

Course Outline -- JN 8404 – International Journalism

Winter 2012

Thursday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. RCC 205

(Note: NO MEETINGS Jan. 19 and 26 – see below)

Updated Feb. 15. Underlined words are hyperlinks.

Calendar description

JN8404 International Journalism

This course will give students an in-depth background in international journalism. It will have a combined practical and academic focus. Topics covered will include the international political and economic system, globalization, and the role of news media in international affairs. Case studies will allow students to develop their knowledge of particular areas of the world or specific international issues. The practical and cultural challenges of working internationally in journalism will be emphasized. **1 Credit**

Dates of classes

January 12	March 1
NO CLASS January 19	March 8
NO CLASS January 26	March 15
February 2	March 22
February 9	March 29
February 16	April 5
NO CLASS February 23 (study week)	

Instructor: Paul Knox

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Introduction

The study of journalism is traditionally undertaken in three different ways: a) academic analysis of outcomes using the methods of social science or literary criticism; b) consideration of journalistic work in various media; c) practical training designed to equip the student with knowledge of key concepts and mastery of techniques. None of these approaches focuses directly on individual journalists and the contribution they make during the course of a career. Yet journalism is, almost by definition, idiosyncratic. Its practitioners develop distinctive styles and make individual choices. These affect the way they pursue their craft and develop the knowledge they disseminate to their audiences.

The premise of JN 8404, Winter 2012, is that we can make an important contribution to knowledge about journalism by identifying, describing and analyzing these styles and choices. This is also an effective way for students who have mastered basic techniques to see how they are applied in the international context. Through meeting journalists who have spent many years covering global affairs, and studying their life and work, we should gain valuable insight into how international journalism is practiced.

Several seasoned journalists have agreed to contribute their time and knowledge to JN 8404. They have worked in a variety of media and styles – from daily radio, television and newspapers to photography and books; in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the United States. Some are long-time staff members of major news organizations; some are freelancers.

Each journalist will be matched with one course participant. The participant will get to know the journalist and conduct a study of her/his work. The participant will also design and conduct one of our weekly seminars, at which the journalist will appear as a guest.

The seminar should include an introduction of the guest and presentation of career highlights, with the spotlight on work that is particularly noteworthy. Normally it will include an interview with the journalist in front of the class. Presenters will identify works (reports, documentaries, stories, photography, etc.) by the journalist to be exhibited during the seminar or circulated to the class beforehand. A participant will be designated as discussant for each seminar. Finally, each participant will write an appreciation/analysis of the journalist studied and submit it at the end of the term.

The names and brief biographies of the journalists will be found below in the class schedule. Our exposure to these distinguished practitioners should teach us something about global issues and how they are covered by the news media, as well as their lives and work. The course design includes a simple assignment structure and attempts to allocate time as efficiently as possible. I hope we can profit from this opportunity to learn from some of the best in the business.

Goals and learning objectives

This course aims to:

- Investigate the practice of international journalism, defined as journalism whose subject is the world outside the country or region of its main audience.
- Develop an appreciation of different styles and techniques of international journalism, and an awareness of the pitfalls and opportunities it presents.
- Through sustained contact with a practitioner of international journalism, examine the role of the journalist in covering unfamiliar events and cultures and the potential for making an impact on public knowledge through journalism.
- Prepare participants to undertake reporting on global affairs and international events.

You are invited to tackle these goals according to your own assessment of their relative importance through your study of the journalist with whom you are matched and the design and execution of your seminar.

Assignments

Further information on assignments, including grading and marking criteria, will be available on Blackboard.

600-word film review – (mandatory; ungraded; penalty of 10% of course grade for failure to submit)

Due: Monday, Jan. 30, 12:00 noon, on paper in instructor's mailbox.

Seminar presentation – 45% of final course grade

Dates and names of guests and presenters are available in the Blackboard Calendar for this course.

Participation as discussant – 10% of final course grade

A discussant will be assigned for each seminar. The discussant will listen carefully to the presentation and lead off the question-and-answer session with two or three well-thought-out questions.

