

New York University Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute  
Syllabus JOUR-UA 25.003

## **Toolkit: Journalism Skills That Can Change Your Life!**

Professor Betty Ming Liu

*Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:20-9:20 pm EST*

*June 3-June 26, 2024*

*Location: Online*

- **ZOOM Classroom Link: (TBA)**
- **Betty's email: BML3@nyu.edu**
- **Betty's Phone: (TBA)**
- **Betty's Office Hours on Thursdays, 6-9 pm EST:**
  - **Schedule here: <https://calendly.com/bettymingliu/betty-s-toolkit-office-hours>**

### **Course Description**

This intensive workshop introduces non-journalism majors to reporting, writing, storytelling and communication skills that are critical for success in school, work and your best life. By the end of this class, you'll learn key tricks of the craft for effectively expressing and presenting yourself with confidence and flair. You'll also develop news analysis tools for connecting more solidly and insightfully with the world around you.

Our eight, three-hour online meetings invite you to experiment with exercises based on journalistic tools of the trade. The syllabus includes techniques for interviewing, news gathering, pitching ideas and concise writing. As a journalist, your mission is to create a listicle, which is a story consisting of a list of items. You'll find this simple-sounding story structure instantly useful for organizing your thoughts and for showing off your personality. Whether you're writing non-fiction, fiction, a script, report, research project or even a poem, listicles will support your self-expression.

Because our time together is precious, attendance at all eight classes is mandatory. After each class, you'll take your class notes into homework assignments that are designed to recap and complete each journalistic learning experience.

## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of our four weeks together, you will leave with new skills that show you how to:

- communicate clearly and concisely as a storyteller and interviewer
  - express yourself confidently, authentically and even creatively
  - navigate news websites and avoid doom scrolling/overwhelm
  - write clear, accurate and engaging prose in an audience-appropriate manner
  - work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diverse perspectives
  - demonstrate critical thinking, independence and creativity appropriate to the role of journalism in a democracy society
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## **Course Requirements**

### **Course Structure & Policies**

All absences or lateness will impact your final grade. Homework assignments must be completed and submitted before the following class. To maximize your practice and learning, I will grade your submissions so that we can discuss your work at the next class, while the topic is still fresh on everyone's minds.

Your assignments will include writing and filling out worksheets as well as reading articles and going through other assigned material such as videos and podcasts. You will file your assignments in our class folder on NYU Google Drive, then share the link in Brightspace.

I hope to make our live Zoom classes an inviting space for learning. To enhance our classroom experience for everyone, please be mindful of the following:

1. Our cameras stay on during the entire class. We want to see each other and connect.
2. We Zoom professionally. This means sitting upright in a chair, at a table, taking notes.
3. Attendance for all eight classes is a must. We will always start and end on time.
4. We will meet MW for Weeks #1, 2, 4. During Week #3, we'll meet MT. More info below.
5. Leaving class during a break and not returning will be marked as an absence.
6. If you're late in getting to class or returning from a break, four times = one absence.
7. Two absences will result in a final grade of F.

## Required Texts

You'll be keeping up with all news, all the time – but in a manageable way. Required reading includes daily exploration of:

The New York Times (NYT)

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)

The Los Angeles Times (LAT)

The Washington Post (WP)

- You can get both NYT and WSJ for FREE through <https://guides.nyu.edu/journalism#s-lg-box-27288179>. Please set this up before our first meeting.
- Please look for an email from me during the week before class. I'll hopefully bring you news of a great deal for subscribing to both LAT and WP. Sometimes, they have special monthly rates as low as 99 cents.

## Attendance/Participation

You can't, for example, skip all or part of a session because you have an interview lined up with a source who can only speak during class time. And, out of respect for your peers, please log in on time – or even a few minutes early. NYU will excuse an absence for a death in the family or severe illness. Arriving late to class and turning in assignments late will impact your final grade.

## Deadlines

Our class meets twice a week (MW, except for a MT schedule for Week #2). Your listicle-related assignments are due on Sunday. News Worksheets are due on Tuesdays.

- Listicle assignments for Monday class discussions are due Sundays, at 6pm EST:
  - Listicle Analysis Worksheet, Listicle Drafts #1, Draft #2 and the Final Draft.
- News Worksheets for Wednesday discussions are due Tuesdays, at 6pm EST.
  - These worksheets consist of a daily, Monday-to-Sunday log of your adventures in reading our four newspaper apps (NYT, WSJ, LAT, WP).
  - You'll be noting what you like, don't like, surprises, reflections, insights.
  - You'll start logging on our first class and turn in your first worksheet during Week #2. Worksheets are also due during Weeks #3 and #4.
  - For Week #1, you'll submit an Introductory Survey on our first Tuesday.

