

**New York University**  
**Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute**  
**Syllabus JOUR-UA 101 004**  
**JOURNALISTIC INQUIRY**  
**Summer 2021**  
**ZOOM**  
**Professor: Julia Dahl**  
Tuesday/Thursday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
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**917-287-5166**  
**Office hours: By appointment**

**Course Description**

No matter what medium you aspire to work in—online, magazines, newspapers, television, podcasts, radio or books—you need to know how to write clearly and concisely. That’s what this class will teach you how to do. Good writing is grounded in logical thinking, solid research, and comprehensive reporting.

The only way to learn journalism is by doing journalism. In the classroom you will do writing exercises, lots of writing exercises. Outside the classroom, you will do what every other journalist in the world is doing these days: learn to report from a social distance. The goal is to give you as much research, reporting and writing as we can pack into a six-week summer session. You will learn how to produce journalism—tell stories—in a number of different forms: as hard new stories, as feature articles, as online posts, and as a Tweet or Instagram.

By the end of the session, you will be able to produce a news story on deadline, to come up with a story idea and write an article that develops that idea. Bottom line: You will learn how to research and report which are the essential elements of every story—news or feature—in every medium.

And, you will have an adventure in the process. You will interview strangers, expose yourself to new ideas, and collaborate with your peers as we navigate the brave new world of reporting during a world-wide pandemic.

**Learning Objectives**

In this course, students will:

- ✓ Demonstrate awareness of journalism’s core ethical values
- ✓ Learn the structure, style and language of news writing, including building stories, from one-sentence leads to more complex articles, with an emphasis on structure, attribution and accuracy.
- ✓ Learn to write under deadline pressure.
- ✓ How to use databases and the Internet to gather information for idea generation as well as news and feature stories

- ✓ Learn basic interviewing skills to gather information and quotes; finding sources from vox pop to experts.
- ✓ Online writing techniques, including using social media.
- ✓ Learn how to write an under-750 word news feature, with both a soft lead and nut graf, and incorporating description, detail and quotes.
- ✓ Consistent use of AP style and libel manual.

### **Requirements:**

- You will have at least one outside assignment every week that involves going out to interview someone, cover an event, or write some other form of news/feature story.
- In-class assignments. We will be writing almost every class, mostly working on deadline. Sometimes it will be an in-class exercise; other times you will be sent out during class.
- If you must miss class, please notify me by email or text before the class begins. More than one absence will affect your performance in class, and therefore your grade.
- Deadlines are crucial to good journalism. Failure to meet your deadlines with assignments will result in deductions from your grade.

### **Assignments**

All assignments are listed on the syllabus.

If your assignment is late, even by an hour, you will be downgraded. You will be graded for research, reporting and writing, as well as spelling and grammar. Fact-checking: On the last page of every assignment, list the names and phone or email contact information for your sources and cite the articles or books quoted (writer, publication, date published, headline or title.)

E-mail your work as a Word attachment and please name the attachment with your last name first followed by the name of the assignment. EG: Dahl-iconic NY

You are expected to use AP style for all your assignments.

You are required to take a photo to accompany each assignment.

In addition to the format there are several other requirements. Every story needs a headline: in fact two. One clever for a print publication, and the other designed for optimal SEO on the web.

Text:

Associated Press: Guide to Newswriting

New York Times daily: [For discounted student rates, print or online:http://homedelivery.nytimes.com/HDS/CMHome.do?mode=CMHome&CampaignCode=393W8](http://homedelivery.nytimes.com/HDS/CMHome.do?mode=CMHome&CampaignCode=393W8)

### **Academic Integrity**

Any plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration on assignments will result in a failure, and could be grounds for failure in the course. All quotes must be original and verifiable. That means you must have a means of contacting anyone you quote for further clarification, or for me to verify accuracy of quotes. If you draw from someone else's work without properly crediting them, you will fail that assignment.

