WRR1: Writing, Research & Reporting Workshop: News & Documentary
JOUR-GA 1021.009 Fall 2013
Prof. Cora Daniels
Wednesdays 10:00am -3:50pm
Room 750, 20 Cooper Square
Contact: email cora.daniels@nyu.edu or cell 646 342 3588
Office hours: Wednesdays, 9am-10am by appointment. (I am also always available via email or phone everyday of the week.)

Purpose

The best journalism flows from logical thinking, solid research, and comprehensive reporting. That’s what this class will teach you how to do. It is the foundation of your graduate program, taken by every graduate journalism student. The goal of our WRR1 is to arm you with a reporting foundation that you can use in any form of media. By the end you will be able to think like a reporter: constantly question the world that you live.

The only way to learn journalism is by doing journalism. In addition to lectures, presentations, and discussions you will be doing reporting exercises, lots of them. We may meet in a room at 20 Cooper Square each week but your real classroom is the city of New York. You will be assigned a neighborhood to cover as your beat for the semester. You will be expected to walk the streets and report from your neighborhood on a regular basis hunting for stories to write each week. That’s right, write. Although you will spend much of this class writing for the web these are the reporting skills you will be expected to use in every News & Doc class and throughout your career. Each week your stories will be published online to the News & Doc multi-media news magazine website and be accessible to the world. You will get as much research, reporting and writing as we can pack into a semester. Most of all you will develop the reporting skills to tell stories in every media form – hard news articles for the web, short features for newspapers and magazines, broadcast pieces, or as blogs – because even though the mediums change, and continue to change, telling stories is at the heart of what we all do.

Welcome to the newsroom…
Every class

This is a six-hour class; generally we will start with a news discussion, critique of the previous week’s assignment, lecture, and the afternoon will typically be devoted to in class reporting assignments.

Bring to every class your AP Stylebook, a reporter’s notebook for in class reporting assignments, as well as something to take notes in during lectures.

You are also expected to stay on top of the news, including reading the New York Times in print or online every day; it is as essential as a textbook. We will begin each class with a short news discussion led by a different member of the class. If you read the print version of the NYT please bring Wednesday’s issue to class. Participation in the discussion is required to show that you are reading the newspaper, well informed, and understand the issues – all of which is the basic foundation for a journalist. If there is not enough participation during our news discussions then pop news quizzes will be given instead and will be counted towards your participation grade. While the Times is a daily reading requirement for every journalist, there’s lots of other media out there, from radio, to TV, to magazines, to online publications, to blogs. And, as part of this class, you will be required to read or listen to these other media as well. Three online sites are particular useful to check every day; you can sign up and get daily e-mail delivery: Al’s Morning Meeting (www.poynter.org), Today’s News (www.slate.com), the daily Eye Opener (www.GothamGazette.com), and Daily newsfeed (www.mediabistro.com), among others.

There are graded assignments in every class, either in the form of writing exercises or pop news quizzes. If you miss an assignment that means an automatic F for the assignment. I do not give “makeup” assignments. Participation in class discussion is required.

Assignments

Generally you will pitch your weekly story ideas in class and the story will be due via e-mail as an attachment on the following Monday by Noon latest unless otherwise noted. Email assignments to cora.daniels@nyu.edu Stories will be published online on Fridays during class.

If your assignment is late, even by an hour, you will be downgraded. Learning to meet deadlines is an essential aspect of this craft. You will be graded for story idea, research, reporting and writing, as well as spelling and grammar: in essence publishability. You are expected to use AP style for all your assignments. If you piece does not meet AP style standards it will be reflected in your grade.

When you e-mail your work, please name the attachment with your last name first followed by the name of the assignment. EG: JonesMaryStudentIssue.
Please single space each assignment. On the first page include your name, the story slug, the date and the page number. On the last page of your story please put -30- to signify the end.

- **Art:** Every assignment must include a jpg photo or other piece of art (graph, table, slide show, etc). The idea is to get you thinking about you story holistically and visually. Words do not stand alone. Respect copyrights! Remember with your weekly assignments you are reporting for a real live media site. Only original art or that which can be used with permission is acceptable for publication.