Final paper (appreciation/analysis) – 45% of final course grade

Due: April 20, 12:00 noon, by e-mail and on paper in instructor's mailbox.

Respect

We are a small group this year. Full attendance and participation in the seminars is essential. As a mark of respect for the practitioners and other participants, please show up for all seminars. Please do not schedule other activities such as interviews, research and out-of-town trips during class time. For medical emergencies and other unexpected events, please see the section on academic accommodation at the end of this outline.

Readings

JN 8404 has no textbook and no instructor-assigned readings. The organizers of each seminar will identify readings, viewing and listening material as appropriate. These may be supplemented by suggestions from the instructor as the focus of each seminar takes shape. You are encouraged to undertake other reading or research to maximize the quality of your final papers. I'm available for consultation on research materials.

Current knowledge and broad curiosity about international affairs is an asset in this course.

Communication

This course is on Blackboard. The site will contain information about assignments and other materials where appropriate. If you e-mail me from a non-Ryerson account I'll reply to that account, but in accordance with [Ryerson policy](#), **all official notifications, including those that may affect your grades**, will go to your Ryerson e-mail account (xxxxx@ryerson.ca). **Make sure there's room in your Ryerson mailbox to receive these messages.**

Course evaluation

You will be asked to complete a formal evaluation, known at Ryerson as a Faculty Course Survey, before the end of the semester. I'm eager to hear suggestions for improving the content and conduct of the course.

Your instructor

Journalism, in my view, has a bright future – not least because good journalism is as much in demand as ever. Mastery of technique and a thorough knowledge of our craft and its challenges can help journalists make a difference by making good choices in their work. Scholarly study and reflection on the past and present is important, too.

I've been a journalist since my mid-teens and a journalism teacher since 2005. I spent many years at *The Globe and Mail*, arriving in 1978 and moving through several different reporting, editing and management jobs, many of them in international news. I was a foreign correspondent based in Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro, wrote the Worldbeat column on global issues and was foreign editor in 2004-2005. Before joining the *Globe* I worked at the *Vancouver Sun* and the *News Letter* (Belfast, Northern Ireland). I attended the University of British Columbia and studied at Harvard University as a Nieman journalism fellow. In 2000 I received the Maria Moors Cabot prize for reporting on the Americas from Columbia University. I've also been a commentator in English and Spanish for *Radio Canada International*. At Ryerson I was chair of the School of Journalism from 2005 to 2010. In Fall 2011 I taught the introductory reporting course to MJs and feature reporting to undergraduates. This term, besides JN 8404, I have an undergraduate class in international journalism.

Current research interests include access to information, international news coverage by Canadians, journalism as literature, Canadian journalism education and challenges to freedom of expression. I support the work of Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, a non-profit group that works on behalf of threatened and harassed journalists in Canada and around the world.

I'm here to share my experience, contacts and any insight I may have acquired. You're invited to take advantage of office hours and other opportunities to ask questions, clear up uncertainties or simply trade thoughts.

Week-by-week seminar schedule

More details will be rolled out as the course proceeds.

Week 1, Jan. 12:

Introduction and discussion of course plan

Student/practitioner matchups

Film presentation (The Year of Living Dangerously)

Week 2, Jan. 19:

NO CLASS

Individual discussions with instructor about seminar projects

Week 3, Jan. 26:

NO CLASS

Individual discussions with instructor about seminar projects

Week 4, Feb. 2

Guest: Oakland Ross

Presented by:

Discussant:

Oakland Ross, a *Toronto Star* feature writer, travels frequently in search of stories from his base in Toronto. He has been a *Star* correspondent based in the Middle East and reported for the paper on the Arab Spring in 2011. Before joining the *Star* he worked for many years at *The Globe and Mail*, opening the paper's Mexico City bureau in 1981 and later serving as a correspondent in Africa and Montreal. He is the author of *Fire on the Mountain*, a collection of reports from Africa and Latin America, *Guerrilla Beach*, a collection of short stories, and *The Dark Virgin*, a historical novel set in Mexico.

