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JRNL 473.03: International Reporting

Henriette B. Lowisch

University of Montana - Missoula, henriette.lowisch@umontana.edu

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JRNL 473 International Reporting: Migration and Refuge in Berlin

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:10 to 6:30 p.m., in DAH 301

Instructors

Prof. Henriette Lowisch

Don Anderson Hall 431

Phone: (406) 243-2227

Henriette.Lowisch@umontana.edu

Office Hours

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wednesdays, 2 to 4 p.m.

And by appointment

Dean Larry Abramson

Don Anderson Hall

Phone: (406) 243-4001

Larry.Abramson@umontana.edu

Course Objective

This course prepares students of journalism and related majors for the opportunities and challenges of international reporting. It acquaints them with practical difficulties that arise from working in unfamiliar environments. Cultural differences, access to sources, propaganda and language barriers are issues to be examined, as are logistics and safety. Students will learn about the current refugee crisis and how one nation – Germany – deals with the historic movement of people from the Middle East and Africa to Europe.

The course will culminate in a 3-week reporting trip to Berlin, Germany, in May/June 2016. Through meetings with experts; visits of major media outlets; guided tours of historical locations, and interviews with refugees, politicians, activists and ordinary citizens, students will research and observe history in the making. They will also practice telling multidimensional stories of migration and refuge through text, photo, video, and audio.

Course Outcomes

Our goal is to give refugees in Germany a voice and tell the public about their situation, their challenges and their hopes for the future. Germans will play an important role in these stories, as well. Let's not forget the forces of history, politics and socioeconomics. Or art. Or technology.

All final projects pursued through this course are intended for publication. You are producing them for the public, not for the benefit of your instructors.

That said, we can imagine a wide range of products coming out of this course. Here are some

examples, with the ultimate outcome depending on your skills, talents and dedication.

- Written features
- Photo documentaries
- Podcasts
- Audio slideshows
- Videos
- In-depth Q&As
- Journal articles
- Web apps
- Interactive maps
- Informational graphics
- Multimedia vignettes

Course Structure

During spring semester, the course will meet twice a week, for mini-lectures and workshops, pitch sessions and guest speaker appearances. We will use this time to prepare for the Berlin trip and pre-report the stories you hope to tell once you get there.

The reporting trip to Berlin will break up into three distinct parts:

- 5/25-5/31: Orientation, visits, panel discussions, group excursions, pre-reporting.
- 6/1-6/7: Reporting in small teams.
- 6/8-6/14: Story production (writing and editing).

A separate Berlin program schedule will be ready after Spring Break.

Follow the News

If you want to succeed as an international reporter, you must immerse yourself in the topic at hand. To facilitate this, we will require you to read *The Economist* during spring semester. Sign up for your own subscription at economist.com; student rates are as low as \$1.50 / week. We will assign specific readings related to the refugee crisis each week and quiz you on them each Tuesday.

Guest speakers

Expert appearances (in person or via Skype) during spring semester will serve to

- Deepen your knowledge of international reporting and the refugee crisis;
- Hone your interviewing skills: We will teach you how to formulate smart, effective questions;
- Test your professionalism: You will be asked to send in your questions on deadline;
- Practice shooting, recording and editing short videos for our social media sites.

Story and Research Proposals

In the spring, you will develop and pre-report ideas for the final project you will produce in Berlin. Some of this work will be done individually, some in teams, some by all.

- Week 1-3: Discuss and agree on common theme that will tie your stories together. Assign pitch dates.
- Week 4-9: Develop individual story pitches or proposals and test them during pitch sessions.
- Week 10: Team up to develop multimedia story or research projects.
- Week 12-15: Develop, present and submit (team) projects for evaluation and grading.

Regarding Team Work

We know that team work is not everyone's favorite pastime. However, much of journalism is done in teams, and when it comes to working internationally, you have to collaborate with others, if only because you need someone to translate for you. The ideal team consists of 3-4 members with distinct roles and abilities. Based on individual story ideas and skills, we will suggest team compositions by Week 10. Separately, we intend to implement a buddy system for the trip, because we don't want you to wander around Berlin all alone in your free time. We will discuss this more during our prep sessions in the spring.

Mini-Lectures and In-Class Workshops

Here's a sampling of the topics we will cover through mini-lectures, guest appearances and in-class workshops.

A History of Foreign Correspondence

- From the early travelers through the Golden Age to today's bloggers and tweeters.

Changing Perspectives

- How media outlets in the U.S. cover international news, compared to websites, newspapers, radio and TV stations in other countries.

Who Reports the World

- Contemporary foreign correspondents and their work environment.
- The business of international news coverage.
- The role of news agencies, satellite television and the Internet.
- How social media are changing ways of reporting and consuming international news.

Logistics

- Visa questions, technical infrastructure, health, safety and risk awareness.

Finding and Selling Stories

- How to develop winning story ideas.
- Range of storytelling formats and publishing platforms.
- Learning from and standing up to veteran news people.
- Selling your angle while avoiding clichés.

Pre-reporting the Refugee Story

- Where the refugees come from and what triggered their flight.
- How integration is a struggle for refugees as well as host communities.
- Reliability and role of local media and social networks.

Reporting the Refugee Story

- Identifying sources and using them wisely.
- How to schedule, conduct and record interviews.
- Communicating across cultures.
- Working with a translator or fixer.

The Do's and Don'ts of International Reporting

- A shortlist of what to do and what to avoid when reporting from abroad.

Professionalism

To learn is your responsibility. It is imperative that you follow all instructions closely and completely. Otherwise, you risk squandering the opportunities this course affords.

- Adhere to all deadlines and closely follow instructions for assignments.
- Don't be late. Class doesn't start at 5:11 p.m. It starts at 5:10 p.m.
- Notify us in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- You get one free absence, as long as you notify me in advance.
- Mute your electronic devices and use them for class-related activity only.
- To act professionally at all times will positively affect your final grade.
- Unexcused absences and late shows will negatively affect your final grade.

- Missing one third of classes will automatically result in failing the course.

Grading

- Quizzes: 10 percent
- Proposal: 15 percent
- Final project: 25 percent
- Participation: 50 percent

Participation is evaluated based on active engagement and contribution during lectures, panel discussions, visits, meetings, etc. Pre-departure sessions at UM are included in this evaluation, with extra credit given for content you produce for our social media platforms. Both quality and quantity of participation are considered. Peer evaluations and self-assessment are taken into account. Generally proper behavior during our stay in Germany is expected.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will:

- Develop your ability to communicate across cultural differences.
- Become current in developments and events surrounding the refugee crisis.
- Know the structure and functioning of the global media system.
- Learn techniques and technologies used in international reporting.
- Hone your ability to develop and pitch story ideas.
- Make valuable cross-cultural and international connections.
- Understand how to travel as a journalist, rather than a tourist.
- Add an amazing story to your portfolio.

Graduate Increment

Graduate students enrolled in this course will be on a graduate-level reading and presentation schedule. They will also develop and implement an assessment of the program. They will survey participants twice (at the beginning and the end of the program) and submit a report on June 30, 2016.

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](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php) (http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

Same Work for Multiple Classes in J-School

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, and could result in an "F" for the course.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. The syllabus and grading will be done through Moodle. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructor. [Disability Services for Students](http://life.umt.edu/dss) (<http://life.umt.edu/dss>) will assist in the accommodation process.