## Grades

Your weekly assignments (total grade percentage = 60%) consist of:

1. **Intro Survey** > (5%) Due Tuesday, June 4, 6pm EST
2. **Listicle Analysis Worksheet** > (5%) Due Sunday, June 9, 6pm EST
3. **News Worksheet #1** > (5%) Due Tuesday, June 11, 6pm EST
4. **Listicle, Draft #1 + two pics** > (10%) Due Sunday, June 16, 6pm EST
5. **News Worksheet #2** > (5%) Due Tuesday, June 17, 6pm EST
6. **Listicle, Draft #2 + two pics** > (10%) Due Sunday, June 23, 6pm EST
7. **News Worksheet #3** > (5%) Due Tuesday, June 25, 6pm EST
8. **Listicle, Final Draft** > (15%) Due Wednesday, June 26, 2pm EST

The remaining 40% of your final grade focuses on how you show up in class:

- **Class Attendance** > (30%) Covers in-class discussions and class participation.
- **Editorial Professionalism** > (10%) Covers in-class etiquette as you demonstrate your ability to respectfully and supportively collaborate with colleagues.

## Class Schedule

(Subject to change due to class progress and other events)

### WEEK 1 June 3-June 9 (Monday-Sunday)

#### Week 1 > Class #1 (M, June 3): Journalism, writing & reporting skills

- Reporting and writing basics: the 5Ws, show don't tell, gee-wow facts
- Interviewing skills and writing up quotes, with in-class interviewing exercise
- How to explore your news apps on News Worksheet #1

#### Assignment #1:

- *Complete and submit Introductory Survey > (5%) Due Tuesday, June 4, 6pm EST*
- *The start of a beautiful relationship begins tonight with your News Worksheet #1*
  - *This first News Worksheet is due next Tuesday, June 11, 6pm EST*

#### Week #1 > Class #2 (W, June 5): What is news?

- Hard news (inverted pyramid) vs. soft news (features), with in-class writing exercise
- What is a listicle?
- Reading analysis exercise: Facts, fluff, fire – opinions & objectivity
- Building community: Discuss *Introductory Survey* results

#### Assignment #2:

- *Complete and submit Listicle Analysis Worksheet > Due Sunday, June 9, 6pm EST*
- *Come to class prepared to pitch your best and/or favorite listicle ideas*

## **WEEK 2 June 10-June 16 (Monday-Sunday)**

### **Week #2 > Class #3 (M, June 10): Brainstorming your listicle ideas**

- Conversational vs. academic writing
- Journalistic writing tools (nut graf, Rule of 3, “so what?” test, reading out loud)
- *Listicle Analysis Worksheet* discussion
- How to pitch, with in-class pitching exercise

#### **Assignment #3:**

- *Complete and submit News Worksheet #1 > Due Tuesday, June 11, 6pm EST*
- *News Worksheet #2 > Journaling starts tonight (M-Sun) > Due next week Tuesday*

### **Week #2> Class #4 (W, June 12): What is your listicle?**

- Newsroom chat about *News Worksheet #1*
- How to draft your listicle
  - Story structure (summarizing, concise writing, paragraphs, quotes)
  - Gathering information: Using library research, Ai, notifications
- Photojournalism basics

#### **Assignment #4:**

- *Submit your Listicle Draft #1 > Due Tuesday, June 16, 6pm EST*
- *Submit two photos with your draft > Due Tuesday, June 16, 6pm EST*

## **WEEK 3 June 17-June 23 (Monday-Sunday)**

### **Week #3 > Class #5 (M, June 17): Getting to know your storytelling style**

- Workshopping your *Listicle Draft #1*
- Reading your work out loud
- Writing with color, descriptions and emotions with in-class writing exercise

#### **Assignment: #5:**

- *Submit your News Worksheet #2 > Due TOMORROW, Tuesday, June 18, 6pm EST*
- *News Worksheet #3 > Journaling starts tonight (M-Sun) > Due next week Tuesday*

### **Week #3 NEW MEETING DATE > (T, June 18): Communicating to the world**

- Newsroom chat about *News Worksheet #2*
- Zoom presentation skills with in-class exercise
- Developing your voice, your themes, your style

#### **Assignment #6:**

- *Submit Listicle Draft #2 + 2 pics > Due Sunday, June 23, 6pm EST*

## **WEEK 4 June 24-June 26 (Monday-Wednesday)**

### **Week #4 > Class #7 (M, June 24): Polish, purpose and perspective**

- Workshopping your *Listicle Draft #2*
- Workshopping your photos
- Presentation rehearsal

### **Assignment #7:**

- *Submit your News Worksheet #3 > Due Tuesday, June 25, 6pm EST*
- *Submit Listicle Final Draft > NEW DEADLINE TIME: Wednesday, 2pm EST*
- *Practice your presentation*

### **Week #4 > Class #8 (W, June 26) Presentation party!**

Newsroom chat about *News Worksheet #3*

Your presentations for *Listicle Final Draft*

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## **Academic Integrity**

Any plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration on assignments will result in a failure and can be grounds for failing the course, or in extreme cases, expulsion from the program. All quotes must be original and verifiable. That means you must include contacts for sources at the end of your draft to clarify or verify quotes. If you draw from someone else's work without properly crediting them, you could fail that assignment. Please be sure you have read the [Cardinal Sins](#) section of the NYU handbook by the first class.

## **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](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu). Information about the Moses Center can be found at [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

## **Diversity & Inclusion:**

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.