Week 5, Feb. 9

Note: This seminar may be held at the CBC Broadcast Centre, 205 Front Street W.

Guest: Anna Maria Tremonti

Presented by:

Discussant:

Anna Maria Tremonti is host of CBC Radio's *The Current*. Her CBC bio says: "Between 1991 and 2000 Anna Maria filed regular news and documentary reports for CBC Television from a rotating cast of international home bases: Berlin, London, Jerusalem, and Washington. She has covered conflict and crisis in more than 30 countries, providing the CBC with eyewitness accounts of the war in Bosnia, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the break-up of the Soviet Union." Born in Windsor, Ont., she worked for CBC Radio in Fredericton, Edmonton and Ottawa. She has won two Gemini awards and an outstanding achievement award from Toronto Women in Film and Television.

Week 6, Feb. 16

Guest: Sonia Verma

Presented by:

Discussant:

Sonia Verma is an international affairs writer at *The Globe and Mail*. She has reported for the paper from Cuba, Haiti and Egypt, among other countries. Earlier, she spent several years covering the Middle East and southwest Asia regions as a freelancer and correspondent for *The Times* of London, reporting from countries including Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. She also spent seven years at the *Toronto Star*.

Feb. 23

NO CLASS – STUDY WEEK

Week 7, March 1

Guest: Ryan Pyle

Presented by:

Discussant:

Ryan Pyle, a Canadian-born documentary photographer, has been living and working in China since 2001. His clients include the New York Times, TIME, Fortune, Newsweek, Outside, Forbes, Foreign Policy, Sunday Times Magazine, Budget Travel and Der Spiegel. He majored in East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto. He covered the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, and one of his photographs was on the cover of Newsweek International's December 1, 2008 issue. He is completing a documentary film on a 65-day motorcycle journey he undertook through China in 2011.

Week 8, March 8**Guest: Graeme Smith****Presented by:****Discussant:**

Graeme Smith is currently based in Istanbul for *The Globe and Mail*, but expects to be in Toronto during the semester. He became the paper's Moscow bureau chief in 2005 and later spent three years covering Afghanistan for the paper. He is winner of three National Newspaper Awards, a Michener Award for public-service journalism, and an Emmy Award for New Approaches to News and Documentary for his 2009 multimedia project, Talking to the Taliban. He holds a Bachelor of Journalism degree from Ryerson University.

Week 9, March 15**Guest: Adrienne Arsenault****Presented by:****Discussant:**

Adrienne Arsenault is a Toronto-based correspondent for CBC's *The National*. From her CBC biog note: "Prior to that, she was London correspondent, a position she took up in the fall of 2006 after having spent three and a half years in Jerusalem. And before that, Washington D.C. was home for two and a half years. Over the years, and across the continents, Arsenault's assignments have included disasters, conflicts, politics, sports and basic human dramas. She has won and been nominated for several Gemini awards, was named the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association's journalist of the year in 2005, picked up a Gracie award for outstanding female correspondent and a Monte Carlo festival award for her coverage of the Zimbabwe election."

Week 10, March 22**Guest: Bill Schiller****Presented by:****Discussant:**

Bill Schiller has just returned to Toronto after five years as the *Toronto Star's* Beijing correspondent. He has also been bureau chief for the Star in Berlin, London and Johannesburg, where he covered the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. He is winner of a National Newspaper Award and served as the *Star's* foreign editor for several years. Quoted in the University of Windsor's alumni magazine, Schiller had this to say about the life of a foreign correspondent: "You live in a heightened state of awareness and an atmosphere in which your sensors are very attuned. It can sharpen your ability to write. You see things more clearly and push all the outside details to the side."

