



GEO

Study Abroad

SYLLABUS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS JOURNALISM

Instructor: Andrew Whitehead
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Hours: 40

Language of Instruction: English

REMOTE/LONDON
Summer Journalism

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the practice of news journalism and the manner in which it is being remoulded by new digital platforms and increasing competition. The focus will be on journalism in Britain and the United States and we will also look briefly at English-language news platforms in other parts of the world. The key requirement is that you are curious about the world and the way it is changing. You will need to read widely about how the world is reported. This course is more about journalism than about how to be a journalist - but you will have the chance to write and report.

At the time of writing, the world - and the world's news media - has one focus: the coronavirus pandemic. We will look at how that has been reported and analysed - how journalists and newsrooms operate through a 'lockdown' - and how this worldwide emergency has reshaped patterns of news media consumption.

We will look at the ethics of news reporting and the difficulties – of safety, balance, authority – in covering war and conflict. Can journalists, should journalists, be impartial in the face of the increase in violence evident in many parts of the world? Is the era of the foreign correspondent, flown in from afar to cover political unrest and insurgencies, now over? Do we have too much reporting of violence and political rows, and not enough coverage of the environment, health, gender issues and lifestyles?

The course will also look at the rise of citizen journalism and the impact this is having on news reporting, and at the growth of social news, everything from Facebook and Twitter to the news

and lifestyle websites aimed at the young. We will look at the controversy about 'Fake News' and the measures being taken to combat it. We will discuss the rise of new digital platforms and whether the 'mainstream media' has a future

Every week, we will also look at a topical news story and the different ways in which it is being reported across countries and platforms (TV, press, websites).

This is a virtual course. The instructor will be in London and classes will be conducted on Zoom or similar software. An extensive range of guest speakers will talk to you, and respond to your comments and questions, using this software. There will be one-to-one tutorials, probably on two occasions during the course. You will be required to view videos and documentaries, and to read prescribed articles and posts, in preparation for specific lessons; links or guidance how to find these items will be provided.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught through a combination of virtual class work, individual and small group tutorials and discussions, guest speakers and marked exercises (both analytical and journalistic).

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Four pieces of written work will be required from students during this course, as outlined below. These exercises will each attract 20% of available marks - or 30% for the substantial piece of reportage. The remaining 10% will be awarded for participation and attendance.

Academic Integrity: it is expected that any written 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. Any absence other than for sickness will affect your grade.

GUEST SPEAKERS

There will be at least one guest speaker each week. This programme has yet to be confirmed. To give you some idea of the range of speakers anticipated, in previous years we have heard from:

- a young and up-and-coming journalist now with Britain's biggest-selling daily newspaper, the *Sun*

- a prominent investigative journalist with one of the UK's best regarded papers, the *Telegraph*
- a onetime BBC correspondent in Washington and in Jakarta
- a former Beijing-based foreign correspondent
- an editor with the BBC News website
- a broadcast journalist who specialises in using and verifying 'user generated content' and citizen journalism
- a social media specialist who has worked in senior roles for both BuzzFeed and the BBC

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Week One**: introduction to the changing face of news journalism; how the coronavirus has been reported and how the emergency has reshaped patterns of media consumption; do those who consume journalism trust their news providers?
- **Required reading and viewing**: the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism posts an annual report on trends in journalism; you will be advised closer to time of reportage of the pandemic to be discussed, but as an indication of the range of material we will look at throughout the course, this could well include the following:
 - a BBC TV report based on access to a hospital Intensive Care Unit treating COVID patients <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrfRs0WeShU>
 - a Reuters news agency 'long read' analysing the British response to the emerging threat posed by the coronavirus <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-path-speci-idUSKBN21P1VF>
 - an article in the *Atlantic* magazine discussing historical analogies with the pandemic and its potential long-term implications: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/revolution-only-getting-started/609463/>

Written work: An examination (500 words) of a specific piece of reporting on the pandemic discussing its strengths, weaknesses, intended audience, assumptions and biases

