

Course Syllabus

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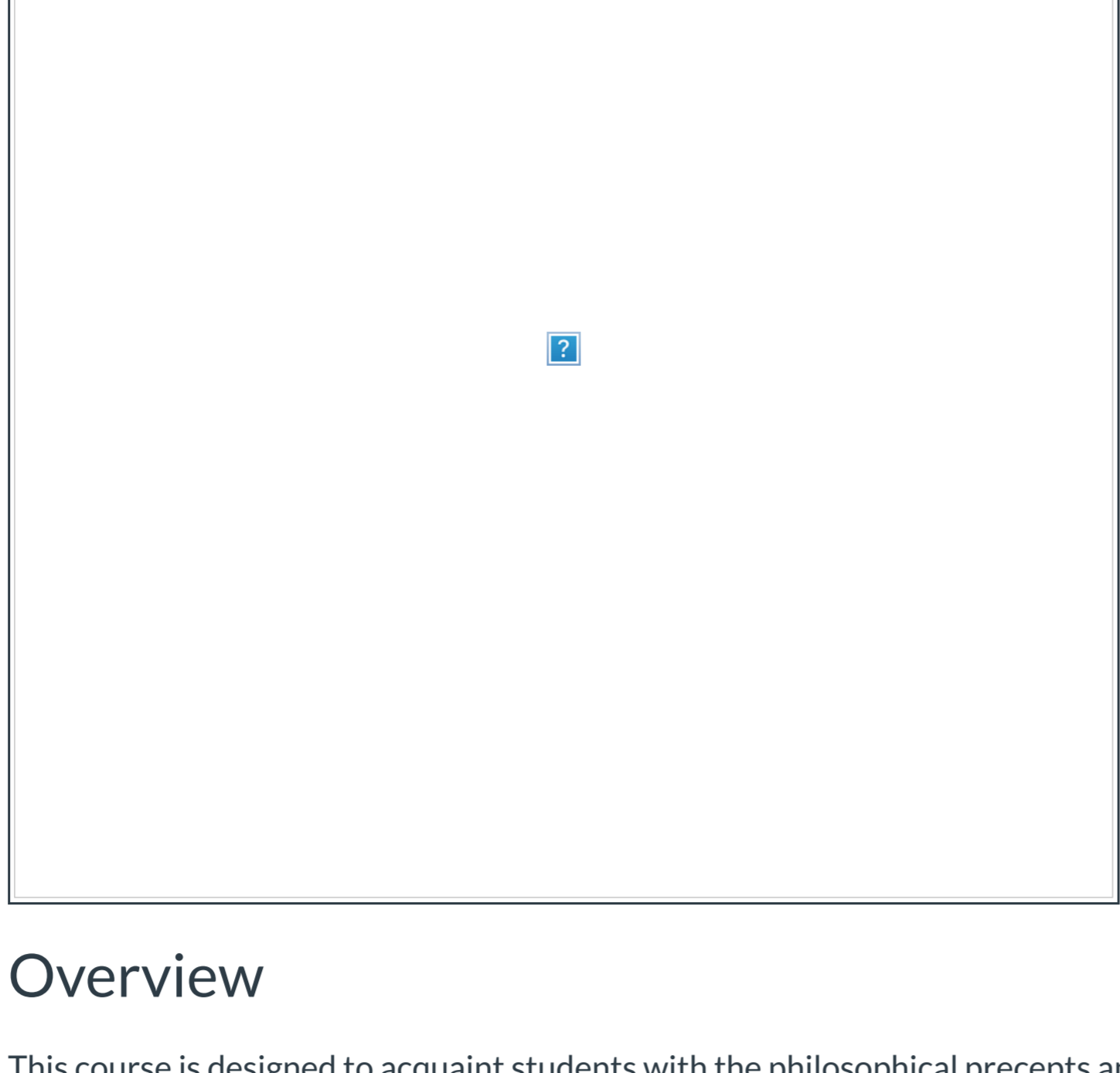
JPW 321/AAS 321: Race, Gender and the News Media

