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JRNL 620.01: Covering Native American Issues

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Native News Honors Project

JRNL 410/411/620

Spring 2022 • Tues, Thurs 2-3:20 p.m. Lab: Tues, Thurs 3:30-4:50 p.m. • DAH 301/316

JRNL 410 • J620

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JRNL 411 • J620

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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 Montana's Native American communities.

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

In light of the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic, we must include the following expectations:

- ***Adaptability***
Although this class is designed as a newsroom focusing on a specific topic, it remains a newsroom, which requires a level of adaptability in the face of breaking news. This requires a level of professionalism as we perform the duties to which this project is committed: Covering with tenacity and compassion how news events affect Montana's Indian Country.
- ***Project completion***
As a capstone project in the School of Journalism, the base level of success in this course is completion of a published project. Publication will require a completed story or image-based journalistic body of work.
- ***Remotely working***
Among the challenges we are facing is the possibility of working remotely as a newsroom. However, this has become a reality for all newsrooms around the world. Students are expected to participate in online discussions, brainstorming and critiques.

Students are also expected to complete reporting projects remotely by doing what we do best, stay vigilant, tenacious and responsible.

This could be a particularly challenging endeavor for visual journalists in the class. We expect those students to continue to be part of the reporting process and work as photo editors – finding ways to gather complimentary visuals, graphics and submitted photos to go with our story coverage. And to work as reporters gathering information for these stories.

- ***Following safety protocols***

As a practicing reporting experience, students will be expected to follow safety protocols before, during and after their reporting trips, not to mention while in the classroom. See addendums for both reporting and photography.

- ***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 half a dozen 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

Climate change

Climate change is real and undeniable. Its effect is global, devastating and intensifying even quicker than scientists had predicted. Just last week, the Washington Post reported that “the seven hottest years on record have happened in the last seven years.” Throughout the nation, Indigenous communities are relocating from historic lands that are no longer safe in the wake of fires and floods. The overall effect might seem to be hitting Montana at a slow rate, however reservation communities are both aware and wary. For instance: Fueled by characteristic high winds and drought-ridden forest areas, fires destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres on the Flathead, Fort Belknap and Northern Cheyenne reservations last summer. The Chippewa Cree, which live on the Rocky Boy’s reservation, have long focused on how droughts might affect production of sweet grass, a medicinal plant used by Indigenous people all over. And, of course, it is impossible to visit Glacier National Park, which includes mountains long held sacred to the Blackfeet, without hearing about and seeing the shrinking of the glaciers that are so iconic to Montana.

This topic will require a thorough understanding of climate change and the science behind it. 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 cultural 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.

COURSE STRUCTURE

We will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3:20 p.m. in DAH 301 or 316. We will also have the option to meet during our scheduled lab time, which is Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30-4:50 p.m. During pitch sessions and guest speakers we will often use some of this lab time. We also hope your team will use the lab time as a time to connect with each other and your editors and professors for one-on-one meetings. On some days, especially after the reporting trips, 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.

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 American Indian Science and Engineering Society: <https://www.aises.org/>

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

Advancing Chicano/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, Native American programs: <https://www.sacnas.org/what-we-do/native-american-programs/>

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 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. They will book our hotel room with their procard and you will track your mileage and they will reimburse your mileage

when you return. 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 you need to take pictures of your odometer for mileage. **You must keep lodging receipts and return them to Kathleen.** 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

- As a capstone class, which requires a published, professional-grade work of journalism, it is impossible to earn an A grade without completing a publishable piece of work
- 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

We will assess students based on performance throughout the semester including

- Reservation reports
- Attendance and participation each week
- Pre-reporting video interviews
- Pre-reporting, pitches and pitch revisions
- Involvement in the editing process of stories, photographs, video and captions
- Reporting and sourcing
- Final projects work
- Final fact checking and proofing with your team
- Ability to work in a team

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.

<https://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.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 <https://www.umt.edu/disability/>