



SYLLABUS

VISUAL JOURNALISM

Instructor: Simon Waldman

Contact Hours: 40

Language of Instruction: English

LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

To misquote Mark Twain, reports of the death of TV journalism have been greatly exaggerated. But the landscape is changing with bewildering speed. The way we watch news has undergone a revolution in the past decade – a revolution that shows no sign of slowing down. And the way younger people get their news continues to challenge the world’s major broadcasters. But the essential principles that underpin the creation of high quality video journalism seem – so far - to have survived this upheaval.

This course combines intensely practical sessions covering the skills and techniques necessary for producing broadcast standard visual journalism 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 and they will have the opportunity to spend time in the TV News studios at the headquarters of the BBC. By the end of the course, they will have created their own TV programme.

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 impact of the “citizen publisher”? Much of the material we create will use equipment that (almost) every student already owns: a mobile phone.

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 elementary grasp of how to build an engaging programme running order
- An appetite for further investigation and experience

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

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

ESSENTIAL READING

- Christian Parkinson, *Camera Confidential: How to Succeed as a Video Journalist* (2014)
- Ivo Burum and Stephen Quinn, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook: How to make Broadcast Videos with an iPhone or iPad* (2015)
- Reuters Institute: What is happening to Television News (2016)
<http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2016/what-is-happening-to-television-news/>
- Pew Research Centre: News use across social media (2106)
http://www.journalism.org/2016/05/26/news-use-across-social-media-platforms-2016/pj_2016-05-26_social-media-and-news_0-01/

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, print, online. 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)

Two pieces of written work and two multimedia visual journalism projects will be required from students during this course, as outlined below. These exercises will attract respectively 15%, 20%, 20% and 30% of available marks. The remaining 15% 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 site or a field trip) must be attended. Any absence other than for sickness will affect your grade. Sickness must be notified in advance in person (by phone, note or email) either to Amanda or Mary, with a copy to the course tutor. 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, visits and guest speakers will be scheduled to fit this timetable. There will be a guest speaker and visit every week. Students will be required to submit a piece of written or visual work each week.

Week One

- Introduction to visual journalism
- Key elements of a video news package
- Writing to pictures (1)
- Day in the life of the roving correspondent/news anchor
- First mobile exercise

Speaker: Top reporter/presenter: [Simon McCoy/Maxine Mawhinney/Christian Fraser]

Visit: BBC News or Sky News

Written work: A comparison (750 words) of 3 different visual treatments of one news story

Required reading: Chapters TBC, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook*

Week Two

- Pace of change in the industry
- Proliferation of providers and platforms
- Citizen journalist and citizen publisher
- History of photojournalism
- Second mobile exercise

Speakers: Academic/thinker/writer [Richard Sambrook/Peter Barron]

Visit: Photographers' Gallery for workshop on the development of photojournalism

Written work: Your blueprint (800-900 words) for ensuring that Millennials and subsequent generations develop and retain an interest in news and current affairs. How do you grab – and hold - the attention of the Instagrammers and Tinderers? [Possible alternative topic: A crystal-ball gaze into the future of visual journalism in 2050.]

Required reading: *News Use Across Social Media* and *What Is Happening To Television News* (or updated research material)

Week Three

- Camera craft
- How to film like the professionals using your mobile phone; framing/angles; lighting; sound; presentation masterclass; shooting a p to c
- Writing to pictures (2)
- Third visual exercise – preparing for “Bonkers Britain”

Speakers: BBC correspondent [Rory Cellan-Jones] Cameraman [Jonty Sumberg/Chris Parkinson]

Visit: Buzzfeed

Multimedia work: “Bonkers Britain” – a 45 second (maximum 60 seconds) visual project with commentary and captions capturing the essence of London life: landmarks, traditions, customs, culture, diversity, eccentricity.

Required reading: Chapters TBC, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook* and Chapters TBC, *Camera Confidential*

Week Four

- Essential editing tips
- Interviewing techniques and styles: getting the answers you want – and using the ones you didn’t expect

Speaker: Presenter/interviewer [Martine Croxall/Julian Worricker/Andrew Neil/Jeremy Paxman/Barney Jones]

Visit: TBC

Multimedia work: 60 second (maximum 90 seconds) visual project – shot and edited on phone, with commentary and captions, subject to be discussed in advance with tutor.

Required reading: Chapters TBC, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook* and Chapters TBC, *Camera Confidential*

Week Five

- Using data to explain and illustrate
- Creating your own material and building your own programme

Speaker: Picture editor [Tim Platt/Em Cummins]

Visit: Celebro Media Studios

Required reading: Chapters TBC, *MOJO: The Mobile Journalism Handbook* and Chapters TBC, *Camera Confidential*