Spring, 2020
M-Th 3:30-4:50pm ALMM 104
Office hours M-Th 9:30-11:30am

Instructor: [Kim Pearson](#)
Associate Prof.
Journalism/Professional Writing

Office: ALMM 303
Google Voice: 215-253-8624

Email/Gchat: kpearson@tcnj.edu



Overview

This course is designed to acquaint students with the philosophical precepts and practical challenges underlying the decades-long effort by journalists, primarily in the US, to fairly cover America's communities in all of their diversity. The class begins with an overview of some of the current issues confronting news organizations as they attempt to present a comprehensive, fair picture of American life. Then, we explore basic philosophical concepts in journalism that help explain why the news industry concerns itself with diversity at all. After that, we explore the history of the concepts of race and gender, and examine how those ideas became incorporated into American journalism in ways that unconsciously promoted white supremacy and patriarchal norms. We move on to explore efforts to reform journalistic practices, their results, and the criticisms leveled against the news industry by those who think that the commitment to diversity in newsroom staffing and coverage has undermined the quality of journalism. Finally, we will engage in a community reporting project, described in detail below.

COLLABORATING ACROSS BOUNDARIES PROJECT

This course is part of a National Science Foundation-sponsored project ([Award #1914869](#)) testing strategies for improving undergraduate students' science literacy. You will be invited to participate in several short assessments at various points on the semester. You are not required to participate in these assessments. Neither your participation nor the content of your responses will affect your grades. Your professor will not see your individual responses. Additional information on this project will be provided to students on the first day of class.



via GIPHY

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT: (adapted from a [statement](#) written by Prof. Monica Linden and Mary Wright, Ph.D. Brown University) In an ideal world, journalism would be objective. However, much of journalism is subjective and is historically built on a small subset of privileged voices and sources. In this class, we will make an effort to access texts from a diverse group of journalists, but limits still exist to this diversity. I acknowledge that it is possible that there may be both overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens with which it was written, even though the material is primarily rooted in journalism and the social and natural sciences. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of journalism.

Please contact me (in person or electronically) or submit anonymous feedback if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.)

If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official TCNJ records, please let me know!

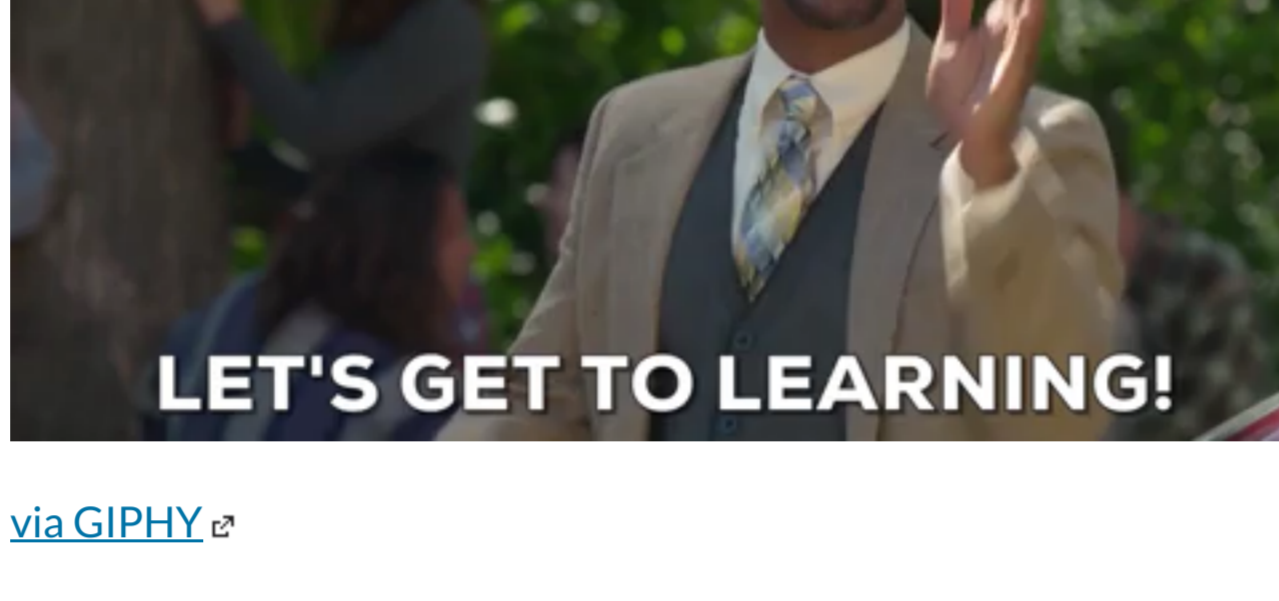
If you feel as if your performance in the class is being affected by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. Remember that you can also submit anonymous feedback (which will lead to an invitation to a conversation about the best way to address your concerns). If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, here are some resources that may be helpful:

