

# **SCHOOL OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS**

**MEDIA ARTS DEPARTMENT**

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

**FOR**

**COURSE NUMBER: JOU 5**

**NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3**

**COURSE TITLE: Writing for Electronic Journalism**

**INSTRUCTOR: Carl Corry**

**DATE SUBMITTED: 1/14/16**

**Class:** Monday and Wednesday from 9:30-10:50 a.m. || **Where:** HUM 209

**Contact:** 631-662-1647; [Carl.Corry@liu.edu](mailto:Carl.Corry@liu.edu)

**Office hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 11 a.m.-12 p.m. and by appointment in HUM003

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### **PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:**

This course will focus on reporting and writing for electronic media, including social media, the Web, radio and TV.

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### **INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- Learn how to write and produce journalistic pieces for the Web, radio and TV.
  - Understand the major skills of writing for online versus traditional publications, including the use of live and continuous updating, effective blogging and microblogging, and maximizing audience through search-engine optimization.
  - Learn to use social media as a reporting tool and to build audience for your work.
  - Learn unique forms of digital storytelling, including photo slideshows and lists, podcasts and web video. .
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### **REQUIRED READING:**

The required texts for this class are “JournalismNext (Third Edition)” by Mark Briggs and the AP Stylebook. I ordered the books through the school bookstore, but you can get them via Amazon. In addition, you should also be reading several websites daily, including but not limited to:

- Daily reading of NYTimes.com, CNN.com, NPR.org, Huffingtonpost.com, JimRomensko.com, Mashable.com.
- Twitter/Facebook/RSS feeds of your favorite news organizations and prominent journalists or publications.
- The class blog.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

You will be required to post on the group blog for class.

By the end of the semester, you’ll have one mobile event-based story that incorporates photos and a short written piece from a mobile device, a photo slideshow / list, an audio project (or audio slideshow), a video trend/issue piece and an e-portfolio. Use the blog’s tools to post photos, but host any videos of your own through Vimeo or YouTube and embed it into your post. The e-portfolio will be separate from the class blog.

You will be required to use social media throughout the semester to find sources, to start a dialogue with the community or other online news pros and to publicize your work. The more places you are linked with or link to, the more people see your work.

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### **THE CLASS BLOG:**

We will set up a WordPress blog during one of the first classes, which you will be required to use throughout the semester. Consider the class blog “Grand Central Station.” Most of our class discussion will take place here, and all of your homework and major projects will be posted here. Once we create it, bookmark it.

You will also be required to set up a Twitter account (if you don't already have one) and to follow your classmates on Twitter. We will share stories and other information this way (I'm @carlcorry). Once everyone is set up, we'll use #jou5Post throughout the semester.

**Posting:**

You will be graded on the homework assignments on a 0-4 scale. Make sure you provide links and screenshots of the things you are posting about. Tag posts appropriately. Write in a web-appropriate fashion in AP style. Failure to adhere to best blogging practices will result in a lower grade.

Posts and drafts are due by 6 p.m. the day before class. Late assignments will be given a zero. If you cannot make it to class, you will have 24 hours to post that assignment.

**Blog comments:**

In addition to homework posts, you are encouraged to comment and engage your peers on the blog. The blog is in place to facilitate discussion, and that can't happen unless you are talking to each other. Comments should go beyond "I like it," or they're not really useful. Keep the comments relevant and civil.

**Go nuts:**

Don't feel that the blog is just limited to what you're required to post. If there's a website or story or multimedia project that pertains to class or that you think your classmates might find interesting, please feel free to post it on the blog or share it via Twitter or another type of social media.

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**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Food/drink:** Absolutely none is allowed in the classroom.

This course meets the SED requirements of at least 45 hours of class instruction and 90 hours of homework as assigned in the syllabus.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every class, fully prepared, and on time. Attendance will be recorded on a sign-in sheet located at the front of the room at the beginning of class. If it is necessary to miss a class, students must get approval from the instructor by phone or email in advance. More than three (3) absences will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade. Each subsequent absence will result in the loss of 1/3 of a letter grade.

**Punctuality:** Lateness is disruptive to the instructor and other students in the class. Lateness will result in a reduced final grade. Reporters do not last long if they show up late to press conferences, court hearings, council meetings or interviews. The same applies to this class.

In general, all stories must include at least 3 live sources. The final story requires at least 6 live sources. Using quotes from other publications without fully attributing them will result in an F for that assignment. All stories must be accompanied by a complete list of sources. These should include titles, phone numbers, and email addresses for anyone quoted in your story. Websites must have URLs. Printed sources must have bibliographical information. I will randomly fact check your work during the semester by using these source lists, calling your sources to thank them for their help and requesting feedback. Stories that are not accompanied by source lists will receive an F.

