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JRNL 105X.01: Global Current Events

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Syllabus

JRNL 105X Global Current Events

Spring 2022

Meets: Monday, Wednesday, 11-12:20 p.m., in DAH 316
Midterm: Wednesday, March 9
Last class: Wednesday, May 4
Final exam: Friday, May 13, 8-10 a.m.
Holidays: President's Day, Feb. 21; Spring Break, March 21-25.
Textbook: The Economist Magazine (12-weeks for \$29. Subscribe individually for at least a 12-week student subscription.

Instructor

Associate Professor Nadia White
Don Anderson Hall 408
nadia.white@umontana.edu

Office Hours

Monday 2– 4 p.m.
Thursday 2 – 4 p.m.
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'll know key world leaders, the challenges they face, how democracy works – or doesn't – around the globe, and the cultural distinctions that inform politics worldwide. Words like Brexit and Daesh, Sunni and Shia, won't slow you down. And you'll understand why the world is watching countries like The Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine and Iran. My goal is for you to be the most interesting person over Spring Break when it comes to what's going on in the world.

The skills and information you learn in Global Current Events will inform how you understand the world around you for the rest of your life. You will connect the dots between seemingly unrelated events; track stories that will let you contribute meaningful insight when talk turns to politics and global affair and explore how journalists around the world play a role in civil society. Your knowledge of other cultures will expand as you learn about the historical, socioeconomic and geostrategic forces behind this semester's news.

I will know you are learning these things because you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse ways humans structure their social, political, and cultural lives;
2. Interpret human activities, ideas, and institutions with reference to diverse cultural, historical and geopolitical perspectives and physical environments; and
3. Recognize the complexities of inter-cultural and international communications and collaborative endeavors, and relate this to the complex challenges of the 21st century.

You will use these skills to work together on a substantial and complex presentation to the class. You'll work together in a small group and I'll check in along the way to offer help, to check your progress and to be sure you are getting the credit you deserve for the work you are doing with your team.

The Economist magazine will be our required textbook. You will subscribe for the semester. Please bring your magazine to class. At first, I will assign 10-12 articles to read from each issue, by the end of the semester, you

will help choose the stories. With your subscription you will also have online access, but I assure you, it's nice to have a print copy.

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 the first week of class you should subscribe to a 12-week student subscription to the Economist for \$29. Plan on canceling the autorenewal feature of that subscription if you do not wish to continue for the full year. Subscribe at: <https://subscribe.economist.com/long-term-student> (shorturl.at/lpyl8). **This is required.** You must have access to the **print edition** of the Economist, though you may also read the articles online or on your app. Experience suggests people who read the print edition do much, much better in class.

In the event you need a backup plan, you may access The Economist through Mansfield Library using Montana Library 2 GO: <https://montana.overdrive.com/media/5848823> or the ProQuest database search from Mansfield Library Home page (Magazines are listed alphabetically under the data base tab.)

Course Structure

On Tuesdays, class will typically begin with a 10-question quiz on the previous week's reading and the presentation from the previous week. The quiz will be followed by a reflection round that ask you to consider the way global news affects the way you understand the world you occupy. We'll have a brief discussion of the quiz questions and a review of information from the week before. As the semester advances, Tuesdays will sometimes be used to allow time for teams to work together on their research and presentation efforts. We'll distribute new Economists and new reading will be assigned. Often, I will present a shorter How Things Work explainer presentation, we'll watch journalists interview a source using the 1-2 punch question approach and critique the interview or have a guest speaker.

On Thursdays, a 45-minute 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. It will introduce the current cast of characters, government systems, and provide a sense of how regular people are being affected by the situation as well as what may happen regarding the situation in the near future. There will be time after each presentation for discussion.

At first, I will give the presentations. But by the TK week of class, you will take over. Teams and topics will be assigned in the second week of class. The following Tuesday we will focus on how to succeed as a team and as a member of a team.

Teams of students will each prepare and present a 45-minute presentation on a predetermined topic. Each team will comprise four jobs: a researcher, a script writer, a slideshow builder and a presenter. Each group will meet with me as a group three times as each of you, individually, takes charge of previewing the material you have prepared in completing your part of the team's presentation. These meetings should represent your best effort at a finished product for your portion of the presentation, not a rough draft, though you may receive feedback that warrants revising your work before you hand it off to your teammate.

It is essential you meet all deadlines associated with your presentation. Your teammates depend on you getting your work to them on time and completely. 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-.

Notice: The majority of your presentation grade -- 75 percent -- is based on your presentation of your pwork to me. The remaining 25 percent is based on your contribution to the final presentation and growth after your preview meeting. This is to be ensure each team member is pulling his or her own weight.

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. Some students find doing their share of the work for the presentation the most challenging – and some say most rewarding – assignment they’ve ever done. Done well, these presentations are suitable for inclusion in your honors or senior portfolio.