1. [To request help if you are in crisis](#) or if [you are concerned about a friend](#)
2. [To report discrimination or harassment](#)
3. [To request counseling or psychological services](#)

I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option.)

As a participant in course discussions, you should also strive to honor the diversity of your classmates. Our goal is to keep the lines of respectful deliberation going, or, as the poet Claudia Rankine put it:

Claudia Rankine: "I spend a lot of time thinking about, how can I say this so that we can stay in this car together, and yet explore the things that I want to explore with you?"



via GIPHY

Learning goals

As a result of this class students should be able to:

- Discuss scholarship on the role that news coverage plays in the social construction of race, class and gender
- Identify and discuss professional standards, practices and initiatives designed to prevent biased and stereotypical reporting
- Raise questions and draw conclusions about the ethics and impact of their own practice and development as journalists, and as informed citizens.

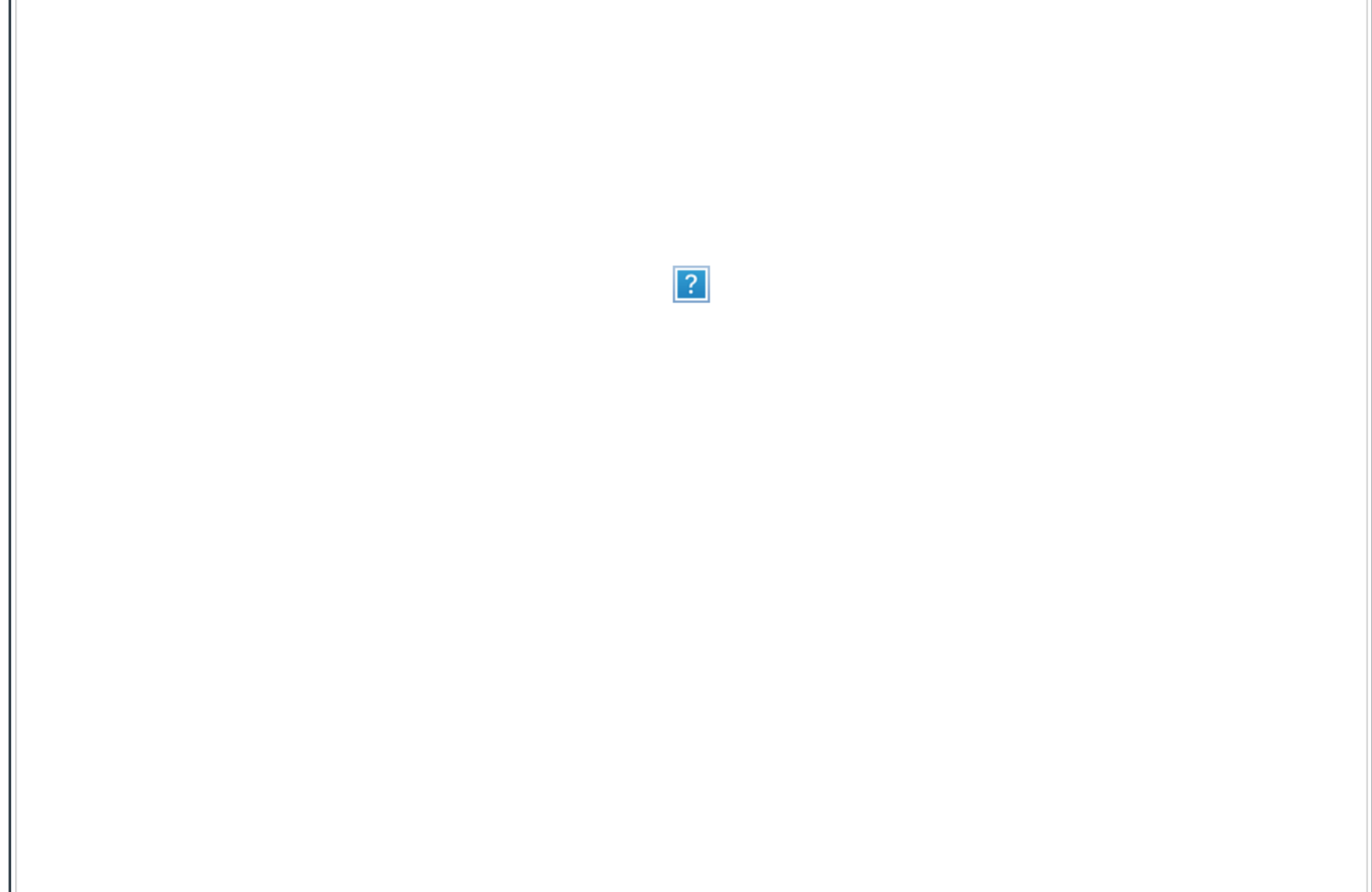
Please note: This class counts as a major option in the journalism/professional writing major, as well as for the African American Studies minor or major. It can also be used to fulfill either the "race and ethnicity" or "gender" liberal learning distribution requirement.

