on reporting in Indian country. There are many resources we will use.

- *Books*

Bryan, William L. Jr. (1996). *Montana's Indians: yesterday and today*. Helena, MT: Farcountry Press. (This book is a bit outdated, but there is good material about reservation history.)

Barbican Art Gallery. (1998). *Native Nations*. London, England: Booth-Clibborn Editions.

Hubbard, Jim. (1994). *Shooting Back from the Reservation*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Modica, Andrea. (2003). *Real Indians: Portraits of Contemporary Native Americans and America's Tribal Colleges*. New York, NY: Melcher Media.

- *Many good resources are available online.*

Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, with links to all Montana reservations. It also has a feed for important stories relating to tribal issues, plus archives where you might find articles pertaining to your assigned reservation.

<http://www.mtwytlc.com/>

The Senate Indian Affairs Committee Website:

<http://indian.senate.gov>

Bureau of Indian Affairs, [www.bia.gov](http://www.bia.gov) (Regional office is in Billings: 406-247-2976)

An exceptional home for analysis of how American politics affects Indian Country:

[www.trahantreports.com](http://www.trahantreports.com)

Reporting in Indigenous Communities – great new resource about reporting

<http://www.riic.ca/teachings-2/>

National Native News on NPR: <http://www.nativenews.net/> - on MTPR at 1:32 pm every weekday.

There will be copies of several years of Best Newspaper Writing that reporters might want to look at. You will also be expected to **read stories from your assigned**

**reservations** in past Native News tabs. Several of those over the last 20 years will relate to this year's topic.

## TRAVEL EXPENSES

You will pay for travel expenses and then be reimbursed. You will need to approve your travel dates with Jason and Jeremy and then you need to fill out forms with Kathleen Whetzel, the dean's assistant, before you travel. If you need an advance, a budget must be done at least a week before you leave. Receipts also have to be accounted for and any unused money returned. **You must keep lodging and gasoline receipts or you can't be reimbursed.** Period. Turn in your expenses to Kathleen Whetzel in DAH 203 by any Friday afternoon for reimbursement the next week.

Here's the reimbursement schedule:

- \$70 plus tax (**must have receipt**) per day for lodging. \* *Ask for the state rate when you reserve lodging.*
- Gasoline receipts for actual use. (Fill up as you leave town and as you return.)

## GRADING

- Quality of reporting in both the pitch and the final pieces
- Depth of research
- Teamwork
- Class participation and attendance
- How well you write/photograph/edit/design your stories
- Quality of your final product and your work during the revision process
- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and fulfill requirements

## AFTER-HOURS ACCESS

Enrollment in this class will give you after-hours access. Your prior codes should continue to work this semester. Your griz card should also work to gain access to the building.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

All work turned in for this class must be your own. Failure to comply with this and you will be assigned an F for your final grade. It is expected that you shoot all new work for this class. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in referral to the proper university authorities or disciplinary action. Students must be familiar with the conduct code.

[http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php)

\*\*\* read carefully

You may not submit for this course any assignment that has previously, or will be concurrently, submitted for another class, unless you receive prior approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an F for the assignment.

## ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This course is accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with instructor. Disability Services for Students will

assist the instructor and student in the accommodation process. For more information, visit <http://life.umt.edu/dss>.