- **Source List** On the last page of every reporting assignment list the names/titles/contact info of your sources. If you do not provide this, I will not grade the piece. This is department standard. For this class anonymous sources cannot be used except on rare occasion and only with my prior approval. Contact info will still be required for anonymous sources. Your source list is for my eyes only and will not be posted with the online version of the story.

**Rewrite workshop**

Each week I will line edit and offer comments throughout your weekly assignments and return them electronically. We will rewrite some assignments as a class. And most assignments we will edit into shorter versions for the web. Drafts and revisions is common practice in long form journalism and require a reporter to be able to react to feedback, follow instruction, and sometimes envision a story in a whole new way due to editor questions and comments. It can be some of the most difficult work you do and a great opportunity to learn. You will be required to turn in your final project in drafts. In addition, during the semester you have the option of using my edit to rewrite one assignment of your choice for a revised grade. If you originally got a B but your rewrite is an A- you will be given the A- for that assignment. This is an optional assignment. But if you choose to do a rewrite it must be turned in a week after getting back your original edit. **For rewrites make your revisions in track changes on the edited version of the story you originally received back from me.**

**Multi-media Final project:**

Our final project will be a joint project with TV Reporting 1 taught by Prof. Marcia Rock. This year the class will work as a newsroom to create a single interactive documentary. The topic of the interactive doc will be announced. But each student will be required to contribute video, text, and/or data to help tell the single multimedia story. The class will also be in charge of building the website for the project. This is a group project but each student will receive an individual grade for their contributions. **You will pitch your final project ideas Tues. Nov. 4 to Prof. Rock and me in Prof. Rock's class. A draft of the print portion of the final project is due Wednesday Nov. 26 at 9am. The Final project is due the last day of class Dec. 5.** (Note: Wednesday classes, included ours, ends one week earlier than the rest of the semester.)
Texts:

Required

1. The Associated Press Style and Libel Manual (Bring to class everyday)
2. The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, Revised and Updated edition By Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel
3. The New York Times daily. (Bring print version to class)
4. I may also provide you with additional handouts and reading materials in class or post them online to our NYU Classes site.
5. Reporters notebooks. On every story you cover either in class or on your weekly assignments use only a reporter’s notebook to take notes. It is the professional standard of the industry.

Optional:

1. Reporting for the Media by Bender, Davenport, Drager and Fedler 10th Edition
   This is a standard journalism textbook. The textbook is optional to reflect and respect the varying levels of experience students may bring to graduate school. If you think a journalism textbook would be helpful based on your experience this is the text I recommend and I have outlined appropriate readings every week in the syllabus. The textbook outlines the basics of journalism. My lectures tend not to repeat textbook material but make the assumption that you know the basics and instead teach how to put the basics into practice with real life advice. This is an expensive text. Used books and older editions may be available online. Those are fine to use too or if classmates want to share books that is OK too.

2. On Writing Well, William Zinsser
   Zinsser is a brilliant writer and teaches the art of writing very well. If you want your writing to be inspired this is a short, very readable, book, filled with advice that will make you think about your use of language, and how best to get your point across.
Grades

Your final grades will reflect your marks on class and field assignments and class participation. Effort and progress will count. I strongly urge you not to miss any classes during the semester; if you miss more than two classes your final grade will drop one full letter.

Every weekend there will be an out-of-class assignment that are typically due to me via e-mail by Wednesday, Noon. You will know these assignments well in advance so you can plan for them. Late assignments will be downgraded.

Your participation grade is comprised of your participation in news discussions and other class discussions.

Your grade in the class will be calculated using the formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class assignments</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-class assignments</td>
<td>40 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>30 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading will conform to the Journalism Department’s standard:

- 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

Plagiarism:

All students are required to sign the department's ethic pledge. Be clear: plagiarism or fabricating sources, quotes, sentences from any print, broadcast or online source is strictly forbidden. Any incidents of plagiarism will be punished with an automatic failure of this course and the Department chair will be notified. Contact information for all sources quoted or used in your work is required at the end of every assignment. I may check in with your sources on occasion.