As such, this course supports the following Liberal Learning goals:

Students should have an understanding of the nature of race and ethnicity and the impact both have on our lives in modern communities.

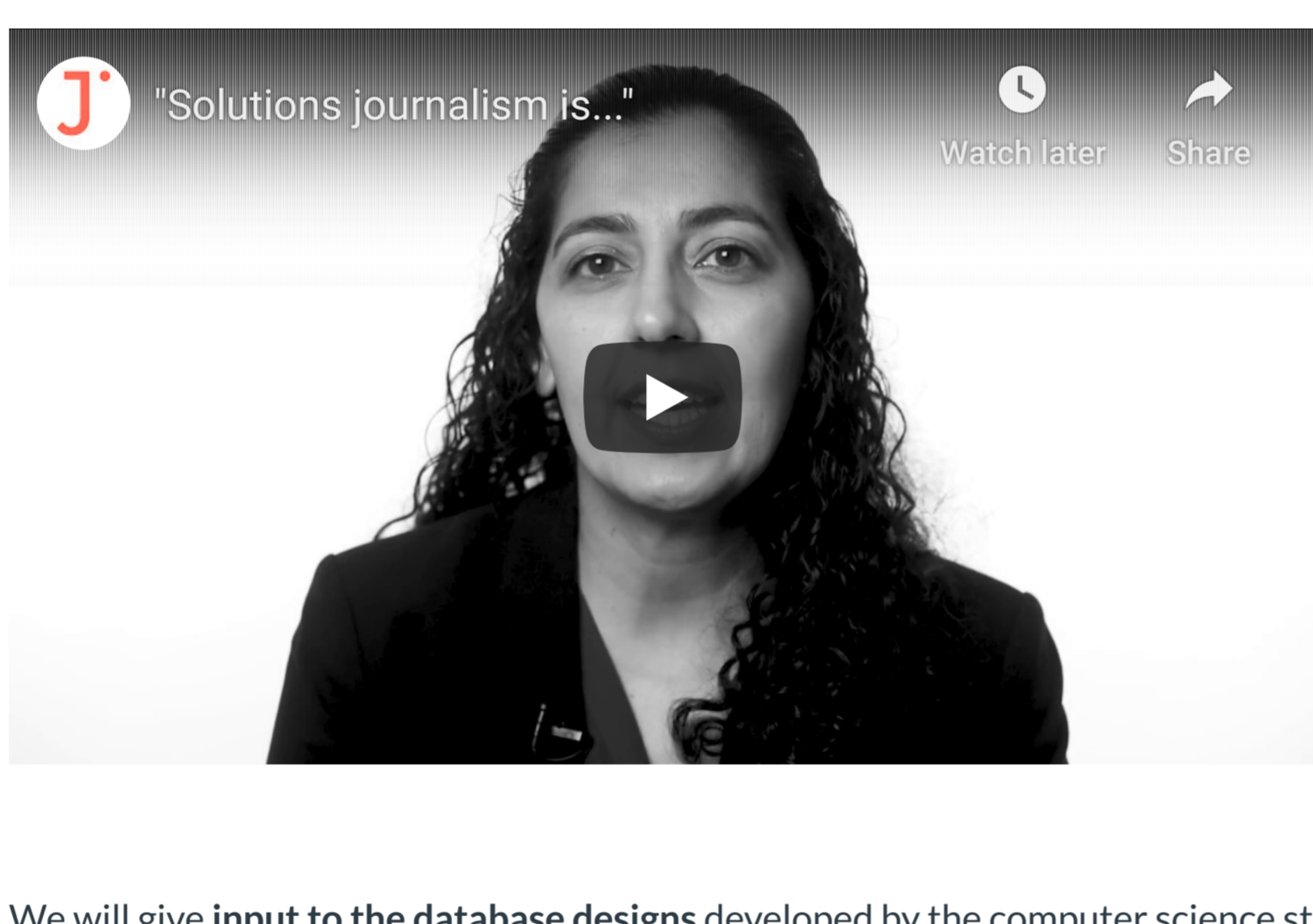
- Students should be able to explain the broad spectrum of human racial and ethnic experience. They should understand the differences and similarities between race and ethnicity as concepts.
- Students should understand the arbitrary and socially defined nature of race as well as analyze the ways race and racism maintain positions of class, power, and privilege in America.
- Students should develop thoughtful and equitable personal, ethical, and political decision-making abilities when considerations of race and ethnicity are involved. They should identify the limits of ethnocentric and parochial thinking.

