Mansfield University of Pennsylvania

JN 2210: Journalism and Society - 3 credits
Spring 2014

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219 Allen Hall
Office Hours: no.mad@comcast.net
Tuesday 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Wednesday 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Thursday 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
or by appointment

Class Meeting Time and Location:
tba

APSCUF is the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties. We uphold the highest standards of teaching, scholarly inquiry, and service. We are an organization that is committed to promoting excellence in all that we do to ensure that our students receive the highest quality education.

Dan Mason is the Instructor of Record and only the Instructor of Record can assign a grade in this class.

Catalog description
This course uses fiction to develop an understanding of how society and societal behavior is affected by journalism and the reporting of events through texts and film: how journalists cover events, different approaches to recording events (broadcast, print), and the history and current state of journalism. It allows students an opportunity to see how they can chance social behavior by writing history, one day at a time.

Course Prerequisites: None

Credits: 3

Detailed Course Description:
Social and Behavioral Sciences allow students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to address many of the world's social problems. In the course of its existence, journalism has recorded those social problems, changed the course of society and been changed by society and technology.

The 21st century global society presents a complex picture of human conditions that can be examined politically, economically, culturally, historically, socially, technologically and behaviorally. One of the best ways to examine those problems is through the dissemination of information through newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet.
Since the birth of modern journalism in the 18th century, journalism has caused, reported on and been changed by social upheaval. Governments have tried to control journalists. Journalists have tried to change governments. Today’s turmoil is both changing and being changed by the people who report the news and the way the news is being reported.

New technology has always changed society. Three hundred years ago it was James Franklin and the New England Courant using movable type to spread information (most of it true) to the colonists in Massachusetts. Later it was the telegraph that changed how reporters wrote their stories. The telegraph was unreliable, so reporters learned to front-load their stories and the inverted pyramid style was born. Then the penny press made newspapers available to the people.

Today the internet is changing the world. It is changing society. It is changing journalism and journalists. It’s exciting being on the inside, making decisions about society and human behavior, how to report it and what to report.

This class will examine, through fiction, the birth of social information dissemination: journalism. We will explore the effects of historical reporting on society and learn how society might be different without access to information.

We will explore, through fiction, what journalism is, its importance in maintaining the stability of a healthy democracy, how information effects the behavior of individuals and society, and how it helps shape the public’s view of the world.

**Goal**

Students in this class will describe the role journalism plays in democracy at the local, state and national levels.

**Course Objectives**

- Explain how journalism effects people and governments at the local, state and national levels
- Discuss how news stories are developed, challenged, modified, and defended over the course of time
- Analyze the strategies employed by journalists to report the news fairly and honestly
- Evaluate the influence of journalism on marketplace of ideas

**Desired Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes for this course</th>
<th>Program Level Student Outcomes linked to the relevant course-level SLO</th>
<th>Gen Ed – Social and Behavioral Science Student Learning Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
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| Students will use methods appropriate to the social and behavioral sciences to analyze and critique ideas and events. | JN 2  
EM 1, 3, 5  
PR 1 | Use social science methods to analyze social issues and problems. |
| Students will be able to articulate how social and behavioral sciences address the challenges of society and how they develop over time. | JN 2  
EM 1, 3, 5  
PR 1 | Understand how the social sciences approach human societies and behaviors. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Students will analyze historical approaches to the study of society.</td>
<td>JN 2 EM 1, 3, 5 PR 1</td>
<td>Identify and describe some fundamental social structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Students will interpret basic texts using critical analysis and reference to cultural contexts.</td>
<td>JN 2 EM 1, 3, 5 PR 1</td>
<td>Explain basic theories of human and social behaviors based on the methods of the target disciplines. Describe the development or application of key concepts in the target disciplines.</td>
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**Department of Communication Program Outcomes**

**Journalism Program Outcomes**

1. Journalism majors will be able to gather, analyze, and evaluate information from sources to create a variety of print media appropriate to the profession.
2. Journalism majors will explore the interactions between American history and the media.

**Electronic Media (these may be updated by James, Gary and Chuck to eliminate the ANDS):**

1. Develop and improve critical thinking skills through the evaluation of diverse media texts.
2. Develop and improve proficiency in the use of audio and visual production equipment and elements.
3. Demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge in the historical, theoretical and current operating principles of electronic media.
4. Adapting a writing style appropriate for electronic media.
5. Analyze and make decisions related to media ethical and moral dilemmas based on philosophical principles.