The journalism Institute’s Ethics pledge can be downloaded at [http://jouranlism.nyu.edu/ethics](http://jouranlism.nyu.edu/ethics). The Institute requires students to sign, date and return it to the box on the 6th floor. Students who don’t return the pledge will not be able to receive their final grades from the department.
Course Outline (Subject to change)

Week 1 Sept 3: Reporting Basics 1: Developing News judgment.
Reading: Kovach/Elements of Journalism
   Introduction chapter
   Ch 2 Truth: The First and Most Confusing Principle
Fedler/ Reporting for the Media
   Ch. 5 Selecting and Reporting the News

   Writing Assignment Part A: Meet the class. Write a 350 word profile of a classmate. Use a story telling style appropriate for a one source story like a 1st person as told to, a Q/A, punchy quote driven conversation, etc. Profile must have a clear angle. Include 1 piece of art for the story (a jpg of the subject). Due Friday 9/5 Noon.
   Writing Assignment Part B: Our next class will be meeting on the eve of the 13th anniversary of 9/11. NYC media always covers the anniversary. On the day the names of the victims are read one by one and aired on all the local networks. At the 10 year anniversary media coverage was at an all time high. The Carter Institute had a day-long conference that it required all its students to attend. But how do we handle coverage in these off years, especially as we get farther and farther away? Is this still news? Sometimes coming up with coverage in the off years of major events can be more of a challenge, requiring creative thinking for a fresh angle. Give it a try. Come up with one viable 9/11 story idea and bring to next class.

Week 2 Sept 10 Story Structure: Leads, Middles, Endings
   The ins and outs of story structure.
   Reading: Fedler 8/Basic News Leads
      9/Alternative Leads
      10/The body of a News Story
   Kovach 9/Make the News Comprehensive and Proportional

   Writing Assignment: AP Daybook Assignment include 1 piece of art. 500 words Due Monday 9/15 Noon
   Assignment: Prepare to pitch neighborhood beat story for next class.

Week 3 Sept 17 Reporting Basics Part 2: Interviews + Idea development
   Interviewing – knowing who to speak to and getting them to speak – is at the heart of being a journalist. The best story ideas can be wrecked with bad interviews. .
   Guest: Jaron Galinsky, Co-founder and CEO, Storyhunter (www.storyhunter.tv)
   Storyhunter is a global community of professional and aspiring video journalists, documentary filmmakers, and multimedia storytellers who produce premium journalism for the web.
   In class: Intro to the Pitch Lab: Pitch neighborhood beat stories
   Reading: Kovach/ Ch.3 Who Journalists Work For Ch.8 Engagement and Relevance
      Fedler 12/Interviews 11/Quoting and Attribution Review if needed: 3/ News writing style and 4/Language
      Zissner/Ch.12 The Interview
Writing Assignment: Write a 500 word news story from your neighborhood beat. Include 1 piece of art. Walk the streets of your neighborhood, talk to people, discover what is going on. The idea is to write a story that comes from that neighborhood. The only specific you have is location -- the rest is up to you. This story will be our first published to the News Doc news site. **DUE Mon. 9/22 noon**

**Week 4 Sept. 24 Finding sources: Library lecture**
Guest: NYU Journalism Librarian
Newsroom 2-4pm posting neighborhood stories
Reading: Fedler/19/ Advanced Reporting
   Kovach 4/Journalism of Verification
   5/Independence of Faction
   Zissner/Part 1 Ch1-ch7
Reading on Classes site:
   Mencher/Ch. 11 Digging for information
   Ch. 14 Finding, Cultivating and Using Sources
   Ch. 23 Business Reporting
Writing Assignment: Neighborhood Business story. Write a 500 business story from your neighborhood beat. Include 1 piece of art. **DUE Mon. 9/29 Noon.** To be published online.

**Week 5 Oct. 1 Law & Order**
Trip to Manhattan DA office
Newsroom 2-4: Posting neighborhood biz stories
Reading: Handouts on Classes site
Fedler: Ch 18 Public Affairs Reporting
Writing Assignment: Courtroom Reporters notebook. A reporter’s notebook feature is not a traditional straight news story. Every news organization has their own exact definition but typically it is a story that can be a little less formal, gives the audience insight into a story from an unusual point of view. Sometimes it is a behind the scenes take -- how the reporter got info for the story, sometimes it is an observational piece, or a fun/ironic take, or an off the beaten path/evergreen angle. Even reporters notebooks have a clear angle. Our pieces will be written for the web and can take that conversational tone. **DUE Mon. 10/6 9am.**
Assignment: Written pitch for trend story **due Monday Noon**

**Week 6 Oct. 8 Investigative Reporting**
Hunting for stories, FOIA requests, and beyond
Readings: Kovach/Ch.10 Journalists Have a Responsibility to Conscience.
   On Classes site: Mencher/Ch. 8 Features, Long Stories and Series
Writing Assignment: Writing Assignment: Nationalizing and localizing. Write a 750 word trend story. This story does not have to be based in your neighborhood! The idea is to think big and cover an issue or trend that is happening on a wider scale – across the city or the nation. Or you can localize or nationalize an issue. The purpose of this assignment is to showcase sophisticated story ideas. To be published online. **Due Mon 10/20 9am**
Week 7 Oct. 15 Advanced Reporting: Meetings, press conferences and finding gems in the mundane
   In class: mid-term reviews
   In class: UN exercise
   Reading: Fedler 13/Speeches and Meetings
   Writing Assignment: Continue work on your trend story **Due Mon. 10/20 9am.**

Week 8 Oct 22 Multimedia Journalism Part 1: Telling a story in any medium
   In class: Newsroom 2-4pm Posting trend stories.
   **Viewing:** By next class watch Hollow an interactive documentary at hollowdocumentary.com
   Reading: Fedler  Ch. 14 Writing for Digital Media
   **Writing Assignment:** Neighborhood Story Revisited. In Prof. Rock's class you are working on a neighborhood video story. Find an angle related to your video story that is suitable for a companion written piece. Do NOT write a written version of your video story. The audience will be watching and reading both. Instead pull out a related angle. The goal is to think about your coverage in video and written form and find appropriate angles suitable for each medium. Your written piece is intended for the web and so should take advantage including links, slideshows, etc. Your entire package -video and text -- will be posted online together. **Due: Mon 10/27 Noon.**

Week 9 Oct 29 Big Stories, Big ideas
   In class: Final project and Hollow documentary discussion
   In class: Final Project Guest TBA
   In class: Polish neighborhood stories. Post when videos are done.
   Reading: Kovach 6/Monitor Power and Offer Voice to the Voiceless
   7/ Journalism as a Public Forum
   Assignment: Election Story. Create a multimedia election story, for example a slideshow, slideshow with narration, podcast, interactive data graphic. You can find an election issue in your neighborhood or elsewhere in the city. You must go to at least 1 polling place on election day to talk to voters. You will be creating your multimedia stories in class on Wednesday and our election coverage will go live at the end of class. The challenge is to find an angle that will hold up after election day since stories will be posted late Wednesday. **Due: Wed. Nov. 5 end of class.**
   Assignment: Prepare to Pitch Final Project Nov. 4 in Prof. Rock’s class. You will be pitching your final project for both classes to both of us.

Week 10 Nov 5 Thinking as a newsroom
   Newsroom: Multimedia election stories Due end of class.
   **Assignment:** Start on your final projects **Drafts Due**
Week: 11 Nov. 11: Multimedia Part 2: Data Visualization
   Guest in Prof. Rock’s class.
Week 11: Nov 12 Multimedia Part 3: Web Design
   Guest: TBA
   Putting together the website for our interactive doc final project
   Assignment: Create personal blog website. Consider your site to be your professional
   business card, it is your introduction to the industry. It is a way for editors to see your work and
   development and something that you can update throughout your NYU career and beyond.
   Assignment: Continue work on your final project

Week 12: Nov 19
   Assignment: Continue work on your final project. Draft due Nov. 26.

Week 13 Nov. 26 Final Project workshop
   In class: Final Project workshop review first drafts and research
   Assignment: Continue work on final project. Final Projects due Wed. Dec. 3.

Week 14 Dec. 3 Final Project website launch
   Final Projects Due.
   Send me your source list and post your contribution in draft to the class interactive doc
   by 9am to make deadline. In class we will edit text and make revisions so the most polished
   work will be posted. This will be a 6 hour session.