- **Week Two**: what is "fake" news, and how much does it matter? what can and should the tech giants do to root out inaccurate and alarmist 'news'?; the impact of social media, particularly of sites aimed at younger users
 - **Recommended reading and viewing**: Matthew d'Ancona, *Post Truth: the new war on truth and how to fight back* and other articles to be specified
- Written work**: An analysis (500 words) of an aspect of the debate about 'Fake News'

- **Week Three:** the digital revolution in global news, and how the big broadcasters are responding to the impact particularly of sites and platforms aimed at younger users; the growth of ‘citizen journalism’ – is everyone a reporter/editor now? is the age of the old-style foreign correspondent over?

Required reading and viewing: look carefully through the websites of both established news media organisations (broadcasters such as the BBC, CNN, Fox and al Jazeera; newspapers including the *New York Times*, the *Guardian* and the Mail Online) and newer, digital-only platforms such as HuffPo, BuzzFeed and Vice

Written work: A piece of independent writing (800 words) in the style of a digital news platform

- **Week Four:** reporting war and conflict, issues of balance and impartiality - when does impassioned reporting become partisan reporting?; is there a future for investigative journalism?; we will also look at the BBC's 50:50 project to increase women's representation in news and current affairs output

Required reading and viewing: You can find out about the BBC 50:50 project here: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/5050>; immerse yourself in the websites and broadcasts of the BBC and other commanding providers of global news - specific articles and reports to be specified

- **Week Five:** is journalism an "honest" profession? what are the values and ethics of news journalism (we will have a 'contingencies' exercise in class to explore practical issues about media ethics)? the changing news and media environment in emerging powers – is the news media creating an informed citizenry?; and the growth of ‘citizen journalism’ – is everyone a reporter/editor now and is the news media becoming more democratic?

Required reading and viewing: details to be confirmed, but be sure to trawl through Indian news websites, those linked to newspapers (Indian Express, The Hindu), to TV news channels (ndtv.com) and digital start-ups (Quint, The Wire and Scroll)

Written work: A substantial piece of reportage (1,200 words) based in part on first-hand observation or interaction suitable for a newspaper or website or for broadcast. Each of you will need your instructor's sign-off for both your topic and your means of gathering information - ***all reporting must be strictly in accordance with the then current COVID guidelines.***

COURSE READINGS AND PREPARATION

Topical articles will be specified prior to the commencement of the course, and articles relating to current news stories featuring in class discussions will be circulated during the course. It is imperative that you consume a range of news media: broadcast news, newspaper, magazine, conventional news website, new-style website. These should include the weekly magazine *The*

Economist, the news websites of the BBC, the *Guardian*, and as best you can (these are subscription sites) the *Telegraph* and the *New York Times*. Sites visited should include Huffington Post, BuzzFeed and al Jazeera.

You should also be familiar with:

- Matthew d'Ancona, *Post Truth: the new war on truth and how to fight back*, 2017 (the entire book, 149pp, is required reading) - this is available cheaply [in both digital and print formats](#)
- <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/> - the website of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford, which has a wealth of topical articles and its annual look at trends in journalism and the emerging technologies it relies upon to reach a mass audience: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2020>

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides an introduction to methods of news journalism, changes within the profession and particularly the impact of internet-based news providers and what is often called citizen journalism. Students will consider the ethics of news journalism and gain an understanding of issues surrounding impartiality and inherent bias. They will explore aspects of crisis and conflict reporting, both reportage and analysis, and will discuss the phenomenon of "fake" news and why it is attracting such controversy. Students will be able to demonstrate basic journalistic writing or presentational skills.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Andrew Whitehead was the Editor of BBC World Service News, the BBC's biggest radio network reaching almost one-hundred-million listeners around the world. During his career, he has been a foreign correspondent, a correspondent covering British politics, a news presenter and a maker of award-winning documentaries. Andrew is currently an honorary professor at the University of Nottingham and he also teaches at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, India. He has spent a semester as a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan. He continues to contribute to newspapers, journals and news websites as well as to radio and TV networks in India and the UK.