Week 11, March 29**Guest: Alanna Mitchell****Presented by:****Discussant:**

Alanna Mitchell describes herself as “a Canadian author and journalist who writes about global science issues. She specializes in investigating changes to the earth's life-support systems and travels the world in search of scientists at the centre of what's going on.” A Ryerson journalism grad, Alanna worked for the *Financial Post* and *The Globe and Mail*, and won four major national and international awards during her stint at The Globe. Her website says: “She left daily journalism in 2004 after 17 years to devote herself to writing popular science books and magazine articles, also setting up her own consultancy on environmental issues and strategic communications. Her clients are in the non-profit sector as well as industry. She is an Associate with the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), based in Winnipeg.” In 2008 Alanna was awarded the Atkinson Fellowship in Journalism to conduct a new course of study on the intersection of neuroscience and education. She is the author of *Dancing at the Dead Sea: Tracking the World's Environmental Hotspots* and *Sea Sick: The Hidden Crisis in the Global Ocean*, for which she received the international Grantham Prize for Excellence in Reporting on the Environment.

Week 12, April 5**Guest: Michelle Shephard****Presented by:****Discussant:**

Michelle Shephard, a graduate of the Ryerson School of Journalism, has spent the past decade reporting for the Toronto Star on the fallout from the World Trade Tower attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. From her website: “Michelle Shephard stood among the crumbling remains of New York City’s World Trade Center on the night of 9/11 and asked, ‘Why?’ So began her 10-year journalistic journey as the Toronto Star’s National Security reporter, looking for answers in the streets of Mogadishu, Sanaa, to the mountains of Waziristan, refugee camps in Dadaab and Peshawar, the corridors of power in Washington and Ottawa, 200 km north of the Arctic Circle and flying to the world’s most famous jail in Guantanamo Bay two dozen times. Shephard has won Canada’s top journalism’s prizes, twice a recipient of the National Newspaper Award for investigations and beats and the Governor-General’s Michener Award for Public Service Journalism. When not travelling, Shephard enjoys life in a century-old home in downtown Toronto with her photojournalist husband Jim Rankin and their two cats Bernstein (Bernie) and Deep Throat (DeeTee, adopted following Woodward’s passing). She finds peace camping in the wilds of Algonquin Park and on the beaches of Costa Rica.”

Academic integrity; course management; academic consideration; appeals

All work you submit must be entirely your own. Penalties for fabrication, plagiarism or other forms of cheating will range from failing an assignment to failing the course and will include a disciplinary notice being placed on your academic record.

As additional guidance, please note the following:

You are required to adhere to Ryerson University's Code of Academic Conduct, which covers plagiarism and other transgressions. It is at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf>.

You are also required to adhere to the School of Journalism's Rules of Conduct, which contain greater detail about truth-telling issues specific to the practice of journalism. These are in the student handbook at http://www.ryerson.ca/journalism/student_handbook.

[Policies of the School of Graduate Studies](#) on course management and appeals set out in detail the responsibilities of academic units, instructors and students. Please become familiar with them.

Requests for academic consideration on **medical or compassionate grounds** will be governed by [Ryerson's policy](#). A [Ryerson Medical Certificate](#) must accompany all requests for consideration on medical grounds. It should be submitted within three working days of the missed deadline, test or exam. Documentation should also accompany requests for consideration on compassionate grounds.

Please note that **re-grading requests** must be made within 10 working days of the return of the assignment.

Access and accommodation

Ryerson University and the School of Journalism are committed to providing as much access and accommodation as possible for students with **disabilities or other special needs**. Accommodation of disabilities at Ryerson is governed by [the university's policy](#). Please tell me about any such requirements as soon as you can. It's best to register with Ryerson's [Access Centre](#) so that special requirements can be properly co-ordinated. Please also let me know if accommodations prove unsatisfactory or new requirements arise during the term.

Requests for accommodation of **religious, aboriginal and spiritual observance obligations** will be governed by [Ryerson's policy](#). Students should make requests in the first two weeks of the course. Formal requests must be made within two weeks of an affected deadline, test or exam, or as soon as the date of the observance is known.

Ryerson does not allow academic consideration for tests or assignments missed because of employment commitments. Please do not ask for this.