You are not permitted in this class to write the same story that you covered for another class or media outlet on campus.

Here are the criteria for letter grades:

A+ = 97 or higher

A = 94-96

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D = 65-69

F = 64 and lower.

**Important:**

Larger assignments will be judged as outlined when they are assigned. You won't earn more points by writing longer than assigned. Comply with the directions for word length, write succinctly, stay relevant, and always provide specific examples or evidence to support your point.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own. According to the Academic Misconduct Policy of the LIU Post Task Force on Plagiarism, plagiarism is defined as "representing the words or ideas of another as one's own (whether knowingly or in ignorance) in any academic activity. This principle applies to texts published in print or online, to manuscripts, to your own work, and to the work of other students. All suspected academic misconduct will be appropriately handled in accordance with the university's policies. Papers in which violation of academic honesty occur will receive an F grade with no possibility of rewriting. A second violation of academic honesty by the same student will be penalized by an F for the course.

**Copyright:** Copyright is the exclusive legal right of a creator or owner to reproduce, publish, adapt, sell or distribute his or her original work of authorship. It covers literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and other intellectual works. The published or broadcast work of student media professionals, just like any other author or creator, is protected by copyright. The Media Arts Department diligently protects its own copyrighted materials and respects the copyrights of others. The Department expects students to abide by all university copyright policies. Although the fair use defense may permit students to incorporate copyrighted material into their work in certain circumstances, when in doubt about the use of any materials created by a third party, always consult with your instructor.

**Disruptive Behavior:** All cell phones and other devices must be OFF, not just switched to "vibrate," during the entire class, unless otherwise instructed. Trips to the food machines, doing homework for other classes, or otherwise being inattentive during class are not appreciated by either the instructor or your classmates. In this class, good manners really do matter. The key to success in this class is to come prepared, listen and participate.

**Professional Dress Policy:** When interviewing a news source, remember that you are a working reporter. Students are expected to act and dress in a professional, businesslike manner. When emailing, use your LIU email address rather than your personal email address.

**Remember:** you represent our class, just as newspaper reporters represent their newspapers. Treat others with dignity and act professionally. In return, you have the right to be treated as

bona fide members of the press by government officials and others you come into contact with in the course of your reporting.

### **IDENTIFYING YOURSELF:**

When reporting, students are obligated to make clear to sources that they are working on stories that may be published or broadcast. Students should not tell a source: "Don't worry, this is just for a class." A reporter's sources must understand that information and quotes provided can appear in print or online or be broadcast.

### **ASSIGNMENT TURN-IN:**

Your turn-ins for your homework will be mediated through the class blog. Homework will be posted there, as well as first and final versions of your larger projects. We will have first version turn-in dates and final deadlines for every project except Assignment 1. The first version should showcase finished work, but I will give you extra time to make changes as suggested during in-class critiques that day.

**Assignment 1 – Mobile reporting:** Our first assignment will be a mobile-reporting assignment. You will be required to attend an event and either report in real-time (submitting tweets, photos and videos via a smartphone or other device). You will also be required to write a follow-up story for the web on deadline. You will not be required to turn in anything extra after the deadline. We will review all materials in class.

**Assignment 2 – Photo story:** Post to the blog your photo story, which may be done in a group. Tweet out the assignment and share in other ways via social media. Write a follow-up blog post about the traction you received via social media and additional ideas for next time.

**Assignment 3 – Audio story (or audio slideshow):** Post the slideshow/audio story and corresponding text story to the blog.

**Assignment 4 -- Video story:** Post the video with the story to the class blog.

**Assignment 5 – E-Portfolio:** You will set up an e-portfolio that showcases your work.

### **DEADLINES:**

All work is due on time. Final versions of projects not turned in at the beginning of class on the due date will not be accepted late, and the grade entered for the work will be an "F." Late or missing first versions of projects result in a deduction of one letter grade from the final version. If you see a potential problem, talk to me BEFORE deadline. If your work is in the wrong format, or is a blank disc, I will not accept a new one, so check your work.

### **EMAIL / BLACKBOARD:**

There is a Blackboard account for this course. Check daily for announcements.

### **EQUIPMENT:**

I recommend having your own portable hard drive so you can have a copy with you for your portfolio.

You will need access to a digital camera and smartphone or iPhone touch (for sharing content), as well a digital recorder with a microphone. A smartphone can be used for audio (better if it's accompanied by a microphone).

