

Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute/NYU  
JOUR-UA-101-001/Journalistic Inquiry: The Written Word  
Syllabus Summer 2023/ Monday/Wednesday 9 AM-1 PM  
Professor Lambeth Hochwald  
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Office hours: By appointment

## **Course Description**

No matter what medium you aspire to work in—online, magazines, newspapers, TV, 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 some interesting reporting. The goal is to give you as much research, reporting and writing training as we can pack into six weeks. You will learn how to produce journalism—tell stories—in a number of different forms: as hard new stories, as feature articles and as Tweets and Instagram posts. By the end of the session you will be able to come up with a story idea and write produce a news story on deadline. 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, head out into the city and collaborate with your peers as we navigate the world of local journalism.

## **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.

\*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.

\*Polish online writing techniques, including using social media.

\*Write a 750-word news feature, with both a soft lead and nut graf.

\*Use AP style and libel manual consistently.

\*Meet working journalists who will Zoom in during lively Lunch-and-Learns

### **Requirements:**

- You will have at least one outside assignment every week
- 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. Modules (as listed below) are Inquiry requirements as per the department. 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. You'll also be responsible for writing a contact list for each story. You're also going to be setting up an Instagram account just for class and will be required to take a photo to accompany each assignment and post to Instagram. Finally, every story needs two headlines: One for a print publication and the other designed for optimal SEO on the web.

Read: The New York Times: For discounted student rates, print or online:

[http://homedelivery.nytimes.com/HDS/CMHome.do?mode=CMHome  
&Campaign Code=393W8](http://homedelivery.nytimes.com/HDS/CMHome.do?mode=CMHome&Campaign Code=393W8)

## Grading

By the end of the semester you will have many graded assignments. Your final grade will reflect your scores on class and field assignments as well as class participation. **Effort and progress will count.** Please note: A missed assignment is an automatic F. There are no 'makeup' assignments. Attendance counts as does participation.

Your final grade will be calculated using this formula:

In-class assignments 25%

Out-of-class assignments 50%

Participation, positive attitude/collegiality and attendance 25%

## Notes on Grading

Late assignments will be downgraded. The factors that matter when it comes to grades on pieces: Reporting outside your comfort zone, use of data, breadth of interviews, spelling, grammar and quote construction.

Here is a checklist to look at every time you file. Make sure each piece contains a:

- \*Compelling lead (hard news or feature)
- \*Solid nut graf for feature; second graf that expands and amplifies for hard news
- \*Development of lede and main idea in logical order with transitions
- \*At least three sources quoted
- \*Use of quotes and paraphrasing where warranted
- \*Descriptive details, including images that show don't tell
- \*Correct grammar and usage
- \*AP style
- \*Complete sourcing and attribution
- \*Fair and balanced reporting/sourcing

Grading will conform to the Journalism Department's policy:

A=publishable as is

B=publishable with light editing

C=publishable with a rewrite

D=major problems with facts, reporting writing

F=missing key facts, containing gross misspellings, plagiarism or libel

## **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.

## **{Weekly schedule}**

### **Week #1**

## **Monday 5/22**

A walk through the syllabus. Note-taking, 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.

*Assignment: Observation: My home; DUE Tues 5/23, 6pm*

## **Wednesday 5/24**

Meet at Grand Central Station. Discussion of news stories, news outlets, how to find news. Interviewing techniques. Soft news leads. In class: Essay on the strengths and weaknesses you bring to the class AND interview your classmate.

*Assignment: Classmate Notes Quotes Details DUE Mon, 5/29, via email*

## **Week #2**

### **Monday 5/29 NO CLASS**

### **Wednesday 5/31**

Building a story: context, structure, data. Discussion of data-driven stories and how to use dry data to create a compelling story. Intro to local business story

*Assignment: Local Business story DUE Mon, 6/5, in class [600 WORDS]*

Complete Module NYU Journalism Handbook For Students: Ethics, Law & Good Practice: <https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/journalism-handbook>

## **Week #3**

### **Monday 6/5**

The ins and outs of research: Guest Speaker: Katherine Boss, NYU journalism librarian. Meet at Bobst. How to pitch a story and intro to the final feature.

Complete Module: IJ Module 6: Sources of Information:

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

*Assignment: Summer in the City story DUE Mon 6/12 in class [600 WORDS]*

### **Wednesday 6/7**

Meet at the Staten Island Ferry. Observation, Interviewing, Detail Immersion.

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

*Assignment: Pitch 2 ideas for your final feature DUE Wed 6/14 in class*

### **Week #4**

#### **Monday 6/12**

Covering crime and government and in-class spot-reporting. Leads, nut graf review, intro to fact-checking

*Assignment: Final feature reporting plan DUE Mon, 6/19 in class*

#### **Wednesday 6/14**

Meet at Moynihan Station. In-class writing-you pick Q&A topic, finessing your final pieces

Complete NYU Fact-Checking Module:

<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/nyu-journalism-fact-checking/>

*Assignment: You pick Q&A topic DUE Tues 6/20 [600 WORDS]*

## **Week #5**

**Monday 6/19 NO CLASS/JUNETEENTH**

**Tuesday 6/20**

Feature writing techniques. Finding the “second day” story. In-class workshop Final Features. Meet at Columbus Circle; In class practice final

**Wednesday 6/21**

Assignment: *First draft of Final Feature, due Friday, 6/23, 5 PM*

## **Week #6**

**Monday 6/26**

Editing workshop; Panel of experts

**Wednesday 6/28**

Meet at Yonah Shimmel Knishery West Houston Street for a walking food tour and reporting exercise. Review of what we’ve learned.

## **Week #7:**

**Monday 7/3**

Final meetings

**Wednesday July 5<sup>th</sup>**

Final Exam; Final feature due at the start of class (750 Words)