

New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
THE WORKING JOURNALIST
Summer 2020
Professor: Bartie Scott
Wednesdays, 7 p.m. -10 p.m. EST
Zoom

Course Description

This course will prepare students for a career in journalism. You will apply the craft you've learned in other courses to unlock your professional potential to find a job or internship as well as explore the complicated world of contract work as a writer.

Students will begin by investigating the state of the journalism industry, which, as you know, has taken a sudden turn. You'll hear from a diverse panel of recruiters to learn what skills they value in potential new hires. You will craft a professional online presence, consisting of a website containing your portfolio of work as well as an engaging social persona. We'll also refine cover letters and resumes. For those interested in broadcast, we'll put together a "reel" to showcase on-camera reporting and editing skills. Pitching your work to editors is a skill that can make or break a journalism career. We'll hear from editors at top publications to learn what they're looking for and what to avoid.

Learning Objectives

- To provide a sense of the journalism industry today, analyze its current state, ponder its future, and how to build a career in the landscape
- To improve students' professional identity, ensuring their website and social platforms communicate their journalistic capabilities and mission
- To illustrate the nuances of the soft skills required to network, build sources, avoid harassment, and work in unfamiliar places
- To explore the everyday challenges journalist face related to finances, contracts, unions, organization and time management,
- To deepen students' understanding of the art of the pitch--a skill that can make or break a career in journalism
- To give students a professional launchpad from which they can pursue a diverse set of pathways to a varied and sustainable career in an ever-changing industry

Course Structure

This is a practical, hands-on course in which students will be challenged to create materials that prove they have the chops for a top job in journalism. It will involve reading, weekly assignments, critical thinking, and professional interaction with guests.

Your job will be to read/view/listen to the assigned material, complete each week's assignment, and prepare to engage in thoughtful discussion with classmates and professionals. You will also be expected to participate in the class online forum where you, your fellow students, and faculty will share information, publish comments, and hold discussions. Over the semester, you will hold a minimum of three videoconferencing sessions with your instructor/editor to discuss your career prospects.

Class participation is required—except it is in the form of an online class forum. You must have on your computer camera so that the instructor can put a name to the face, and you can also see the faces of your fellow students.

To simulate the classroom experience, we have an online forum. You are expected to post frequently—make comments, provide links to articles and other resources—as well as react to your fellow students' posts. For any class to be successful online and off-, students must engage with one another and provide fodder for discussion.

Readings

- *Telling True Stories* (excerpts)
- *Surviving Journalism: Fireproofing A Career In The Fourth Estate* by Warren Watson
- Select pitches from Open Notebook
- Links to articles and other resources

Course Requirements

There is an old saying: “Showing up is 80 percent of life.” In your case, that means showing up online. Nevertheless, you are required to follow the curriculum, which is divided into a 6-week semester. You cannot advance to a new module until you have completed the previous ones. You are expected to finish all assignments and interact in the online forums with your classmates and instructors.

You will complete several assignments over the course the semester, including:

- Website containing your journalistic portfolio, including purchasing a domain, installing a theme and updating your headshot, bio, and clips

- A written professional social media strategy to maintain consistent engagement on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other appropriate social platforms,
- A cover letter template and resume
- Three thoroughly researched pitches, which will be sent to professional editors at appropriate publications

You will be graded on your mastery of the materials and participation with instructor, classmates, and visiting professionals. You will also be graded on facts, depth of research, and quality of analysis.

Grading & Assignments

Website: 20%

Cover Letter and Resume: 20%

Pitches: 20%

Social Strategy: 20%

Professionalism: 20%

*Editorial Professionalism refers to the quality of your attendance, participation in class and on Slack, and etiquette throughout the course, especially with guests.

About This Syllabus

This syllabus is not etched in stone. By its nature, journalism is fluid and subject to fast-paced changes. Sometimes events can dictate a change in lecture topics, readings, or assignments. So go with the flow.

SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Discussion, Activities, Materials	Assignments
1 May 27	Introduction + Your Mission Statement	<p>Discuss</p> <p>--Your mission statement. The importance of clearly articulating your unique strengths.</p> <p>--Compiling clips & building a website:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best hosting services 2. What to include / how to organize it 	<p>Begin setting up your website to present in class Week 4. Look into CMS and domain options.</p> <p>Draft professional mission statement</p> <p>Read</p> <p>--<i>Telling True Stories</i>:</p>

		<p>3. How to align with your professional mission</p> <p>Pitch workshop --Steps to reporting a story for a pitch --Write the headline first</p>	<p>“Finding Good Topics: A Writer’s Questions” by Lane Gregory --select pitches that worked from Open Notebook</p>
2 June 3	Building a sparkling social presence	<p>Guest Bizzy Coy will discuss building your social presence</p> <p>Pitch workshop How to make a pitching decision guide: Hook, characters, documents, “why now?”, “why this publication?”, “why you?”</p>	<p>Draft your website (present in class Week 4), purchase domain, write bio, and begin displaying articles.</p> <p>Draft cover letter template and resume</p> <p>Draft professional mission statement to present to a guest next week.</p>
3 June 10	Your value proposition + networking	<p>Guest Danny Groner will discuss: --fine-tuning your professional mission statement --developing a networking action plan</p> <p>Pitch workshop Practice presenting verbally</p>	<p>Draft cover letter template and resume for instructor feedback</p> <p>Finish your website (present in class Week 4).</p> <p>Read: <i>Telling True Stories</i>: “Finding Good Topics: An Editor’s Questions” by Jan Winburn</p>
4 June 17	Cover letter + resumes	<p>Present your website in class -- we should get a clear sense of your mission and value proposition</p> <p>Workshop cover letter template and resume (we’ll take volunteers for 1-2 to look at as a group and then you’ll have 1-on-1 consultations with instructor)</p> <p>Pitch workshop</p>	<p>Finalize cover letter, resume, and website for professional feedback</p> <p>Prep a quick (2-3 sentence) verbal pitch for yourself and think of 2-3 stories you’d want to pitch if asked.</p>

5 June 24	Hiring managers panel	<p>Guests from publications will discuss what they look for and review your websites, resumes, and cover letters</p> <p>Pitch workshop</p>	<p>Revise resume, cover letter, and website based on professional feedback</p> <p>Read Rules of Journalism, what are your rules?</p>
6 July 1	Reel + portfolio	<p>Guest Sylvan Solloway of Journalism Career Services, will discuss: --building a portfolio and reel. --resume tips & cover letter templating</p> <p>Discuss --Getting paid as a freelancer, salary negotiation, salary transparency, taxes --Source Management: what to do when a source relationship sours; Staying safe and maintaining boundaries; Workplace harassment - who to contact and when</p>	<p>Draft your social media strategy</p> <p>Listen: Ashley C. Ford on the Longform podcast</p>

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.