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### **GRADING BREAKDOWN:**

- **Participation/Effort/Homework: 30%**  
Participating is vital. You should be progressing steadily upward throughout the semester.

Participation includes social media use. Homework is graded on a 0-4 scale, so you will need to make sure you put effort in to receive a good grade here. Posts must be unique – repeating a subject of a post already on the blog from another student gets no credit, so check before you post. Pay close attention to blogging best practices and web-friendliness – you are graded on that in addition to the content of the post.

- **Assignment 1 – Mobile Report: 15%**

You will be required to attend an event and either report in real-time (submitting tweets, photos and videos via a smartphone or other device). You will also be required to write a follow-up story for the web on deadline. You will not be required to turn in anything extra after the deadline. We will review all materials in class. We will organize a Storify story in class.

- **Assignment 2 – The Listicle / Photo Story: 10%**

You will tell a story through photos and text and present it as a list.

- **Assignment 3 – Audio story: 15%**

You will create an audio slideshow or tell an audio story (podcast style) based around an interesting business or person within a chosen class theme. Profile the business or person using photos and audio, and write a 500-word story as well. You will be graded equally on the quality of the written story and the slideshow/podcast.

- **Assignment 4 – Video & Story: 15%**

You will report and write a trend or issue story and submit with a corresponding video. All of this content, again, should be shared via social media.

- **Assignment 5 – E-Portfolio - 15%**

Create an e-portfolio that showcases your work.

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## **COURSE CALENDAR AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS**

### **WEEK 1**

**Monday, Jan. 18**

**SCHOOL CLOSED // NO CLASS**

**Wednesday, Jan. 20**

**Introduction:** Review syllabus and requirements. Talk about everyone's experience with multimedia and share information about mobile devices at each student's disposal. Look at different types of social media (starting with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and talk about the digital media landscape and RSS feeds (using Feedly). Set up all of these in class if you don't already have. Complete Google Form during class (<http://goo.gl/forms/XwJkbFs6de>) on your background and what you hope to get out of the class.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Start using social media at home and setting up Feedly account. Read Briggs Chapter 2 - "Blogging and microblogging"). See the "Evaluate other blogs" heading on page 88 and bring to class a list of three blogs that fit this criteria, with an analysis of each using the criteria mentioned. You should pick a particular area of interest now (ex. women's health, local politics or education) and use throughout when choosing media and journalists to follow/write about. Be ready to discuss blogging on Monday.

### **WEEK 2**

**Monday, Jan. 25**

Set up our class blog using WordPress. Talk about best practices for blogging, how to post to the class blog, and content management systems generally. Write first blog post in class on the three blogs that you've chosen (see above assignment). Also go through social media sites that everyone has set up and tweet about this blog post.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Follow your classmates, 10 journalists that you admire (some working within an area of

interest), 10 news feeds and five topic-specific feeds on Twitter. Also follow five news sites on Facebook. Follow the same or like sites/blogs (including the three that you chose) using Feedly. Write a blog post about this assignment. How will this “news diet” give you a leg up on the competition?

### **Wednesday, Jan. 27**

Quick review of blogging and social media basics. Hands-on learning about mobile reporting and the tools at your disposal. Use our smartphones to go over how to tweet, take photos, shoot video, etc. and then how to post to the class blog. Simulate a news event or find an event happening on campus that day. Some students are the reporters, others are the photographers, a few are the editors/producers, etc. Spend this time collecting information to tell a story as a TEAM using Storify or another tool.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Briggs Chapter 4 - “Going mobile.” Find one event for Assignment 1 (must take place the week of Feb. 1 and post the details (time, date, place, info and Web link) to the class blog BY SUNDAY, JAN. 30 before class. Include in your post: Why would you want to cover this as a mobile journalist? Why would it WORK in this online / multimedia format?

## **WEEK 3**

### **Monday, Feb. 1**

Discuss Assignment 1, which will take place this week. How to interview people in a mobile news environment. What are best practices?

ASSIGNMENT: Assignment 1 will take place this week. Be prepared to spend multiple hours in real time at an event and after an event. A post-event recap blog post detailing what worked and didn’t work is due. Included in this blog post should be a mention about other media that attended and what you would do different next time. BEFORE the event, practice mobile reporting skills. Take 10 photos with mobile device and post the best three — that tell about this assignment as you’re doing it. Will review Wednesday.

### **Wednesday, Feb. 3**

Review camera basics for shooting and handling. Discuss Assignment 2.