- Students should be able to explain how gender and sexuality shape our daily lives. They should understand how gender is a central category of analysis that informs our interpretation of human experience.
- Students should understand that gender is socially constructed. They should be able to analyze family, education, labor, religion, and government as they are shaped by gendered constructs. Further, they should be able to explain how gender intersects with other constructed patterns of privilege and oppression in society, such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.
- Students should develop skills in the application of gender research and theory to problems in the contemporary world.
- Students should have an understanding of gender and the impact it has on our lives in modern communities.



Community Reporting Project: Redesigning CivicStory

We are going to undertake a community-engaged learning collaboration with Professor [John DeGond](#)'s Database Design class aimed at helping Civic Story redesign its website to accommodate its growing media archive and create space for its participation in the New Jersey [Sustainability Reporting Hub](#) collaborative. Civic Story is a non-profit solutions journalism project that supplies video reports on what members of New Jersey communities are doing to address pressing social problems. Here's a quick introduction to Solutions Journalism:



We will give **input** to the database designs developed by the computer science students based on our research on audience needs using both library research, interviews and other techniques that are becoming an integral aspect of the way in which journalism is being transformed by computer science.

We will also use our audience research to create our own audience engagement projects for Civic Story. This will be discussed in more detail on the [Community Reporting project page](#).

You do not need prior background in journalism or user-center design to contribute to this project.

Texts

For purchase:

[Race, Gender, Class and Media: Studying Mass Communication and Multiculturalism](#) by Sharon Bramlett-Solomon and Meta G. Carstarphen, Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2017. Please note that an [eBook version](#) of the text is available at this link for \$75.00. (Referred to as RGCM in the syllabus)

On Reserve:

David T.Z. Mindich, [The Mediated World: A New Approach to Mass Communication and Culture](#) Rowman and Littlefield, 2019

Recommended:

Also, students doing journalism reporting projects must have access to a current edition of the [Associated Press Stylebook](#), print or online edition. Journalism All non-journalism writing assignments will be in APA style.

Other class readings are hyperlinked to the syllabus.

