New York University / Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Professor Kenneth Paulsen
Summer 2023: SS0: JOUR-UA 25, REPORTING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA
Mondays & Wednesdays*, 6:20–9:20 p.m.
*Holiday week scheduling to be discussed

To contact professor: kjp2007@nyu.edu; home: TK; cell:
Office hours: after class every night, but also before
any class plus by phone/appointment

Course description
Today’s journalists research and promote the news on social media, and they also directly report on social platforms. The holdouts have become dinosaurs. This course aims to help you evolve your skills as a journalist, so you’re positioned to succeed in 2023 and beyond. We’ll learn to track down high-quality primary sources through social channels and engage with them; conduct geographically focused research; and craft news reports that meet the interests of a social-media obsessed audience. We will do this while also serving the public-interest objectives of serious news outlets. This isn’t “extra” work on top of traditional reporting – we cover essential skills that help you to report more efficiently and to reach a wider audience. We’ll write traditional reports using information and sources from social media but we’ll push creative boundaries as you create content for Instagram Stories and Twitter (platforms of emphasis), along with TikTok, Facebook and Snapchat.

In addition, we’ll study social media habits across age spectrums, including how authors build personal readerships, how stories go viral, and the overwhelmingly mobile audience that has reshaped news presentation and consumption. We’ll follow the data, exploring insights from social media analytics and scheduling platforms, while also remaining true to the ethics and tenets of high-quality journalism.

Learning objectives
• Identify strong, reliable sources of information on social media channels and cultivate relationships that lead to strong journalistic reporting.
• Demonstrate awareness of how factual information is disseminated on social media, and understand how misinformation can spread.
• Prepare journalistic reports using a variety of non-traditional approaches, including “live” reporting, social information cards, threads, and Instagram/Snapchat stories.
• Build skills to present clear, accurate breaking news reports on the spot.
• Harness the reach of social media channels to build diversity in news reporting.

Course structure
• Class sessions will include instruction on using different social media platforms for journalistic purposes; writing, research and live reporting drills; and intensive
planning/review of assignments. We’ll discuss the news of the day – how it’s handled on social media, what we can learn from it, and how we can build on it. Ethics will be woven into each class session.

Readings/Viewings
- Selected social media accounts to be noted in class

Social requirements
- Students enrolled in the course are required to have public-facing Twitter and Instagram accounts, to connect with each other on these platforms, and to review each other’s work.

Course requirements
- **Attendance:** Your attendance is critical, not only to understanding the course content but to showing your commitment to the material and engaging with your classmates. There is no substitute for that. Due to the intense nature of the class and limited time we have together, no undocumented absences will be permitted. Discuss challenges with me well ahead of time.
- **Engagement:** Participation is not formally graded but it is a critical factor in your success. You’re expected to engage in every class discussion, just as a news reporter or assignment editor would be expected to engage in a news meeting.
- **Punctuality:** Assignments must be completed and turned in on time, down to the minute. There will be a minimum full-letter grade deduction for any late assignment, escalating with subsequent late submissions.
- **Commitment to success:** Failure to complete any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course. Incompletes will not be given.

Strategies for success
Assignments will be thoroughly explained and discussed in class.
- Class time is centered around instruction, practice + strategies to tackle each week’s assignment. Be prepared to explain your approach to your assignments with your classmates, to offer suggestions and insights, and to share constructive criticism.
- Be creative. Take responsible risks. Embrace personal journalism by showcasing the humanity of sources you explore in detail.
- Be open to criticism. It will always be fair and respectful, and with your growth potential foremost in mind. You are expected to make mistakes – big ones sometimes. How will you learn from those inevitable flubs?
- Be flexible. Minor changes to the syllabus are possible. Why? Your needs, your personalities, the evolving response to the pandemic, and news stories of the day.
- Follow instructions and ask questions when you are unclear about anything.
***In addition to my office hours, I am happy to discuss any issue by appointment, by phone, or through e-mail. Text or call my cellphone if it’s pressing. Although assignments will be explained in class, you are welcome to ask for clarification. I am happy to help you. Please do not call later than 10 p.m. regarding classwork. **However: If you have a personal emergency, you may contact me at any hour of the day or night.**

**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 mosecsd@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.

**Grading:**
- 3 major weekly assignments: 55 percent (15–20–20)
- Midweek assignments (2–3 total) 20 percent
- Final report 25 percent

- Journalism majors: It is the Journalism Institute’s policy that a grade of “C” or better is needed for the course to count toward your major.
- **Plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” and possible expulsion from the university.** We will discuss plagiarism in class, but it is your responsibility from Day 1 to know what plagiarism is, and to avoid it at all costs. If you are ever in doubt, **do not submit a questionable assignment** — hold it back until you get clarification.
Grading will conform to the Journalism Institute's policy:

- **A**: Work at a high professional level (publishable in a serious publication, even if the work is unpublished). Excellent attendance. (No unexcused absences). Active class participation. Great attitude. Student has demonstrably challenged him/herself over the course of the term, even if he or she has come into the course with appreciable skill. Exceeds course objectives.
- **A−minus** (90–95): Work at a nearly (high) publishable level in a heavily edited publication. Remarkable progress over the term. Excellent attendance. (No unexcused absence.) Active class participation. Student has demonstrably challenged him/herself over the course of the term. Mastery of course objectives.
- **B−plus** (87–89): Notable progress over the term. Excellent attendance (no unexcused absence). Active class participation. Work is nearing a high publishable standard. Mastery of course objectives.
- **B** (85–87): Good progress over the term. Excellent attendance. Active class participation. Steady improvement in written assignments, assimilating the lessons of the course. Meets course objectives.
- **B−minus** (80–84): Acceptable progress over the term but exhibits the beginnings of mastery and could continue to progress. Excellent attendance and class participation. No more than one unexcused absence. Has strived to meet course objectives and has succeeded to an acceptable extent.
- **C−plus** (77–79): Adequate progress over the term. Work is acceptable but not of a superior quality. Excellent attendance, assignment completion and class participation. No more than one unexcused absence. Despite considerable effort, course objectives are unmet.
- **C** (75–77): Halting but noticeable progress over the term. Work is acceptable, but in no way distinguished. Attendance, assignment completion and class participation are good. Effort has been uninspired and course objectives are not met.
- **C−minus** (70–74): No noticeable progress over the term. Work is acceptable but in no way distinguished. Attendance, assignment completion and class participation are good. No more than one absence. Course objectives unmet.
- **F**: (67 and below) No progress. Unacceptable work. Missing assignments. Poor attendance and participation. Course objectives unmet.
**Reporting with Social Media (SS0: JOUR-UA 25)**

**New York University**

Asst. Professor Kenneth Paulsen (adjunct)

**Summer 2023 Course Schedule**

*Note: Expect to cover all of these topics below, but due to the short timeframe and need to adapt to class needs/news developments, some topics will shift.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Major Assignments [due 6 p.m. the following Sunday]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>Social Media storytelling through Instagram stories. Taking photos and videos that engage your audience.</td>
<td>Midweek assignment: TBA. Due 6/12: Instagram Story on an NYC food or transportation topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>Mining social media to connect with high-quality, diverse sources. Crafting reliable news reports based on information sourced from social media. How the news media uses TikTok to reach a wider audience.</td>
<td>Midweek assignment: Reporting from 1,000 miles away. Due 6/19: Instagram Story + TikTok exploring a topic with a rich history in NYC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/26</td>
<td>Social media analytics and the social audience.</td>
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