ASSIGNMENT: Finish assignment 1. Read Briggs Chapter 5 – “Visual storytelling with photographs.” Start thinking about the next Listicle/ Photo Story assignment. Come up with three IDEAS to discuss in class. As a mobile journalism recap, post a blog post on a good piece of mobile journalism that you’ve seen recently. Explain why and show how they used social media.

## **WEEK 4**

### **Monday, Feb. 8**

Final wrap-up of mobile journalism: What worked? What didn’t work? Where did you have issues? Pitch session on the Listicle/Photo story assignment. Discuss telling a story with photos using different types of images and creating a flow from one to the next.

ASSIGNMENT: Find three listicles/photo stories online. In the class blog, post the links to all three and analyze one. What worked? What didn’t work? Look at how they engaged with their audience on social media. Is this journalism? Why or why not? Continue working on Assignment 2.

### **Wednesday, Feb. 10**

Effective caption writing. Look to examples from blog for good/bad.

ASSIGNMENT: Continue working on Assignment 2. Tweet and share comments on mobile or other apps throughout. Find and follow five photojournalists on Twitter, Facebook and/or Instagram. Write a blog post on one of them and how they best utilize social media to share their work. In prep for Wednesday, read Briggs Chapter 9 – “Building a Digital Audience for News.”

## **WEEK 5**

**Monday, Feb. 15 -- PRESIDENT'S DAY, NO CLASSES**

**Tuesday, Feb. 16 -- TUESDAY CLASSES SUSPENDED // MONDAY CLASSES MEET**

Search engine optimization, Google Trends and working in an online newsroom. Headline writing, packaging stories, adding photos/video and links, beating the competition. Possible guest.

ASSIGNMENT: Follow a breaking news story on three news websites — newspaper site, broadcast site and blog. What did they do the same? What did they do different? How did they use social media? Where did their content appear in search? Who won, and why?

**Wednesday, Feb. 17**

Review the assignment on breaking news and online journalism. What are some of the challenges and ethical dilemmas that occur when working in an online newsroom (review examples)? When is it appropriate to link to another site? How do you balance speed vs. accuracy? And present news in real time? Plus, a brief discussion on what role COMMUNITY plays in a digital news operation.

ASSIGNMENT: Think about the examples provided in class about speed vs. accuracy. Do more research on one of these case studies and write a blog post on your findings and key takeaways. How could the problems presented be avoided in the future? Finish Assignment 2.

## **WEEK 6**

**Monday, Feb. 22**

Review Assignment 2. Share in class. Discuss social media traction. Who got the most social media likes/shares etc. on their project. Why?

ASSIGNMENT: Write a blog post on one of your classmates' photo project. What worked for you? How did the social media strategy work? Play their editor — what might you have done differently (stay constructive). Read pages 171-196 in Briggs textbook (Chapter 7 – “Making Audio Journalism Visible”). Prepare a personal story about how you decided to take up journalism and how you ended up at LIU Post.

**Wednesday, Feb. 24**

Telling a story is important no matter the medium. So what is most important with audio? Talk about podcasts — share a few snippets in class of some that are awesome, including a podcast focusing on storytelling, a Q&A and a piece of narrative journalism. Then jump into the audio workshop. Learning to use recorders and import audio. Interview a partner and have them tell their story. Learn to edit and cut to 3 minutes or less.

ASSIGNMENT: Listen to one of five podcasts provided in class (multiple episodes – 1.5-2 hours of listening). Blog about that podcast and what you liked and didn't like. On transparency, interviews and more.

## **WEEK 7**

**Monday, Feb. 29**

Talk about the audio assignment and pick a class theme. Continue audio workshop and post final audio story to blog with brief commentary.

ASSIGNMENT: Consider what you'll do for your audio story (or audio slideshow). You'll do this assignment alone. Prepare a pitch for class and a backup. Why is this story best told through audio? How will you report? Post to the class blog for review in class.

## **Wednesday, March 2**

Pitch class for the audio project. You must stay on theme and have a story approved by the end of class. Intro to audio slideshows — is this still an important type of journalism? Every student should bring some photos of themselves to work with that correspond to the story they told to their partner.

ASSIGNMENT: Start reporting for assignment 3.

## **SPRING RECESS -- NO CLASSES MARCH 7-11**

### **WEEK 8**

#### **Monday, March 14**

Quick review of Assignment 3 and editing audio / audio slideshows. Discussion about challenges with the assignment. Bring something to work on in class. Will have time to ask questions and share with a classmate for editing notes.

