Writing and Reporting Workshop I
JOUR – GA.1021.1
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
New York University
Global and Joint Studies Master’s Program
Fall 2016, Fridays, Sept. 9 – Dec. 16, 10:00 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.

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Office hours: After class or by appointment

The idea

International reporting casts a different eye on a society; this course is designed to help you develop that eye as you learn the fundamentals of reporting and writing news and feature stories. Welcome to the start of a global adventure.

We will tap the resources of this cosmopolitan city to learn how to report for readers abroad with meaningful background and a sense of humanity. We will learn by doing, seeing, listening and asking – through field trips, workshops in class and talks with foreign correspondents. We will discuss what the news looks like to other societies and we will read works by noted correspondents. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to pursue topics related to their joint majors. All the while, we will work on the skills essential to accurate and evocative journalism: solid research and reporting, well organized thought, and writing that brings stories to life.

Throughout the fall semester, we will focus on news reporting because it is the backbone of every type of journalism. A news story must be truthful, thorough and clear. The best way to achieve that is to think clearly at every step of the process. We will start by working on basics, including research methods, sources, interview techniques, note taking, story organization, grammar and style, and deadlines. We will practice in the classroom and in the field. Our discussions will range over many aspects of journalism: news judgment, ethics and standards, bureaucratic language and spin, teamwork and competition, cultural awareness, writing for diverse readers and working with editors. We will discuss some of the challenges foreign correspondents face – dangerous assignments, tough deadlines, life abroad and analytical skills. We also will talk about technological changes that are creating new roles for journalists – both the multitasking of multimedia and the need to sort through information overload.
The objectives

This course focuses on the basics of researching, reporting and writing news and short feature articles written for international readers.
Research: learning the background, checking facts, understanding the big picture into which the story fits, pitching story ideas
Reporting: selecting appropriate people and organizations to contact, making contacts, getting interviews, asking good questions, taking accurate notes, checking facts
Writing: telling the story coherently, developing structure and flow, eliminating clichés, stereotypes and unnecessary words, mastering grammar and journalistic style
Multimedia: first steps on telling stories through various media

Students will be introduced to the principles, purposes, practice and challenges of international journalism.

The master’s program seeks to help students bring their work up to publishable quality and then help them to get it published. To learn more about publishing opportunities through the Journalism Institute, please take a look at the Web site for Bedford + Bowery, published with New York Magazine: http://bedfordandbowery.com/

The materials

The following books are required reading. They are available through NYU Bookstores, Barnes & Noble, Amazon.com or other sources.


Bring a reporter’s notebook and pens to every class. Take a notebook, camera and digital sound recorder (with USB) everywhere so you are always ready to report.
Requirements and class structure

**In class:** Field trips and guest speakers will be scheduled during the semester. We will discuss what’s in the news as well as class readings on ethics, works by distinguished writers and international journalism approaches. Each student will be asked to lead a discussion on a journalism issue. Workshops will cover news judgment, news writing, editing and other skills. Students will be graded on in-class writing and reporting workshops, and on participation in class discussions and field trips. All students should read *The New York Times*; a comprehensive, non-American news Website, such as the BBC, EFE or Al Jazeera; and the news media of the country or region of their joint majors.

Each student must **meet privately with me** at least once during the semester. Please also speak with me when you have questions or concerns. The only silly question is the one you needed to ask but didn’t. While we are trying to instill professionalism and independence in students, we also want to offer the support you need to succeed.

**Outside class:** Students will be graded on articles, blogs, a multimedia project and a final project written outside of class. Developing a “beat” by making connections with a community is one way to generate story ideas. The community may be people united by neighborhood, ethnicity, religion, ideas, politics, sports, arts or other purposes. Students are encouraged, not required, to find a community that complements their dual studies.