Learning outcomes

Successful students in this class will:

- Read complex news stories deeply and retain key ideas and supporting details.
- Place inter-cultural and international geopolitical events in context and relate this to shared contemporary challenges and complexities.
- Understand the nature of civil society and the role journalists play in supporting or failing to support civil society globally.
- Locate nations and regions in the news and interpret how geography affects conflicts.
- Articulate common themes or factors linking otherwise disparate global conflicts.
- Reflect on the impact global events have on their own lives or outlooks and the impact their lives and the actions of other Americans on the future of other people in vulnerable populations.
- Demonstrate their ability to work as part of a team and help their peers succeed

General Education

This class satisfies General Education requirements for Group X (Cultural & International Diversity.) These courses foster an appreciation for diverse cultures, their histories and values, and their struggles both to maintain their ways of life and to gain equal positions in world spheres of power and change. This includes knowledge of diverse cultures in comparative and thematic frameworks. Knowledge gained through courses in the X perspective prepares students to cultivate ways of thinking that foster an understanding of the complexities of indigenous or international cultures and global issues, past and present.

Upon completion of a course in this group, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse ways humans structure their social, political, and cultural lives;
2. Interpret human activities, ideas, and institutions with reference to diverse cultural, historical and geo-political perspectives and physical environments; and
3. Recognize the complexities of inter-cultural and international communications and collaborative endeavors, and relate this to the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Assessment

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

A 10-question quiz will be given each week. It will mostly cover the reading, with one or two questions drawn from the previous week’s presentation. Geographic knowledge will be quizzed using maps from the reading, on weeks when they are available. Quiz grades will be averaged; the lowest quiz score will be dropped. Quiz grades are 30 percent of your final grade.

The midterm exam will be administered <Date TK,> during regular class time. It will cover material from presentations to that date. (There will be no quiz on reading that week.) The midterm grade is 10 percent of the total grade.

The final exam will be administered on Friday, May 13 at 8 a.m. unless rescheduled. It will emphasize presentation given after the midterm, but you will be able to draw on all presentations for one or more essay questions. The final exam grade is 15 percent of the total grade.

You presentation grade will make up 30 percent of your total grade. It will be based primarily (75%) on the individual work you present at your preview or rehearsal meeting with me. A lesser amount of your grade (20%) will reflect the final presentation, with additional evaluation based on class and team feedback. Criteria for presentation evaluation are included later in this syllabus.

Discussion Rubric

Attendance and Discussion is 15 percent of your final grade.

It's a complicated modern world and news stories and social media share the experiences of individuals and communities that are shaped by broader political systems, world leaders, culture, religion and geography. One goal of this class is that you will be able to clearly connect news stories to their broader context in which they appear and articulate the ways different global events inform each other. Class discussion is your opportunity to demonstrate your ability to connect the global dots in meaningful ways. Here's how I evaluate your engagement during each class discussion:

No engagement	0
Affirmation without substantial supporting argument	75
Offers supporting evidence for ideas raised by another	85
Raises original ideas connecting key concepts from lectures to specific events in presentations or readings	100

Grading

Quizzes:	30 percent
Class Presentation:	30 percent (Preview 75 %, Presentation 20%, Discussion and peer assessment 5%.)
Exams:	30 percent (Midterm: 15%, Final: 15%)
Attendance & Discussion:	10 percent

The grading scale is:

A	93-100	B-	80-82
A-	90-92	C+	77-79
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
		F	59-0

Professionalism

Journalism is competitive; 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 in class may be used only for note taking (although please note that evidence strongly suggests you retain more if you take notes by hand.)
- Notify me in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- Acting professionally at all times will positively affect your final grade. Being distracted, distracting others or failing to engage in class will negatively affect your final grade.
- 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 (9 of 27) or more 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.

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](#).

Cultural leave policy

UM has a cultural or ceremonial leave policy that allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student's customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student's attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Student Conduct Code

The Student Conduct Code, embodying the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, human rights and responsible citizenship, governs all student conduct at The University of Montana-Missoula. Student enrollment presupposes a commitment to the principles and policies embodied in this Code. The Student Conduct Code sets forth University jurisdiction, student rights, standards of academic and general student conduct, disciplinary sanctions for breach of the standards of student conduct and procedures to be followed in adjudicating charges of both academic and general misconduct.

The Vice Provost for Student Success is responsible for procedural administration of the Student Conduct Code for all general conduct. The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs is responsible for all academic conduct. Copies of the Student Conduct Code can be obtained from the Office for Community Standards, located in Turner Hall . The Student Conduct Code also can be accessed at <http://www.umt.edu/student-conduct-code>.

Plagiarism Warning

Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the Journalism and academic communities and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion. (See Student Conduct Code that precedes this section of the catalog.)

Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism.