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JRNL 105X.80: Global Current Events

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JRNL 105X Global Current Events 2018

Meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:20 p.m., in DAH 201

Midterm: Tuesday, Oct. 16.

Final: Tuesday, Dec. 11, 3:20-5:20

Holidays (no class): Tuesday, Nov. 6 (Election Day,) Thursday Nov. 22 (Thanksgiving)

Textbook: The Economist Magazine (provided weekly through the course for \$30 per student.)

Instructor

Associate Professor Nadia White

Don Anderson Hall 408

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Office Hours

Monday, Wednesday 9 -10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Thursday 4-5 p.m.

Or by appointment

Teaching Assistant

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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; be able to read the financial pages of a newspaper; know what Brexit and Daesh represent and why the world is watching countries like North Korea, Northern Ireland and Ethiopia.

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 chime in if talk turns to politics over Thanksgiving Break, and explore how journalists cover international developments. Your knowledge of other cultures will expand as you learn about the historical, socioeconomic and geostrategic forces behind today's news.

The Economist magazine will be our required textbook. I will distribute a fresh copy each week in class and assign a dozen or more articles to read from each issue.

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.

On Dec. 4, please bring to class a personal check or money order for \$30 made out to UM

Foundation/Journalism. This will buy you (at a student discount) one Economist magazine each week for the semester. They come to me in a box and I will hand them out in class. If you already subscribe please contact the Economist and ask them to put your personal subscription on hold until the week of Dec. 17. They will happily do that and your subscription will pause and be extended so you will receive no fewer magazines than you have paid for.

Course Structure

On Tuesdays, class will typically begin with a 10-question quiz on that week's reading and the presentation from the previous week. The quiz will be followed by a brief discussion of the quiz questions and a review of information from the week before. Tuesdays will frequently allow time for teams to work together on their research and presentation efforts. New Economists and reading assignments will be distributed.

On Thursdays, a 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 and provide a sense of 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 sixth week of class, you will take over. Teams and topics will be assigned on Sept. 4, when you will also receive detailed guidelines 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 presentations on a predetermined topic. Each team will consist of one or two researchers, a script writer, a slideshow builder and a presenter. You will meet with me individually as you develop your part of the presentation.

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: Much more of your presentation grade -- 80 percent -- is based on your presentation of your work to me than the final presentation. This is to be sure 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 rewarding – assignment they've ever done.

Learning outcomes

Successful students in this class will:

- Understand a wide range of contemporary global news stories.
- Discuss global geography and how it affects regional conflicts.
- Know the names and background of global leaders who appear in the news.
- Articulate common factors linking otherwise disparate global conflicts.
- Recognize how geostrategic forces affect different segments of society differently, including the poor, minorities, women and children.
- Improve their ability to work as part of a team.
- Report, produce or present an in-depth study of a current global issue.

Assessment

Weekly quizzes, two exams 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. Quiz grades will be averaged; the lowest quiz score will be dropped. Quiz grades are 25 percent of your final grade.

- The midterm exam will be administered Tuesday Oct. 16, during regular class time. It will cover material **in presentations** to that date. (There will be no quiz on reading that week.) The midterm grade is 20 percent of your total grade.
- The final exam will be administered Tuesday, Dec. 11, from 3:20-5:20 p.m. It will cover all presentations, with an emphasis on those given after the midterm. The final exam grade is 20 percent of your total grade.
- Your presentation grade will be based primarily (80%) on the individual work you present at your meeting with me. A lesser amount of your grade (20%) will reflect the final presentation, with additional evaluation based on class and team feedback. The presentation is 25 percent of your total grade.
- Class discussion is an important way to expand your understanding of key global events -- whether you ask thoughtful questions, share insights or articulate points you find confusing, you are leading others as they learn as well. Discussion is 10 percent of your final grade.

Grading

Quizzes: 25 percent

Class Presentation: 25 percent

Midterm: 20 percent

Final: 20 percent

Discussion: 10 percent

The grading scale is:

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	0-59

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 may be used for note taking only during class.
- Notify me in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- To act professionally at all times will positively 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 (10 of 29) 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](#).