Students will complete the following assignments outside class:

- 3 stories of 800 to 1,000 words each, with ideas for multimedia elements
- 2 of these stories will be thoroughly revised
- 1 story told through a slideshow with audio
- 1 Weblog installment of 300 to 500 words
  - Free choice of subjects; blogs must include original reporting
- 1 article of 1,200 to 1,500 words
  - Query, first draft and revisions
  - In-depth look at the subject; multimedia component

Students will turn in queries ahead of time for each article. (Not required for the blog.) Free choice of topics, but all stories must be written for readers abroad. Every story must include a list of source contacts.
Articles and blogs will be due at the start of class. They must be submitted on paper and also by e-mail, as an attachment in Word, in the following form:

- File labeled with the writer’s last name and the story slug
- Article header with the writer’s full name, the story slug and the date
- Headline, byline and dateline (place where reporting was conducted)
- Article double-spaced, spelling and grammar checked, written in AP style
- Followed by a list of sources (names, titles, dates of interviews, e-mail or phone of people interviewed, list of written or Web sources, etc.)

The grades and the rules

Assignments:

- Articles and blogs completed outside class 35%
- Slideshow with audio 10%
- Final project 20%
- Class participation, workshops 35%

Grading standards:
Each student’s work will be judged according to progress on reporting and writing, timely completion of assignments, effort throughout the course, participation in discussion and class activities, and communications with the instructor.

- A = Exceptional
- A minus = Excellent
- B plus = Very good
- B = Good
- B minus or below = Unsatisfactory

Plagiarism, fabrication, fiction and cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing, inventing sources or doctoring quotes will fail the course.

The ability to meet deadlines is an essential part of journalism. In this class, late assignments will be subject to grade reductions. Missed assignments will be graded ‘F.’

Attendance is expected at every class. Students who miss more than one class will face a reduction in their final grades for the course.

In journalism, showing up on time is a must. Students who arrive late for class may find themselves excluded from the room until the first break.
The weekly readings and assignments

Week 1, Sept. 9
Assignment due at the end of class:
  Preliminary story ideas
Reading:
  World Press Freedom Committee, Charter for a Free Press
  http://www.wpfc.org/CharterForAFreePress.html
  “Principles of Journalism,” Project for Excellence in Journalism
  http://journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/foundations/principles-of-journalism
  The Associated Press – Statement of News Values and Principles
  http://www.ap.org/company/News-Values
Other international journalism organizations:
  Committee to Protect Journalists www.cpj.org
  Reporters Sans Frontieres www.rsf.org
  International Press Institute www.freemedia.at
  International Federation of Journalists www.ifj.org
  Institute for War and Peace Reporting www.iwpr.net
  Overseas Press Club http://www.opcofamerica.org/

Each student must make an appointment for an individual meeting with me.
  Come to the appointment ready to talk about your goals for the course and about
  the stories you propose to pursue during the semester.

Week 2, Sept. 16
Assignment due at the start of class:
  Query for story 1 on the “beat” community or other topic, with ideas for a
  multimedia component (story due Oct. 7)
  Query for slideshow with audio (project due on Nov. 4)
Reading:
  McBride & Rosenstiel, intro, p. 1-6, pursuit of truth, p. 7-37
  Resources on interviewing vulnerable people
    Available on the “resources” tab of the course website
  Ravi Somaiya, “At Charleston Newspaper, Covering the News, and Choking
    http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/charleston-newspaper-brings-local-
    perspective-to-shooting.html?ref=topics
  Judith Shulevitz, “What Happened at Rolling Stone was not Jackie’s Fault,”
    Columbia Journalism Review, Dec. 6, 2014 (2 pages)
    http://www.cjr.org/watchdog/rolling_stone_sabrina_rubin_erdely.php
Week 3, Sept. 23 – Slideshow workshop 1
Assignment due at the start of class:
   Blog – free choice of subject; include original reporting
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, storytelling, p. 39-59
   Cappon, p. 1-4, 5-22, language, newswriting
   Strunk & White, p. 15-24, composition

Week 4, Sept. 30 – Slideshow workshop 2
Assignments due at the start of class:
   Query for story 2, with ideas for a multimedia component; story due Oct. 21
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, fact-checking, p. 61-78
   David Zucchino, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 1989 Pulitzer Prize for feature writing,
   “Being Black in South Africa,” article from Dec. 11, 1988
   (available under the Resources tab on NYU Classes)
   AP Stylebook, p. 322-334, punctuation
   Cappon, p. 37-42, periods
   Strunk & White, p. 1-14, usage (Where the two clash, we use AP style.)

