

DRAFT SYLLABUS

**International Food Reporting
Instructor: Naira Davlashyan**

**Language of Instruction: English
UO Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 40**

Lyon, France, Summer 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In literature and pop culture, French cuisine has long been idealized (hello Ratatouille). Today it holds a special place in the global culinary landscape and its schools and traditions hold a considerable draw over (budding) professional chefs and amateur cooks alike.

At the same time, in the context of compounding crises and evolving demographics, food journalism remains a vibrant, engaging side door into covering not only culinary trends and upcoming stars but also a broad variety of topics and shedding new light on local and global issues.

Through this course - through lectures, peer discussions, conversations with guest speakers, and practical creative exercises and while abroad themselves - students will be given the opportunity to reflect on the ideals and concept of food journalism outside of their home country, as well as earn valuable experience reporting while immersed in a European culture with rich culinary tradition and world-famous chefs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce students to the principles and practices of food reporting through the lens of covering this outside of their own country and culture. It will do this by providing them with an overview of the history, theory, criticisms, and practice of the field.

Students will explore the essential skills required to pitch, report, write, edit, and be published when reporting about food and the world of cooking, as a freelancer, a documentary maker or a staff reporter. They will also examine the ethical, legal, and social responsibilities that journalists have while covering some of the highest-stakes questions when it comes to high-end restaurants, and how politics, gender, culture and languages come into play.

This class will explore the different approaches you can use to cover news about food and cooking, across formats, mediums and platforms, from the ground. A special focus will be given to how to cover these stories in a way that's factual and faithful for the audience at home, and respectful for the people and cultures covered.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. **Understand** the state of food reporting, its styles and approaches, etc.
2. **Explain** the defined characteristics of food reporting.
3. **Know** how to pitch a food story to an editor or a publication.
4. **Use** your pre-existing reporting skills to produce one well-researched piece in the format of your choice.
5. **Demonstrate** critical thinking in evaluating a selection of award-winning reportages in various formats.
6. **Critique** your own ideas/output – and those of your peers – on food reporting.
7. **Recognize** the opportunities and challenges for journalists operating in a foreign country and in a closed-off industry.
8. **Develop** an awareness of how technology and culture affect how cooking, cuisine and the restaurant industry are reported on, including on social media, and the role that important questions - such as power, language and money -play in the present, and future, of this journalistic genre.
9. **Discuss** how the interlocking evolutions of the climate, demographics, trends and tastes affect food media coverage.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will blend lectures and discussion, alongside conversations with guest speakers, with practical exercises, as well as your own reading and research.

You will be expected to critically consume food journalism stories, throughout the course and to consistently share your thoughts on the reading (and content via other mediums e.g. podcasts). Given how large and global this field is – each student will play a key role in helping their peers to develop their own knowledge of this rapidly evolving environment.

Learning methods will include:

- **Discussing** the history and evolution of food journalism.
- **Researching** and analyzing examples of food reporting and criticisms.
- **Presenting** your own research and ideas to your class peers and instructor.
- **Producing** high-quality journalistic work on food and cooking.
- **Publishing** your work on a public-facing class website/blog.
- **Reflecting** on your learning throughout the program.

GUEST SPEAKERS

As part of this class, you will talk to, and hear from, leading international journalists and foreign correspondents professionals, based in France or abroad.

Possible names include:

- **Nora Bouazzouni** - journalist and writer of several books about food
- **Julie Van Ossel** - journalist and producer of the [La Recette](#) podcast
- **Marta Rodriguez**- Spanish journalist living in Lyon, producer of The [Star Ingredient](#) podcast
- **Naira Davlashyan** - Russian journalist living in Lyon, producer of The [Star Ingredient](#) podcast

COURSE OUTLINE

Each week there will be a guiding theme that will shape our discussions and creative/research work. Where possible, work and guest speakers will be orientated around that theme. However, this is subject to their availability. The course schedule may also change depending on class needs and other developments. A more detailed schedule will be made available at the start of the class.

Sample outline:

Week 1: **History and evolution of food reporting** – setting the scene (classic pieces, pop culture representation...)

Week 2: **Today's food journalism landscape** – styles, challenges and criticisms.

Week 3: **Reporting Week** – Finding, developing and producing a food news story from France.

Week 4: **Multimedia week** – Telling international stories beyond the written word.

Week 5: **Field trips** Exploring the whole production chain of the food industry through field trips to farms/vineyard regions around the city of Lyon, France.

COURSEWORK

You'll be given a detailed brief, on Canvas and in class, for each assignment.

Activity	Tasks	% of Grade	Points
Writing	1. Food reporting	30%	200
	2. Restaurant criticism	10%	100
		40%	400
Research / Reflection	3. Weekly reflection x 5	15%	150
	4. Media content analysis (<i>group presentation</i>)	5%	50
	5. Lessons learned from guest speakers (article)	5%	50
		25%	250
Multi-media	6. Multi-media story	15%	150
		15%	150
Other	7. Class participation and engagement	20%	200
		20%	200
TOTAL		100%	1,000

Instructor biography

Born and raised in Lyon, France, [Thomas Seymat](#) is an award-winning journalism leader with a decade of experience in innovative, collaborative strategic projects at the intersection of editorial, audience, and business. As a bilingual, globally-minded educator and mentor, Thomas has a strong track record of leading teams and initiatives in the rapidly changing media landscape.

Thomas currently serves as the Editorial Projects and Development Manager at Euronews, Europe's leading international news channel, providing global, multilingual & independent news with a European perspective. He has been instrumental in the organization's ongoing digital-first transformation to unify the TV and digital newsrooms. This has included designing and launching an internal e-learning platform, coordinating editorial projects with Euronews affiliates, and securing funding for innovative media projects.

While on a sabbatical from Euronews in 2018-2019, Thomas was a Residential Fellow at the Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI), Missouri School of Journalism. While participating in this prestigious program he designed an audience research tool for VR/360° content creators. He also previously worked as a VR editor and bilingual digital journalist at Euronews.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Thomas is also a researcher in the field of journalism and media innovation. He has contributed to industry-facing research, such as his work for the Reynolds Journalism Institute, where he [published](#) "Listening to the audience is key to improving immersive 360/VR experiences." Thomas also [wrote a book section](#) on immersive storytelling in Pignard-Cheynel and van Dievoet's "Journalisme mobile" (2019).

As an expert, Thomas has been interviewed on innovation and journalism for numerous books, reports, and academic research at the graduate and post-graduate levels. Some notable examples include [University of Oregon Professor Damian Radcliffe's "Understanding and Implementing Innovation in News Media and Journalism,"](#) the AP's ["A guide for journalists in a world of immersive 3-D content,"](#) the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's ["VR for News: The New Reality?"](#) and Bosworth & Sarah's ["Crafting Stories for Virtual Reality"](#) (2018).

Thomas holds an Erasmus Mundus MA in Journalism, Media, and Globalization from a joint program of Aarhus University, the University of Amsterdam, and Hamburg University, as well as an undergraduate and MA in Journalism from Sciences Po Lyon.

As an educator and media leader fluent in both French and English, Thomas has held adjunct professor roles at Sciences Po, CFJ Paris, EFAP Lyon, and the Missouri School of Journalism. He is also an experienced public speaker, having presented at numerous international events and conferences on media and journalism.