

1-2014

JRNL 102Y.00 - News Literacy

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Recommended Citation

Fanning, Ray, "JRNL 102Y.00 - News Literacy" (2014). *Syllabi*. 772.
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The University of Montana
School of Journalism
Missoula, MT 59812

JOUR 102Y –*News Literacy* Syllabus – Spring 2014 (subject to change)

Scope:

This course is designed to teach students how to become more discriminating news consumers at a time when the digital revolution is spawning an unprecedented flood of information and disinformation each day. It will help you recognize the differences between news and propaganda, news and opinion, bias and fairness, assertion and verification and evidence and inference in news articles and broadcast reports. Students will learn to apply critical-thinking skills to these goals so they can act on reliable information. Students will also learn how the journalistic process works and how professional journalists make decisions.

Learning Outcomes:

Successful News Literacy Students will:

- Analyze the key elements of a news account, including weight of evidence, credibility of sources and context to judge its reliability.
- Distinguish between news and opinion and analyze the logic/rhetoric employed in opinion journalism.
- Identify and distinguish between news media bias and audience bias
- Blend personal scholarship and course materials to write forcefully about news media standards and practices, as well as First Amendment issues and issues of fairness and bias.
- Connect current news accounts to global concepts of community and citizenship.
- Assess the impact of digital information technologies and place them in their historical context.

Class meets:

Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:10 to 3:30pm

Instructor: Ray Fanning, Associate Professor, School of Journalism,
Radio-Television Department.

Office: Don Anderson Hall 405

Office hours are 8:30-10:30 a.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm also available
at other times by appointment.

Office phone: 243-4747.

My regular e-mail: ray.fanning@umontana.edu.

Discussion leaders:

Nate Hegyi	Section 01	natehegyi@gmail.com
Abbey Dufoe	Section 02	abigail.dufoe@umontana.edu
Laura Scheer	Section 03	laura.scheer@umontana.edu
Ray Fanning	Section 04	ray.fanning@umontana.edu

Required Reading:

"The Influencing Machine," Brooke Gladstone, W.W. Norton

Readings posted on Moodle

Students also will use the following Web sites:

Committee to Protect Journalists: www.cpj.org

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press: www.people-press.org

Poynter Online: www.poynter.org

Grading:

Assignments

You will have various assignments. Some may be selections of readings to help you prepare for an upcoming class or to supplement material from a lecture. Others may involve writing or evaluating a news report.

All written assignments must be typed and double-spaced. Remember to include your name and discussion section number at the top of the first page and to staple all pages together.

You will be graded in part on how well you articulate an understanding of the course material and how you express your own ideas.

These assignments will represent 40 percent of your final grade. Individual assignments will be graded according to the following standards:

Excellent:	Dramatically surpasses the requirements, well written, demonstrates additional insights or research 90-100
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Good:	Exceeds requirements, written clearly and logically 80-90
Satisfactory:	Meets requirements, expresses ideas in a manner that can be understood 70-80
Poor:	Does not meet requirements, confusing or unclear, sloppy 60-70
Failed to hand in:	no credit 0

You won't earn more points by writing a longer assignment. Comply with the directions for word length, write succinctly, and stay relevant.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance and active participation are essential to succeeding in this course. You should consistently demonstrate that you have knowledge of the news; that you have completed the homework and assigned readings; and that you are willing to engage in discussion and debate with your classmates. Participation in class discussions is essential.

Monday Lecture

I won't take formal attendance, but, five times during the semester, you will have a short question to answer in writing at the end of the class. These will determine your attendance grade for the lectures.

Wednesday Discussion Groups

Discussion leaders will take formal attendance at the beginning of class.

Grading Breakdown:

Class Assignments:	45 per cent
Tests (2):	20 per cent
Final Exam:	20 per cent
Participation/Attendance	15 per cent

Moodle

I will use Moodle for this course your grades will be available there, along with some readings and assignments

Academic Honesty

I expect your honesty in presenting your own work for this course. Academic misconduct at The University of Montana is subject to an

academic penalty ranging from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university. Students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>

Plagiarism

As defined by "The University of Montana Student Conduct Code" plagiarism is: "Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own." This is strictly prohibited in this class and any case of plagiarism in this course will be subject to the penalties outlined in the student code of conduct.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to and usable by 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. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at www.umt.edu/dss/.

Class-by-Class Topics
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week	Date	Class	Reading
1	1/27	Why news literacy matters: From Gutenberg to Zuckerberg	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> pages 3-21 (In the Beginning and The American Exception)
	1/29		
2	2/3	The power of information	<u>The Elements of Journalism</u> Chapter 1- What is Journalism For? Posted on Moodle
	2/5		
3	2/10	The Mission of the American Press	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> Pages 22-46 (Existential Angst, Canis Journalisticus and Birds on a Wire)
	2/12		
4	2/17	Presidents Day- NO CLASS	
	2/18	Film: A Fragile Trust About New York Times reporter Jayson Blair Wilma Theater- 6:15pm	
	2/19	A Fragile Trust: panel discussion with the filmmaker- What is Truth?	
5	2/24	What is news and who decides? You be the editor	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> Pages 47-56 (News You Can't Use)
	2/26		
6	3/3	News or Opinion: the license to kill	
	3/5	Test #1	
7	3/10	Balance, Fairness and Bias	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> Pages 57-70 and 111-128 (The Great Refusal, Bias, Disclosure and The Matrix in Me)
	3/12		
8	3/17	What is journalistic truth? How do journalists verify information?	<u>The Elements of Journalism</u> Chapter 2- Truth: The First and Most Confusing Principle Posted on Moodle

	3/19		
9	3/24	The Power of Images	
	3/26		
10	3/31	Spring Break- NO CLASS	
	4/2		
11	4/7	Evaluating Sources	
	4/9		
12	4/14	Deconstructing the News	
	4/16		
13	4/21	Deconstructing TV News	
	4/23	Test #2	
14	4/28	Deconstructing Social Media	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> Pages 129-144 (The Influencing Machines and Um, Panic?)
	4/30		
15	5/5	The future of news and your role in it	<u>The Influencing Machine-</u> Pages 145-156 (I, Robot and I, Media)
	5/7	Course review	
16	5/13	Final- 3:20-5:20pm, Tuesday, May 13 <u>Do not make travel plans to leave campus before the final. The final will not be available early.</u>	