

1-2014

JRNL 331.01 – Intermediate Web and Digital Reporting

Lee M. Banville

University of Montana - Missoula, lee.banville@umontana.edu

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Banville, Lee M., "JRNL 331.01 – Intermediate Web and Digital Reporting" (2014). *Syllabi*. 764.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/764>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

JRNL 331 – *Intermediate Web and Digital Reporting*

Syllabus - Spring 2014 (subject to change)

Scope: This course examines major trends in web, mobile and digital reporting and trains journalists how to report and produce content for various types of news outlets. Course includes a focus on understanding how people develop, produce, publish and consume news. Course will also prepare students to work on the digital/web teams in most newsrooms.

Grading options: This course must be taken for a traditional letter-grade. No credit grading is not permitted. The Montana University System's plus/minus grading system will be used in this class.

Class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:10-3:30 p.m., in DAH 306.

Frequency of Offering: This course is offered most autumn and spring semesters.

Instructor: Lee Banville, Associate Professor, School of Journalism.

Office: Don Anderson Hall 406

Office phone: 243-2577.

Office hours: Tuesday 2 - 4 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. – noon.

My regular e-mail: lee.banville@umontana.edu

Successful JRNL 331 students will:

- 1. Be able to report, edit and produce compelling content for a variety of news platforms.**
- 2. Discern the sources of online information and better be able to ascertain the validity.**
- 3. Assess the impact of on-demand technologies on both the creation and consumption of news content.**
- 4. Recognize news consumers' expectations for the online space and how news websites are organized to serve those needs.**
- 5. Understand how to use social media to report stories, develop personal brands and engage audience.**
- 6. Evaluate online story packages and explain why they work well in the medium, or why they do not.**
- 7. Effectively use blogs, links and content aggregation as part of digital reporting.**

Course Grading is made up of three finals and five in-class attendance/writing assignments:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Kaimin Blog.....	15%
Quizzes/Writing Assignments/Aggregation	40%
Town Project.....	15%
Multimedia Story	20%

A/A-	90-100%
B+/B/B-	80-89%
C+/C/C-	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 59%

Attendance and participation: Come to class and stay for the entire class period. We cover vast amounts of material and there will not be a record of what we discuss. Several times during the semester I will give you in-class writing, editing exercises that will make up part of your Writing/In-class grade. Students WILL NOT be allowed to make these up unless you supply a note from Curry/your doctor or alert ahead of class via phone or email. If you have questions, talk to me after class, visit during office hours, or email or telephone me personally.

Laptop Computers: DAH 306 has desktop computers, but feel free to bring your own computer and you should be able to access the network and/or wireless.

Cell phones must be off or on vibrate while you are in class and must be off and totally out of your sight during examinations. Do not answer a call during class unless you discuss this with me before hand.

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 outlines in the student code of conduct.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at <http://life.umt.edu/dss>.

Weekly Topics and Assignments

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week One: Web writing and producing

Each student will maintain a blog – public or private – to produce and publish to. Each week you will produce a piece for your blog that addresses the topic of the week. Blogs are due Thursday at midnight, completed and posted with a timestamp. If you currently maintain a blog you may use that, but otherwise you will use blogspot, blogger, wordpress or a Moodle blog. You do not need to maintain this after class, but the idea is you would produce work that would be worth showing perspective employers, so it's your call.

In addition to a blog you will maintain a Twitter presence for the duration of this class.

For Wednesday go over two chapters (web design and writing for the web) posted on Moodle.

Week Two: Researching Online

"There was 5 exabytes of information created between the dawn of civilization through 2003, but that much information is now created every 2 days, and the pace is increasing." Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt.

For Monday you will develop a research file on me and come to class with key facts as well as pitches for possible stories based SOLELY on material you find online.

Blogging assignment: Report on what someone can find out about you or identify a knowledge gap on the web.

Week Three: Effective Sourcing

MONDAY CLASS CANCELLED. For Wednesday go over searching social media for experts and sources and we will discuss on class Wednesday.

Blogging assignment: Examine the benefits and difficulties in finding sources in your subject area using social media.

For Wednesday, read multimedia articles posted on Moodle.

Week Four: Multimedia Reporting

MONDAY CLASS CANCELLED. What makes effective multimedia? How do you conceive of stories that are ripe for telling in different formats. Multimedia reporting means lots of different things to different news organizations. Generally newspapers think that means video, TV think that means audio slideshows and magazines get bolloxed up and have no idea what it means. We will hear from multimedia reporters in the field (Washington Post, Smithsonian and HBO) about how they seek to mix media.

We will also explore the evolution of multimedia storytelling by dissecting and critiquing "Snowfall" and another multimedia piece TBD

Blogging Assignment: Critique a multimedia feature.

Assignment: Pitches are due before class on Wednesday.

Week Five: Mapping Stories/Planning Reporting

Multimedia doesn't usually happen on the fly. Stories are planned, narrative flows outlined and reporting formats considered before you hit the pavement. This week you will consider your story elements, set up interviews and consider best ways to report your story.

By Wednesday you should have mapped out your tentative reporting plan.

Week Six: REPORTING

THERE IS NO CLASS THIS WEEK. I am at SXSW this week, but will be checking email and responding to questions. The goal of this week is to gather material for your multimedia reporting project.

Week Seven: Producing Multimedia

So you have done all your reporting. This week we put it together as a story using the Creatavist publishing platform.

Blogging Assignment: Explore how a multimedia production system changed the way you reported and conceived of your story.

Week Eight: Aggregation and Linking

Aggregation is a central concept to digital news production, but what makes good, value-added aggregation versus plagiarism? This week we understand the laws around aggregation and how to write aggregated copy.

Assignment: Aggregate a specific news story in your topic area.

Week Nine: Aggregation and Analysis

Aggregation should be more than just cobbling other people's work and content into something new... It needs to add something to the story through analyzing the facts or adding reporting. This week we will build on initial aggregation to push our writing to take on more of an analytical voice.

Assignment: Aggregate a story in your area and add analysis or additional reporting.

Week Ten:

SPRING BREAK

Week Eleven: Aggregation and the Personal

Much blogging is connected to a given individual's take on the news. This branch of web writing is personal and can be opinion. But still there are effective and ineffective ways to bring the "I" back into your writing. We will explore what to do and what to avoid and then take to the blogs to do it.

Assignment: Aggregate a personal opinion piece or a personal narrative or exploring a topic.

Week Twelve: How to Social Media Like a Pro

Whether it is sources, employers or competitors, your social media presence and how you use it will be the primary way people judge you. This can be something that can benefit you or hurt you. We will explore what a social media presence for reporters should look like and what you should avoid – for example Tweeting drunk selfies.

Assignment: Blog about a fellow reporter that covers your topic and explore what they do well or poorly via social media.

Week Thirteen: Website Production

How websites are constructed and content published is often a mystery to new reporters. We will tackle it by helping rebuild and republish the Montana Election/Town Project website.

Assignment: Aggregate a news piece in your topic area.

Week Fourteen: Live Event Coverage

One of the things that digital reporting allows journalists to cover multi-location events live. This can and should be a mix of material you report and content you find online. We will use Storify to tell the story of May's First Friday.

Assignment: KEEP YOUR FRIDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE FREE

Week Fifteen: Finishing the Town Project

We will QA (Quality Assurance) the Town Project/Election site.