### **Diversity Statement**

The Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute is committed to creating an anti-racist learning environment that embraces diversity, complexity, and honesty. We are an intellectual community enriched by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, sex, gender identity, class, ethnicity, sexualities, abilities, religion, and culture. Our student body is excitingly international. We welcome a multiplicity of perspectives. We acknowledge that listening to other perspectives on some of these issues may be personally challenging, and we accept that challenge. We further acknowledge that our profession, journalism, and our home, New York University, have participated in the systemic racism that underpins U.S. history. We are committed to teaching and practicing fair, rigorous, and engaged journalism that helps all our communities move toward justice and equality.

### **Weekly schedule:**

#### **Tuesday 5/25**

Note-taking, Plagiarism, Curiosity, Defining Terms (News judgment; leads; nut graphs; story structure). What is news? What does a basic news story look like? Structure of a news article, lead-writing.

In-class news writing assessment.

*Out-of-class assignment: Observation story; DUE Thurs 5/27, 9am*

#### **Thursday, 5/27**

Discussion of news stories, news outlets, how to find news. Interviewing techniques. Soft news leads. Creating a website.

In class: Essay on the strengths and weaknesses you bring to the class AND interview your classmate.

Assignments:

Read chapter: 8

Read: <http://publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/01/everything-i-know-about-journalism-in-395-words/>

*Out-of-class assignment: classmate profile due Mon, 5/31, 6pm*

**Tuesday, 6/1**

Profile re-cap. Considering diversity. Local business story idea workshop. Brainstorming. <http://www.profkrg.com/12-tips-for-finding-story-ideas>

In class: Write an “about me” section for your website; pitch your business story idea

Assignments:

Read: chapters 3, 4, 5

Complete AP Style Module: <https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/module-ap-style/>

*Out-of-class assignment: local business “notes, quotes, details”, Thurs, 6/3, 9am*

**Thursday, 6/3**

Building a story: context, personal stories, data.

In class: Discussion of data-driven stories and how to use seemingly dry data to create a compelling story or start an investigation.

Assignments:

Read: chapter 10, 11

Complete Module NYU Journalism Handbook For Students: Ethics, Law & Good

Practice: <https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/journalism-handbook>

*Out-of-class assignment: Add reporting and interviews to make your local business notes into a story, DUE Tues 6/8, 9am*

**Tuesday, 6/8**

Research: Visit from librarian Katherine Boss

How to pitch a story

Read chapter 6, 7

Assignments:

Complete Module: IJ Module 6: Sources of Information:

<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/ij-module-6>

*Out-of-class assignment: Brainstorm for your final feature. Write a memo pitching 2 possible ideas. DUE Thurs. 6/10, 9am*

**Thursday, 6/10**

Discuss final features, create reporting plan.

IN CLASS MIDTERM

Assignments:

Complete IJ Module 5: Source Deals: <https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/ij-module-5>

***Out-of-class assignment:** Create reporting plan for your FF, start contacting sources!  
DUE Monday, 6/14, 6pm*

**Tuesday, 6/15**

Covering crime and government; in-class work time and final practice

Assignments:

Read Chapter 12

***Out-of-class assignment:** Spot News Story to be assigned, DUE Thurs 6/17, 9am*

**Thursday 6/17**

One-on-one meetings

Assignments:

Complete NYU Fact-Checking Module: <https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/nyu-journalism-fact-checking>

***Out-of-class assignment:** Interview notes from 2 sources AND lead for Final Feature,  
DUE Thursday, 6/18, 9am*

**Tuesday, 6/22**

Feature writing techniques, using social media, finding the “second day” story.

Assignments:

***First draft of Final Feature, DUE Thursday, 6/24, 9am***

**Thursday, 6/24**

In class practice final and GUEST SPEAKER

Assignments:

***Out-of-class assignment:** Spot story to be assigned, due Mon, 6/28, 6pm*

**Tuesday, 6/29**

Final Feature presentations

Assignments:

***Out-of-class assignment:** Final Feature due Tuesday, July 1, 10am*

**Thursday, 7/1**

# FINAL EXAM