New York University  
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute  
Syllabus JOUR-GA 1182 016  
DATA JOURNALISM  
Fall 2019  
Professor: Broussard, Meredith  
M 10:00 AM-1:30 PM  
20 Cooper Square, #653

Course Description
In this introductory class, students will learn the skills needed to create visually exciting and thought-provoking online journalism. Topics include data journalism, data analysis, computer-assisted reporting, [painless] coding for journalists, and data visualization. The class is designed for an interdisciplinary group of students interested in writing, editing, visual design, or technology. Student-created projects will influence the path of the class: in a given semester, we may create infographics, investigate current political or economic issues, or develop innovative news apps.

Prior experience is not assumed, nor is it necessary. Students are expected to be comfortable with learning software beyond basic social media or word processing, and should be willing to learn new technology skills.

Learning Objectives
In this course, students will:
  ○ Demonstrate awareness of journalism’s core ethical values
  ○ Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information
  ○ Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives
  ○ Use technological tools and apply quantitative concepts as appropriate
  ○ Learn how to use spreadsheets, databases, and data visualization tools for reporting
  ○ Develop intermediate and advanced skills in Microsoft Excel, SQL, and Tableau Public
  ○ Learn to find, get, and clean data for investigative stories
  ○ Collaboratively develop and implement a data journalism project

Course Structure
The class is a seminar that requires regular readings and a variety of technological and journalistic assignments. Weekly assignments are due at the beginning of each class. The final project will occupy the last few weeks of the class, and will constitute most of the final grade.
Readings

Required:
Data Points, by Nathan Yau
NICAR course pack, available for purchase via NYU Classes link
Weapons of Math Destruction, by Cathy O’Neil
Artificial Unintelligence, by Meredith Broussard
Networks of New York, by Ingrid Burrington
Additional readings on NYU Classes

Recommended:
The Data Journalism Handbook 2, produced by European Journalism Centre and Google News Initiative
Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide, by Brant Houston
Mining Social Media: Finding Stories in Internet Data, by Lam Thuy Vo
Books are available for purchase at the NYU bookstore. Please purchase (or borrow from a library) print copies of the 4 books listed above. The NICAR coursepack is electronic only. Additional readings are posted on NYU Classes.

Course Requirements
Attendance: Mandatory. A third of a letter grade will be deducted from your final attendance grade for each unexcused absence. For an excused absence—in the event of a serious illness or an approved athletic event, for example—you must submit documentation from a third party.

All assignments must be turned in by the assigned deadline. For journalists, deadlines matter. We will cultivate the habits of successful journalists in this class, which means that deadlines must be met. Unless otherwise indicated, each assignment is due at the beginning of class. Assignment details, including formats, will be announced in class and details will be available on NYU Classes. Most assignments will be submitted via NYU Classes, and some will be submitted in print; printed assignments should be typed, double-spaced and printed with pages numbered. You are responsible for keeping track of the requested format. Assignments should not be submitted via email. Late work will be penalized by at least a third of a letter grade. Please remember to check NYU Classes for announcements, classmate contact info, and minor schedule changes.

Plagiarizing, copying or fabricating work will earn you an automatic F for the assignment and possibly the course. Journalism is about reality, about telling people’s stories. A huge amount of public trust is given to us, and there is a huge amount of responsibility that goes with being a journalist. Don’t cheat.
Quizzes and tests: There will not be a final in the course. Pop quizzes will be given should it become clear that class members are not doing the readings or are coming unprepared to class.

Class Participation: You are expected to participate actively in the life of the class, inside and outside the classroom. Come prepared to class. Complete your reading and writing assignments on time. Attend regularly. Engage in class discussion. Get to know your fellow students. A percentage of your final grade will be determined by your participation in this writing community.

When responding to another student’s comments or writing, you are expected to demonstrate respect for the speaker or writer, appreciating that person’s effort and sensitivities. In the spirit of mutual support and reinforcement, only constructive criticism should be offered.

Phones, tablets, recording devices and other digital paraphernalia may only be used by arrangement with the professor. Please turn off all of your desktop and phone notifications during class. Phones should remain in your bag, out of sight, during class unless specifically requested for an assignment. Charging is available out of sight or in the back of the classroom only.

Grading
Final grades will be calculated as follows:
40% Assignments and drafts
40% Final project: a longform feature story that includes original research, interviews, and data analysis.
10% Attendance
10% Class participation

Accommodations
Students with disabilities that necessitate accommodations should contact and register with New York University’s Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu. Information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd. The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

Diversity & Inclusion
The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. The Institute embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions.

Class Schedule
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class topic</th>
<th>Reading due</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/9/19</td>
<td>Introduction to data journalism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/16/19</td>
<td>Data analysis in Excel</td>
<td>Artificial Unintelligence Chapters 1-4; Joel Best, Damned Lies &amp; Statistics, Chapter 1; NICAR: Basics &amp; Sorting in Excel (Read this at home, but do NOT do the exercises; we will work through the exercises together in class.)</td>
<td>Color walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/23/19</td>
<td>Data analysis in Excel</td>
<td>The Curious Journalist’s Guide to Data; Google News Lab 2017 State of Data Journalism</td>
<td>NICAR exercises 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/30/19</td>
<td>Data analysis in Excel</td>
<td>Networks of New York</td>
<td>NICAR exercises 5-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10/7/19</td>
<td>Data visualization in Tableau</td>
<td>The Art of Access, Chapter 4; Data Points; Watch David McCandless, The beauty of data visualization</td>
<td>Networks of New York project</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>10/15/19</td>
<td>Data visualization in Tableau</td>
<td>Artificial Unintelligence Chapters 5-9</td>
<td>Tableau 1: all tutorials</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/21/19</td>
<td>Data visualization in Tableau</td>
<td>Weapons of Math Destruction: introduction, Chapters 1-2, 10, conclusion</td>
<td>Tableau 2: write an explainer story with a data visualization</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/28/19</td>
<td>SQL</td>
<td>Practical SQL, Chapter 1</td>
<td>Tableau 2 Revised</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11/4/19</td>
<td>SQL</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Tableau 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11/11/19</td>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Final project: 1-pg pitch due, including link to data set you plan to analyze</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/18/19</td>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Final project: cleaned data set, data analysis due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Status</td>
<td>Due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11/25/19</td>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Final project: visualization due</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>12/2/19</td>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Final project: draft of text due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>12/9/19</td>
<td>Last day of class</td>
<td>Independent research on final project topic</td>
<td>Final project: revised draft due</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/16/19</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Final project due</td>
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