Week 5, Oct. 7
Assignment due at the start of class:
   Story 1
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, photojournalism, p. 79-88
   Shawn Crispin, “Drawing the line: Cartoonists under threat,” Committee to
   Protect Journalists, May 19, 2015 https://cpj.org/reports/2015/05/drawing-
   the-line-cartoonists-under-threat-free-expression-zunar-charlie-hebdo.php
   “Call for ideological battle against those who condone free speech violations,”
   Reporters sans frontiers, Feb. 17, 2015
   Cappon, p. 23-35, leads
   Strunk & White, p. 25-39, composition and form

Week 6, Oct. 14
Assignments due at the start of class:
   Query for story 3, with ideas for a multimedia component; story due Nov. 11
(NYC Marathon on Nov. 1 is a possible topic)

Think ahead about writing a revised version of story 1 or 2. (Due Oct. 28)
Think ahead about doing a multimedia version of story 1 or 2. (Due Nov. 4)

Reading:
McBride & Rosensti, transparency, public journalism, networked audiences, p. 89-122
Cappon, p. 43-48, journalese

**Week 7, Oct. 21 – Slideshow workshop 3**
Assignments due at the start of class:
Story 2 – on elections
Query for final project – free choice, must be written for readers abroad
plans for a multimedia component
(first draft of the project due Nov. 18, multimedia due Dec. 2)

Reading:
McBride & Rosensti, investigative reporting, p. 123-138
Global Campaign Against Impunity, Committee to Protect Journalists, [http://cpj.org/campaigns/impunity/](http://cpj.org/campaigns/impunity/)
“Soul Search,” John Dinges, Columbia Journalism Review, July/Aug 2005 (access through NYU Libraries e-journals)
Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, Washington Post, 2003 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting (Mexico), March 15, 2002 article [www.pulitzer.org](http://www.pulitzer.org)
Cappon, p. 49-58, tone
Strunk & White, p. 66-85, style

**Week 8, Oct. 28**
Assignment due at the start of class:
1st revised story (2nd revised story will be due Dec. 2)

Reading:
McBride & Rosensti, new sourcing, p. 139-150
Week 9, Nov. 4 – Slideshow presentations
Assignments due at the start of class:
Multimedia version of story 1 or 2

Reading:
McBride & Rosenstiel, corrections, p. 151-164
Cappon, p. 65-77, quotes
Strunk & White, p. 39-65, misused expressions
Optional: “Beyond Google vs. China,” Barbara Borst, GlobalPost, March 10, 2010 (available under the Resources tab on NYU Classes)

Week 10, Nov. 11
Assignment due at the start of class:
Story 3
Revised query for final project (if the story has changed significantly)

Reading:
McBride & Rosenstiel, community, p. 165-176
AP Stylebook, p. 336-358, libel
The New York Times, 3 articles (access through NYU Libraries e-journals):
“Seizing a Moment, Al Jazeera Galvanizes Arab Frustration,” Robert F. Worth and David D. Kirkpatrick, Jan. 28, 2011
“CPJ joins call to renew mandate of human rights rapporteur,” Committee to Protect Journalists, March 12, 2015

Week 11, Nov. 18
Assignment due at the start of class:
Final project, 1st draft – free choice, with international element/interest
(multimedia component due Dec. 2, revised project due Dec. 9)

Reading:
McBride & Rosenstiel, the force of fear, p. 177-188
AP Stylebook, p. p. 365-374, access and privacy
Cappon, p. 79-84, 85-94, color, pseudo color

NO CLASS – Nov. 25 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 12, Dec. 2
Assignments due at the start of class:
Final project – multimedia component
Revised version of earlier story – story 1, 2 or 3

Reading:
McBride & Rosenstiel, diversity, p. 189-204
The Associated Press, 2016 Pulitzer for public service (slaves in the fishing industry), article from March 25, 2015 www.pulitzer.org
Cappon, p. 95-114, features

Week 13, Dec. 9
Assignment due at the start of class:
Final project – revised version, with multimedia component

Reading:
McBride & Rosenstiel, community, future, p. 205-219
Cappon, p. 115-125, 127-136, usage, “bestiary”

Week 14, Dec. 16
Discussion of next steps and thesis ideas.