ASSIGNMENT: Get first draft of audio story ready to go. Find and post to the class blog an example of a good audio slideshow (stills and audio piece) and share your thoughts on what worked and what didn't in the piece. How did the photos add to the story's impact?

#### **Wednesday, March 16, 2015**

First draft of audio project is due. Plan on having snippets of audio ready to play and doing a table read, or have a rough draft posted to the blog. Review in class for critique. If you chose NOT to do audio slideshow — why? ALSO: Info on finding a story (for video project).

ASSIGNMENT: Read Briggs text (Chapter 7 - "Telling stories with video"). Visit three different sections of a news Web site and identify three stories that could have had great video.

### **WEEK 9**

#### **Monday, March 21**

Review Web videos and what makes them different from broadcast video.

ASSIGNMENT: Final draft of audio assignment due. Post to class blog.

#### **Wednesday, March 23**

Video review workshop day 1. Shoot a quick Man on the Street video on an assigned topic during class with a partner and come back.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Chapters 2 and 3 of "Air Words" handout and do the exercises via the blog. If we didn't get a chance in class, review ALL audio stories on blog and write up a blog post about ONE of these stories. Why does it stand out?

### **WEEK 10**

#### **Monday, March 28**

Critique homework exercises and dive deeper. Possible guest.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Chapters 4-7 of "Air Words" handout and do the exercises. Prepare one strong STORY (pre-reporting necessary) and a back-up story idea for project 4.

#### **Wednesday, March 30**

Pitch stories for Assignment 4.

ASSIGNMENT: Come to class on Monday with a detailed write-up of what you are doing for your final story. Who are the sources and what have they already told you? What kind of shots will you shoot for the

video? What will you write about for your story? Pitch in class.

## **WEEK 11**

### **Monday, April 4**

Looking at long-form video, and how it works and doesn't on the Web. How you can do it, and when you should and shouldn't. Bringing together the full multimedia package on the web. When to use text, audio, photo, video, etc.

ASSIGNMENT: Find a long-form, enterprise project to blog about. Should have multiple components or have been published over multiple days. Why did you pick this story? How did social media strategy add to work? Read Briggs Chapter 8 – "Data-Driven Journalism and Digitizing Your Life")

### **Wednesday, April 6**

Intro to data journalism. What kinds of data-driven journalism are out there? Playing around with some data tools in class. How can we incorporate a piece of data journalism into our final stories? What are your options for learning some of these skills at LIU Post? Possible guest speaker in-class or via Skype.

ASSIGNMENT: Find a compelling piece of data journalism and blog about it. How did the news organization use the data to tell the story?

## **WEEK 12**

### **Monday, April 11**

Career day: Gearing your résumé / LinkedIn for online jobs, what jobs are out there, what's a freelance journalist (or journalism student to do)?

ASSIGNMENT: Read articles and audio shared via social media and class blog / Blackboard. Blog about one of these readings and one of the stories of an established journalist. What is your strategy for landing a job in journalism? Incorporate takeaways from the readings/audio. Get Assignment 4 ready to share.

### **Wednesday, April 13**

First version videos and written stories of Assignment 4 due posted to blog. See page 4 for turn-in details. In-class critique day.

ASSIGNMENT: Go back and keep working.

## **WEEK 13**

### **Monday, April 18**

Creating websites & portfolios: Using the WordPress, SquareSpace or Contently to showcase your work. What is the purpose of having a site like this?

ASSIGNMENT: Look through the websites of three journalists (maybe the ones you've been following on Twitter, elsewhere). Analyze two of the sites. What do you like about them? What could they do better?

### **Wednesday, April 20**

Work on your e-portfolio.

ASSIGNMENT: Finish your project!

## **STUDY/SNOW DAYS/ALTERNATE CLASS DAYS -- APRIL 27-28**

## **WEEK 14**

### **Monday, April 25**

Review everyone's e-portfolios. Final takeaways.

ASSIGNMENT: Final thoughts blog post. What advice would you give a student journalist just entering JOU 5, and what are your thoughts about electronic media before and after the class?

**NOTES:**

- Schedule and assignments are subject to change.
- Keep an eye on the blog and your email for notifications.

## Assignment turn-in form

Please turn in an electronic version of this form on the CD/DVD with your final version project and a hard copy printout in the envelope.

Name:

Project #:

Topic:

1. What are some of the challenges you faced on this assignment?
2. What are some things that went well?
3. What could you have improved?
4. What grade would you give yourself and why?
5. Not factoring in effort, what grade would you give the work and why?
6. Please lists the names, titles, phone numbers and email addresses of all sources in this story: