

School of Journalism
Michigan State University
FALL 2014

GLOBAL AFFAIRS REPORTING (JRN 875)

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382 Com Arts Building

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Office hours: Monday & Wednesday 10 a.m.-noon

Class meets: Thursdays: 5-7:50 p.m., 242 Communication Arts Building¹

OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

Our working theme is “Issues, Controversies and Reporting about a Changing World.” This course is a hybrid of hands-on practice and theory that examines techniques and challenges in covering international events and issues such as the world economy, national security, disasters, the environment, health, revolutions, elections and public policy. It helps students understand international press systems, journalists’ rights and constraints on how journalists carry out their profession. It combines reporting assignments, group discussions and guest speakers.

Our objectives include a better understanding of, and insights, about:

- the diversity of press systems and media ethics in the context of history, culture, politics and economics;
- globalization trends in the media and their impact;
- alternatives to traditional mainstream media outlets, including redefinitions of “journalist”;
- how non-U.S. media and U.S. media cover foreign affairs;
- understand the sensitivity necessary when interviewing diverse sources of varied faiths, cultural and ethnic traditions, homelands and languages; and
- restrictions imposed by governments, politics, culture, economics and other centers of influence on journalists and news organizations.

The course should help you become more competent and knowledgeable communicators about and consumers of news of world affairs and their impact on your own lives, cultures and societies.

REQUIRED BOOKS

International News Reporting: Frontlines and Deadlines by John Owen and Heather Purdey (Wiley-Blackwell: 2009)

Naked in Baghdad: The Iraq War and the Aftermath as Seen by NPR’s Correspondent by Anne Garrels (Picador: 2004)

RECOMMENDED BOOK

Associated Press Stylebook (any recent edition)

¹ Sometimes we will meet instead in 382 Com Arts, the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism conference room

LOGISTICS

Attendance is essential. Two or more unexcused absences will result in a drop of at least 0.5 in your course grade. If you miss class, don't ask **me** what you missed—ask your classmates.

Classroom conduct: If you can't stay awake or have a compelling need to talk to a classmate, please leave the room. *All cell phones and pagers must be turned off or put in silent mode and placed out of your view*—in a backpack, pocket or purse, for example. If you have an urgent need to text or talk on the phone, please leave the room. If I hear your phone or pager ring, you'll be asked to leave for the rest of that class. If I see you texting or doing email, you'll also be asked to leave the room for the rest of the class.

Religious observance or conflicts with other courses: Make arrangements in advance for your absence. If you must miss class to participate in another course's required activity, make adequate advance arrangements with me and provide written authorization from the other faculty member.

Accommodations for disabilities: Call the OPHS Disability Resource Center at 353-9643 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY).

PLAGIARISM & PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Don't cheat, fabricate or plagiarize or you may fail the course and risk other disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program. Plagiarism is presenting another person's work or ideas as one's own. The School of Journalism subscribes to the guidelines on academic dishonesty in the General Student Regulations and in the All-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades (both presented in Spartan Life: Student Resource Guide and Handbook and in the "General Procedures and Regulations" section of the university Academic Programs publication). We also follow the J-School Student Code of Ethics and Standards, which each student receives and is posted on the course ANGEL site. Ethical violations carry the risk of failing the course and other sanctions.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

- 5 individual reporting assignments/ news articles (print or audio) – 70 percent
- Essay based on foreign correspondent memoirs – 15 percent
- Participation and short assignments – 15 percent

Details on each assignment will be distributed ahead of time. *Reporting assignments* require at least two, and sometimes more, drafts to produce a professional-caliber news story. The syllabus includes the due dates for 1st drafts. Rewrites are due within a week after each draft is submitted.

See my separate guidelines for reporting assignments.

Some of your stories and visuals may be posted online or published.

There are no exams. Please do assigned readings ahead of class to help understand and participate intelligently in our discussions. Readings not in the textbook will be available on the course ANGEL

site, by hyperlinks or by email. Stay on top of international news by cultivating a wide reading, viewing and listening habit and by drawing on a variety of sources in traditional and non-traditional media. Pay particular attention to what mainstream news media sources –still the principal news agenda-setters – report in print, online, broadcast and other formats. Among them are the *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *WSJ.com*, *MSNBC.com*, *CNN.com*, *Fox.com*, *Bloomberg.com*, *BBC News.com*, etc.

You will choose a country whose news you will follow in a) either the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* and b) an English-language daily or news service in that country. Each student will do two brief presentations comparing coverage of an event or issue based on their close reading of the stories. I will distribute more detailed instructions.

CAUTIONARY NOTE

During this course, you may read about and see broadcasts with graphic images and descriptions of destruction, human suffering, war crimes, religious conflicts, disasters and other ills. Journalism can be a dangerous profession, as the recent beheading of James Foley in Syria and jailing of journalists in Russia, Turkey and elsewhere illustrate. The news they cover can be violent, offensive and distressing, to them, to their audiences and to you.

GRADING

I will evaluate your news articles, oral and written presentations and critical essay based on the logic and structure of your argument, clarity of expression, accuracy and research. Assignments are due at the start of class (hard copy) *and* by email. Late assignments will be penalized. Assignments that are too late—as announced—won't be accepted and will get a failing grade.

SCHEDULE & KEY DATES

Syllabus updates and changes will be distributed by email and posted on ANGEL.

August 28	Introduction to world press systems <i>Readings:</i> Owen & Purdy, chapter 2, “The Future of News Services and International Reporting” (Schlesinger) & chapter 8, “World Perspectives: Ignoring the World at Our Peril” (Burman)
September 4	The British Press, Professor Sue Carter, School of Journalism, & Challenges in covering international environmental news (by Skype from the Society of Environmental Journalists conference) <i>Readings:</i> “Rain of Steel,” <i>SEJournal</i> , 2014; “The Emperor Lost His Clothes”: Rupert Murdoch, News of the World and Journalistic Boundary Work in the UK and USA. (Carlson & Berkowitz) <i>Journalism</i> , 2013
September 11	Localizing international events: Is all news local? <i>Readings to come</i>
September 18	Mining databases for international news coverage: Professor Bruno Takahashi, School of Journalism

Readings: Explore these databases: Environmental Performance Index: <http://epi.yale.edu>; World Values Survey www.worldvaluessurvey.org; Human Development Index: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>
Reporting assignment #1 due: Localized international news article

- September 25 Transborder journalism
 Readings: Barriers to Coverage of Transborder Environmental Issues in Central Asia’s Ferghana Valley” (Freedman) *Applied Environmental Education and Communication*, 2014; “Our Troubled Neighbor across the River: Transborder Journalism in a Canadian-U.S. Region” (Grievies) under review by the *Journal of Borderland Studies* (2014)
- October 2 Covering the U.S.: Foreign correspondent perspectives: Navbahor Imamova, Voice of America Uzbek Service, Washington, & Jennifer Chen, chief U.S. correspondent, SGMZ-TV, Washington
Readings: “Coming to Colorado” (Zaidi), International Center for Journalists, 2014; “Piecing Together a Mosaic of America” (Mykkanen) *Nieman Reports* 2010.
- October 9 WikiLeaks: sources or journalists?
Readings: “The Boy Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest” (Keller), *New York Times Magazine*, 2011; “WikiLeaks & the Future of Journalism” (Beckett & Ball) in *WikiLeaks: News in the Networked Era*, 2012
Reporting assignment #2 due: U.S.-Canadian transborder environmental article (for publication by Great Lakes Echo environmental news service)
- October 16 Information Communication Technologies from Zenger to Samizdat to Arab Spring
Readings: “Censorship and Journalist Blogs in China” (Gong-Cheng and Ying), *Global Media Journal*, 2010; “Cyber-Dissent and Power: Negotiating Online Boundaries in Repressitarian Regimes” (Bowe, Blom & Freedman), *International Journal of Information Communication Technologies and Human Development*, 2012
- October 23 Neal Shine Ethics Lecture (3-4:30 p.m., 145 Com Arts Building): Natan Dvir, international photographer
Readings: “Belief” (Dvir), *International Street Photographer*, 2014. Also explore his website: <http://natandvir.com/>
- October 30 Journalists in peril (Committee to Protect Journalists specialist by Skype from New York)
Readings: “Speaking No Evil: Press Freedom in Post- Communist Bulgaria” (Alwood) *International Communication Research Journal*, 2012; *Freedom of the Press 2014* (Freedom House) country reports on Belarus, Cuba, New Zealand & Botswana (www.freedomhouse.org)

Reporting assignment #3 due: your choice of subject

- November 6 Covering human rights, disasters & civil society/nongovernmental organizations
Readings: Owen & Purdy, chapter 4 “Reporting Humanitarian Crises” (Apps); “Hiding the Real Africa” (Rothmyer) *Columbia Journalism Review*, 2011; “Global Health: A Story Rarely Told (Friedhoff) *Neiman Reports*, 2012; “Chasing Haiti” (Bracken) *Nieman Reports*, 2010; “Photo Gallery: Chernobyl 20 Years after the Disaster,” National Geographic News, 2010
http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0425_060425_chernobyl.html
- November 13 “Peace” journalism vs. “war” journalism
Readings: Owen & Purdy, chapter 6, “Diplomacy and Journalism” (Kendall); “Trust & Perception: Powerful Factors in Assessing News about War” (Baum) *Neiman Reports*, 2010; “War as Peace: Canadian Media in Afghanistan” in *Peace Journalism, War & Conflict Resolution*, 2010
Watch the documentary “War Photographer James Nachtwey,” streamed free at <http://vimeo.com/78800042>.
Reporting assignment #4 due: human rights or disaster-related article
- November 20 Development journalism and the activist as journalist: We will watch the documentary *The Agronomist* in class.
Readings: “Development Journalism Revived: The Case of Ethiopia” (Skjerdal) *Ecquid Novi*, 2011; “The Sportswriter as Development Journalist: Covering African Football” (Peltz) *Ecquid Novi*, 2011; Owen & Purdy, chapter 12, “Citizen Journalism” (Sambrook)
Reporting assignment #5 due: data-driven article, your choice of subject
- November 27 Thanksgiving: no class
- December 4 *Critical essay due* based on *Naked in Baghdad*, the film *War Photographer* and your choice of one of these foreign correspondent memoirs: *8 Pieces of Empire: A 20-Year Journey through the Soviet Collapse* by Lawrence Sheets (Crown: 2011); *Ambushed: A War Reporter’s Life on the Line* by Ian Stewart (Algonquin: 2002); *Peace Meals: Candy-Wrapped Kalashnikovs and Other War Stories* by Anna Badkhen (Free Press, 2010)
Detailed instructions will be provided.
- December 5 5 p.m. absolute deadline for any rewrites or overdue work.

Syllabus as of Aug. 28, 2014