Class policies

- Readings and assignments are due on the calendar dates. Please read the syllabus at least one week ahead so that you can plan to devote sufficient time to class assignments..
- Class participation is essential for success in this class, both in person or online. Significant absences may impair your ability to participate fully in class activities and to fully complete assignments. Please note the [College's policy](#) with regard to absences:
 - "When a student must be absent from classes due to extended illness, a death in the family or similar genuine emergency, the Dean of Student Life should be informed immediately so that the appropriate notice can be provided to individual instructors. Students who must miss classes due to participation in a field trip, athletic event or other official college function should arrange with their instructors for such class absences well in advance. The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participants in such college functions. In every instance, however, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for makeup work"
 - Late assignments will not be accepted unless you have obtained prior permission, or you have a documented emergency. If you obtain an extension and fail to hand in your assignment by the extended due date, you will lose 1/2 grade for each class period that the assignment is delayed.
 - Students requiring accommodations for differing abilities are encouraged to register with the Office of Differing Abilities and bring documentation to me at the beginning of the semester. <http://differingabilities.pages.tcnj.edu/>
 - In the event of the College closing due to inclement weather, I will attempt to hold class and/or office hours online.
 - Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the College's Academic Integrity Policy. (Policy: [Academic Integrity.pdf](#) and PowerPoint slides [Academic Integrity PowerPoint 2014.ppt](#))
 - Please speak up early and often - but appropriately and professionally, if there are questions or concerns. Everyone here has something to teach, and something to learn. That includes me.
 - This course has a final evaluation that consists of a final essay, in accordance with [College policy](#).
 - All 4-credit courses in the Journalism and African American Studies Departments require students to attend a regularly scheduled 4th hour of class meeting time (as indicated in PAWS) OR to complete additional work outside of class that constitutes the equivalent of a 4th hour of class meeting time (in the form of group work, attendance at campus events, rigorous reading assignments and/or research, field trips, community-engaged learning, internships, and/or other academic work as stipulated by the individual instructor). This course adheres to a combination of field trips, group work and additional academic work; please see below for specific course assignments, requirements, and due dates.
 - The College of New Jersey Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace/Educational Environment governs the college's commitment to and expectations of having an environment that respects the diversity of all members of the campus community. The link to this policy is:

<http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=9122>

Grading Scheme

Name:	Range:	
A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to 0%

Course Summary:

Date	Details
Mon Jan 27, 2020	Course overview: What is news? 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Jan 30, 2020	How "media literate" are you? due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 3, 2020	In class exercise: First meeting with computer science students. due by 4:50pm How computer science has changed journalism due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 6, 2020	CAB Pretest 4:20pm to 4:50pm The Fourth Estate due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 10, 2020	CS Students teams and proposals due - JUST FYI - nothing due for you. 3:30pm to 4:50pm Systems Thinking In-class exercise: Stakeholder mapping 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Feb 13, 2020	The maintenance of whiteness and racial stereotypes due by 3:30pm
Mon Feb 17, 2020	Disability and accessibility in journalism and technology due by 3:30pm
Thu Feb 20, 2020	Gender and journalism due by 3:30pm
Mon Feb 24, 2020	Audience engagement strategies due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 27, 2020	Live Journalism brainstorm 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Mar 2, 2020	Idea for community engagement proposal due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 5, 2020	Networked News: Racial Divides 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Mar 9, 2020	Presentations with Database class 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Mar 12, 2020	Full Community Engagement Research or story Proposal due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 26, 2020	Research workshop 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Mar 30, 2020	Interviewing 101: The Sit Down due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 2, 2020	Research workshop 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Apr 6, 2020	Team check-in presentations due by 3:30pm
Thu Apr 9, 2020	Guest speaker: Dr. Yifeng Hu: Learning from Immigrant communities 4pm to 4:50pm
Mon Apr 13, 2020	Team checkins and workshop sessions 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Apr 16, 2020	Guest speaker: Small publisher panel 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Apr 20, 2020	Team checkins and workshop sessions 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Apr 23, 2020	Guest speaker - your request 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Mon Apr 27, 2020	Team checkins and workshop sessions 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu Apr 30, 2020	User tests of CS modules 12am
Mon May 4, 2020	Presentations with Database class 3:30pm to 4:50pm
Thu May 7, 2020	Draft CR project for feedback due by 11:59pm
Thu May 14, 2020	Reflective essay due by 8pm Final CR project due by 11:59pm
Sat May 16, 2020	Respond to CAB post-test survey due by 11:59pm

May 2020						
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Assignments are weighted by group:

Group	Weight
Homework	45%
Community Reporting Project	45%
Final	10%
Total	100%