Writing and Reporting Workshop I, JOUR – GA.1021.1.008
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, Master’s Program
Fall 2014, Thursdays, Sept. 4 – Dec. 4; Fridays, Sept. 5 – Dec. 5
10:00 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.

Prof. Barbara Borst
e-mail: barbara.borst@nyu.edu and b.a.borst@gmail.com
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 good 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. We will talk about students’ upcoming stories. 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 talk to 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
  - 1 of these stories also will be told through multimedia
  - 2 of these stories will be thoroughly revised
- 3 Weblog installments of 300 to 500 words each
  - Free choice of subjects; blogs must include original reporting
  - 1 article of 1,200 to 1,500 words
    - Free choice of subjects; story must be of interest to readers abroad
    - Query, first draft and revisions
    - In-depth look at the subject; multimedia component

Students will turn in queries ahead of time for each assignment. All stories must be written for readers abroad. All 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

Grading:
- Articles and blogs completed outside class 35%
- Multimedia project 10%
- Final project 20%
- Class participation, workshops 35%

The journalism institute’s grade policy:
- A = publishable as is or with minor changes
- B = publishable with light editing
- C = publishable after a rewrite
- D = major problems with facts, reporting and/or writing
- F = missing key facts or containing plagiarism, libel or significant spelling or grammar errors

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. 4 & 5
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://www.journalism.org/resources/principles
  The Associated Press – Statement of News Values and Principles
  http://www.ap.org/newsvalues/index.html
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. 11 & 12
Assignment due at the start of class:
  Query 1, for story on the "beat" community or other topic, with ideas for a
  multimedia component (story due Oct. 4)
Reading:
  McBride & Rosenstiel, intro, p. 1-6, pursuit of truth, p. 7-37

Week 3, Sept. 18 & 19
Assignment due at the start of class:
  Blog 1 – 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. 25 & 26
Assignments due at the start of class:
   Query 2 for story on the elections (Election Day is Nov. 4; story due Oct. 16 & 17)
   Query 3 for story on the New York Marathon, with ideas for a multimedia component (NYC Marathon is Nov. 2; story due Nov. 6 & 7)
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, fact-checking, p. 61-78
   (access through NYU Libraries e-journals)
   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. 2 & 3
Assignment due at the start of class:
   Story 1
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, photojournalism, p. 79-88
   “Newspaper scandal eases Murdoch grip on UK politics,” Matt Falloon, Reuters, July 7, 2011 (access through NYU Libraries e-journals)
   “Beyond the Cartoon Controversy,” Alia Malek, *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2007 (access through NYU Libraries e-journals)
   Cappon, p. 23-35, leads
   Strunk & White, p. 25-39, composition and form

Week 6, Oct. 9 & 10
Assignments due at the start of class:
   Blog 2 -- free choice of subject; include original reporting
   *Think ahead about writing a revised version of story 1 or 2. The revised version will be due on Oct. 23 & 24.*
   *Think ahead about doing a multimedia version of story 1 or 2. The multimedia version will be due on Oct. 30 & 31.*
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, transparency, public journalism, networked audiences, p. 89-122
   Clifford Levy and Ellen Barry, *The New York Times*, 2011 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting (Russia), article from May 18, 2010
Week 7, Oct. 16 & 17
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. 13 & 14, multimedia due Nov. 20 & 21)
Reading:
- McBride & Rosenstiel, investigative reporting, p. 123-138
- Global Campaign Against Impunity, Committee to Protect Journalists,
  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
  Cappon, p. 49-58, tone
- Strunk & White, p. 66-85, style

Week 8, Oct. 23 & 24
Assignment due at the start of class:
- 1st revised story (2nd revised story will be due Nov. 20 & 21)
Reading:
- McBride & Rosenstiel, new sourcing, p. 139-150
- WilfMbanga, “Zimbabwe: Telling the story, reporting the news,” Nieman Reports,
  Fall 2008 http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=100420
- Jeffrey Gettleman, The New York Times, Pulitzer Prize for international reporting
  (Africa), article from Dec. 28, 2011 www.pulitzer.org
- Mark Schoofs, Village Voice, 2000 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting (AIDS
  http://www.pulitzer.org/
  Cappon, p. 59-63, pitfalls
Week 9, Oct. 30 & 31
Assignments due at the start of class:
   Multimedia version of story 1 or 2
   Blog 3 -- free choice of subject; include original reporting
Reading:
   McBride & Rosenstiel, corrections, p. 151-164
   Cappon, p. 65-77, quotes
   Strunk & White, p. 39-65, misused expressions
   David Barboza, The New York Times, Pulitzer for international reporting
      (China), article from Oct. 26, 2012 www.pulitzer.org
Optional: “Beyond Google vs. China,” Barbara Borst, GlobalPost,
      March 10, 2010 http://www.globalpost.com/passport/foreign-
      desk/100304/beyond-google-vs-china

Week 10, Nov. 6 & 7
Assignment due at the start of class:
   Story 3 -- on the New York marathon
   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
      “Wired, Educated and Shrewd, Young Egyptians Guide Revolt,” David D.
         Kirkpatrick, Feb. 10, 2011
      “In Iran, journalists remain in government’s crosshairs,” Committee to Protect
         Journalists, June 15, 2011

Week 11, Nov. 13 & 14
Assignment due at the start of class:
   Final project, 1st draft -- free choice, with international element/interest
      (multimedia component due Nov. 22, revised project due Dec. 6)
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
“The Stringers,” Paul McLeary, *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 2006 (access through NYU libraries e-journals)
**Optional:** David Zucchino, “The Wounded: The Journey through Trauma,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 6, 2006, 3-part series with multimedia (access through NYU libraries e-journals)

**Week 12, Nov. 20 & 21**
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
  - Jason Szep and Andrew R.C. Marshall, Reuters, 2014 Pulitzer for international reporting (Rohingya), article from July 17, 2013 [www.pulitzer.org](http://www.pulitzer.org)
  - Cappon, p. 95-114, features

**NO CLASS ON NOV. 27 or 28 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**Week 13, Dec. 4 & 5**
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”