



SYLLABUS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS JOURNALISM

Instructor Name: Andrew Whitehead

Contact Hrs: 40

**Language of Instruction: English
LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the practice of international news journalism, and the manner in which it is being remoulded by new digital platforms and increasing competition. 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 – and you will have the chance to write and report.

Every week, we will look at a topical news story and the different ways in which it is being reported across countries and platforms (TV, press, websites). 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 coverage of the Middle East, and of radical Islam, fair? Is the era of the foreign correspondent, flown in from afar to cover political unrest and insurgencies, now almost over? Do we have too much reporting of violence and political rows, and not enough coverage of the environment, gender issues and lifestyles? Are journalists lazy, relying too much on hand-outs and web searches and not enough on first-hand reporting?

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 take a look at how journalism is developing globally, not simply in Britain and the United States.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional Goals. The course will provide an introduction to methods of news journalism, changes within the profession and particularly the impact of web-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 war and conflict reporting, both reportage and analysis, and this will involve consideration of journalistic practice in emerging countries as well as in Europe and North America.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to demonstrate basic journalistic writing or presentational skills.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught through a combination of class work, guest speakers, visits to newsrooms and news organizations and writing exercises (both analytical and journalistic).

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Five pieces of written work will be required from students during this course, one to be submitted each week as outlined below. These written exercises will attract respectively 15%, 15%, 15%, 20% and 25% of available marks. The remaining 10% will be awarded for participation in class 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 (whether on or off site) must be attended. Absence will only be accepted on grounds of sickness. Sickness must be notified in advance in person (by phone, note or email) either to Susie or Mary. A signed note must be provided within one week. Any unexcused absence will affect your grade. See attendance policy for details.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each week, there will be a guiding theme to the course about an aspect of news journalism – and as much as possible, visits and guest speakers will be scheduled to fit this timetable. There will be a guest speaker every week and additional visits to the offices of major news organizations. One course session each week will look at the treatment of a current news story or theme. Students will be required to submit a piece of writing each week.

- **Week One:** journalistic ethics, basic styles and formats of news journalism, the changing role of the reporter – is the golden age of the foreign correspondent over?
Speaker: Claire Bolderson, a former BBC correspondent in Washington and Jakarta
Visit: BBC News global headquarters; The Guardian print and web headquarters
Required reading: Janet Malcolm, *The Journalist and the Murderer*, 1990 – a short, very readable and controversial book which explores the ethics and apparent shortcomings of some aspects of news journalism
Written work: An initial exercise of 300 words about whether you agree with the opening statement of Janet Malcolm's book and why.
- **Week Two:** reporting war and conflict, issues of balance and impartiality - when does impassioned reporting become partisan reporting?
Speaker: Elizabeth Blunt, a former correspondent in West and East Africa
Visit: a walk round Fleet Street looking at the origins of news journalism with Andreas Gebauer
Recommended reading: Paul Danahar, *The New Middle East: the world after the Arab Spring*, 2014 – reportage and analysis by a British journalist (currently the BBC's bureau editor in Washington) who was there from the Gulf War to the start of the Syrian uprising; we will also look at some of the TV reporting by Danahar and his colleagues
Written work: An analysis (800 words) of the treatment of a topical story across different news platforms

- Week Three:** the big players in global journalism, the BBC, CNN, al Jazeera, China's CCTV – what is the world watching and browsing, and how are big international broadcasters responding to competition

Visit: a longer look behind the scenes at the BBC, including talks from journalists from the BBC's broadcast and online services

Required reading: Andrew Marr, *My Trade: a short history of British Journalism*, 2005– a history by a noted current practitioner of news and political journalism which also looks at themes such as the foreign correspondent, the newspaper columnist and the political interviewer; we will watch Marr's Sunday morning programme and discuss his approach to the political interview

Written work: A piece of independent writing (800 words) in the style of a newspaper column
- Week Four:** the digital revolution in global news, both the impact of social media, particularly of 'new' sites aimed at younger users, and the growth of 'citizen journalism' – is everyone a reporter/editor now?

Speaker: Maggy van Eijk, social media editor at BuzzFeed

Required reading: the articles available on the internet by Kath Viner and Robert G. Kaiser, listed in the course readings; also recommended are the research reports and global overviews on the [website](#) of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

Written work: An analysis (800 words) of the impact of citizen journalism and of content provided by the public in the reporting of a current news story.
- Week Five:** the changing news and media environment in emerging nations, notably in India, the world's largest democracy – is the news media creating an informed citizenry?

Speaker: Salil Tripathi <http://www.saliltripathi.com/> a widely published Indian journalist based in London

Required reading: the India media landscape page on the [website](#) of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and online sites of CNN-IBN, Tehelka, The Hindu, the Times of India and www.newslandry.com/

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. Students will need to submit for discussion with and approval by the instructor a topic and treatment for this submission, which is the most important piece of work undertaken during the course.

COURSE READINGS

Topical articles and features 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 (it's a subscription site) the New York Times. Sites visited should include Huffington Post, BuzzFeed and Vice. Broadcast news should include the English service of al Jazeera.

- Malcolm, J. (1990). *The Journalist and the Murderer* (the entire book, 163pp, is required reading)

- Danahar, P. (2014). *The New Middle East: the world after the Arab Spring* (the introduction pp.1-17 and the afterword pp.421-8 are recommended reading, as is the chapter on Syria pp.369-420)
- Marr, A. (2005). *My Trade: a short history of British Journalism* (the sections on foreign correspondents and columnists, pp.325-376, are required reading while the section on political journalism, pp.117-188, is recommended reading)
- Various websites, including: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, CNN-IBN, Tehelka, The Hindu, the Times of India and www.newslaundry.com - more detail about articles and postings to read will be given at the beginning of the course
- <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/09/the-rise-of-the-reader-katharine-viner-an-smith-lecture> An optimistic assessment by Kath Viner, editor designate of The Guardian, about 'journalism in the age of the open web'
- <http://www.brookings.edu/research/essays/2014/bad-news> A pessimistic assessment of the consequences of the digital revolution in news by Robert G. Kaiser, for many years a reporter and editor at the Washington Post newspaper

Standard citation needs to include: APA