



SYLLABUS

VISUAL JOURNALISM

Instructor: Simon Waldman
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Contact Hours: 40

LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

There are now almost seven billion smartphones in the world, which means that the vast majority of the global population has the ability to shoot stills and video. But only a tiny minority has the knowledge and skill to produce effective, engaging and accurate content. Those with that knowledge are significantly more attractive to potential employers in many sectors of business and commerce.

This course concentrates on the essential principles that underpin the creation of high-quality visual journalism. It combines intensely practical sessions covering the skills and techniques necessary for producing broadcast standard material with discussion and debate on the shifting tectonic plates in the industry. Students will hear from – and be able to question - leading figures from major TV and online news organisations.

Each week, we will examine different aspects of the production of visual journalism and explore the changing nature of the medium. What are the ingredients needed for an attention-grabbing package? Does EVERY picture tell a story? What makes material shareable? How should journalists frame their questions to elicit the sound-bite answers they seek? How should each shot be framed to achieve the best results? What does the phrase “citizen journalist” really mean? And, now that everyone can put video material online, what will be the lasting impact of the “citizen publisher”? Much of the material we create will use equipment that (almost) every student already owns: a mobile phone.

The course will build towards the creation of a programme entirely devised and produced by the students. Recording will take place in a professional London studio in the final week.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the course:

- To familiarise students with the core skills and competencies involved in visual journalism
- To explore recent technical and stylistic developments in the production and delivery of visual journalism

- To explain the principles underpinning video news production
- To give students an insight into the rapid changes in the area both in the UK and worldwide

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:

- An understanding of what makes attractive, compelling video
- An awareness of the differing styles and methods employed by traditional broadcasters and digital providers – and how they might converge more in future
- A basic ability to use their own mobile phone to create arresting visual material
- An understanding of which apps are most useful in aiding high quality production
- An elementary grasp of how to build an engaging linear programme running order
- An appetite for further investigation and experience

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught through a combination of online group work, guest speakers, practical and written exercises (both analytical and journalistic) and individual feedback.

ESSENTIAL READING

- Christian Parkinson, *Camera Confidential: How to Succeed as a Video Journalist*
- Ivo Burum and Stephen Quinn, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook: How to make Broadcast Videos with an iPhone or iPad* (2016)
- Reuters Institute: Trends and Predictions 2023
- <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2023>
- Reuters Institute: Digital News Report 2022 (2023 Report to be published soon)
- <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022>
- Pew Research Centre: Social Media and News Fact Sheet
<https://www.pewresearch.org/journalism/fact-sheet/social-media-and-news-fact-sheet/>

In addition, topical articles and features will be specified prior to the commencement of the course, and links relating to current news stories featuring in class discussions will be circulated during the course.

Students should consume a wide range of news media: broadcast and digital. These should include the weekly magazine *The Economist*, the news websites of the BBC, the Guardian, plus Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, Vice and AJ+ (on YouTube or app).

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Three multimedia visual journalism projects and one piece of written work will be required from students during this course, as outlined below. These exercises will attract respectively 10%, 20%, 30% and 30% of available marks. The remaining 10% will be awarded for participation in classes and attendance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

It is expected that any work submitted for this course is entirely the student's own work. If you have relied on any source material, you will need to identify those. Failure to

acknowledge a source could leave you open to the charge of plagiarism and, at the least, result in failure to secure a passing grade for this course.

ATTENDANCE

Every class must be attended. See attendance policy for details.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each week, there will be a guiding theme to the course about an aspect of visual journalism – and as much as possible, guest speakers will be scheduled to fit this timetable. There will be a guest speaker most weeks. Students will be required to submit a piece of written or visual work in each of the first four weeks.

Week One

- Introduction to visual journalism
- Pace of change in the industry
- Proliferation of providers and platforms
- First mobile exercise

Written work:

Why do we need journalists? Or don't we? (700-800 words)

Required reading: *Chapters 1 and 5 (pp11-25, pp99-124), MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook*

Week Two

- Key elements of a video news package
- Camera craft (1)
- Writing to pictures (1)
- Interviewing techniques and styles: getting the answers you want – and using the ones you didn't expect
- Second mobile exercise

Multimedia work: *A 60 second (maximum 75 seconds) visual project with commentary and/or captions capturing the essence of London life: landmarks, traditions, customs, culture, diversity, eccentricity*

Required reading: *Digital News Factsheet (2023) and Chapter 1 (pp10-16), Camera Confidential*

Week Three

- Camera craft (2): How to film like the professionals using your mobile phone; framing/angles; lighting; sound; presentation masterclass; shooting a p to c
- Day in the life of the roving cameraman
- Third mobile exercise

Multimedia work: *90 second (maximum two minutes) visual project – an interview with covering “B-roll” - shot on phone, edited on phone or laptop*

Required reading: Chapter 7 (pp151-175), MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook and Chapter 4 (pp57-71), Camera Confidential

Week Four

- Camera craft (3)
- Writing to pictures (2)
- Essential editing tips
- Fourth mobile exercise

Multimedia work: 75 second (maximum 90 seconds) final visual project – shot and edited on phone, with commentary and captions, subject to be discussed in advance with tutor

Required reading: Chapters 9 and 10 (pp199- 220, pp223-235), MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook and Chapter 4 (pp72-86), Camera Confidential

Week Five

- Recording of 30-45 minute programme devised and produced by students
- Course review

Multimedia work: Preparation of programme running order, scripts and associated media

Required reading: Chapter 11 (pp237-251), MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook and Chapter 2 (pp17-39), Camera Confidential

Speakers

Provisionally scheduled speakers include:

- *Julian Worricker, BBC News presenter*
- *Emily Deeker, Sky News assistant editor*
- *Jonathan Sumberg, BBC News camera operator*
- *Kasia Madera, BBC News producer / presenter*