**Public Relations Program Outcomes**

1. PR majors will be able to explain an organization's public relations efforts and how the organization is portrayed in the media.
2. PR majors will be able to develop appropriate communication material to target specific audiences and media.
3. PR majors will be able to evaluate an organization's use of social media.
4. PR majors will be able to evaluate a public relations campaign that they’ve implemented for an organization.

**Required Primary Materials** (available in the campus bookstore unless otherwise noted):
1. *The Truth* by Terry Pratchett
2. *Trust Me on This* by Donald E. Westlake
3. *Fletch* by Gregory McDonald
4. *Fletch* (Movie) — film will be shown in class
5. *The Shipping News* by E. Annie Proulx
6. *The Shipping News* (Movie) — film will be shown in class
7. *Rumor Has It* by Charles Dickinson
8. *State of Play* — Series to be shown in class
9. *Basket Case* by Carl Hiaasen
10. *Network* (Movie) — film will be shown in class

Required Secondary Materials:

6 Theories of How Journalism Affects Society

Principals of Journalism
   [http://www.journalism.org/resources/principles](http://www.journalism.org/resources/principles)

Why Journalism Matters by Jack Lessenberry (Posted on D2L)

Why Journalism Matters by Deborah Potter
   [http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4494](http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4494)

Social effects of tabloid magazines

What is investigative journalism?

Future looks bright for small town newspapers

What Is a News Editor?
   [http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-news-editor.htm](http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-news-editor.htm)

Selections from The Future of News

**Course Requirements and Expectations:**

You are expected to attend class regularly and participate meaningfully, to complete the assigned readings prior class, and to prepare for and complete quizzes, exams and written responses to assess your comprehension of the course content and materials.

**Review Quizzes:**

When we finish each book and/or movie, a quiz will be posted on D2L for you to take before the next class. I will notify the class by email when the quiz has been posted. The review quizzes will be based on the book or movie and our discussion of it. The quizzes are intended to reinforce
content learning and to prepare you for the midterm and final exams. You may use your books and notes when you take the quizzes.

**Exams:**
The midterm and final exams will include a multiple choice section and an essay question. Both will draw on the assigned readings, our class discussions and other material presented in class. The multiple choice section will be taken online in D2L. The answer to the essay will be typed in the standard format for the class and submitted during the next class period.

**Student attendance and evaluation:**
Regular attendance is expected.
Students will be evaluated on the basis of individual and group work.
Expect frequent unannounced quizzes covering reading assignments.
Other evaluation: Midterm and final exams.
The Department of Communication’s plagiarism policy will be enforced.

**More about Professional Behavior:**
Because the classroom is your work environment, students are expected to behave in a professional manner. Students who behave in a professional manner will be successful in this class. "Professional behavior" means: attending class regularly; being punctual and attentive; coming to class prepared; meeting deadlines; joining class discussions; working with classmates and faculty in a respectful and cooperative manner; and not playing with electronic devices during class.

**Conferences:**
Students who are having difficulty in the course should schedule a conference as soon as possible. My office hours are on this syllabus and posted on my office door. If my office hours do not work for you, let me know, and we will schedule a time outside of office hours.

**Attendance Policy:**
Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Documented absences because of illness, serious mitigating circumstances, or official university representation will be excused and you will be allowed to make up the work. You must provide documentation in a timely fashion, however, before such absences can be excused. This attendance policy is consistent with the university's policy as stated in the current undergraduate catalog.

**What to do if you miss class:**
If you are uncertain about what is expected of you the day you return to class, I recommend the following:

- Refer to the assignment schedule in the syllabus AND
- Contact a reliable classmate (exchange phone numbers/e-mail addresses early in the semester) OR
- Call or stop by to see me during office hours
**Exceptionalities:**
Students with documented psychological or learning disorders or other significant medical conditions should work with Jolene Meisner at The Counseling Center to provide me with the requisite letter so that I may serve your needs better.

Jolene Meisner - jmeisner@mansfield.edu
144 South Hall
570-662-4696

The Counseling Center [http://www2.mansfield.edu/counseling-center/](http://www2.mansfield.edu/counseling-center/)

**The Learning Center information:**
Students who need help planning, editing or documenting written assignments can schedule a tutoring session in The Learning Center at Mansfield University, 105 Hemlock Manor, Extension 4693. Appointments are strongly recommended, but walk-ins are welcome.

Kim Slusser, Director - kslusser@mansfield.edu
135 South Hall
570-662-4767

The Learning Center [http://www2.mansfield.edu/learning-center/](http://www2.mansfield.edu/learning-center/)

**Academic Integrity:**
Students are expected to turn in original work. Dishonesty in academic work, including cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic misconduct, is unacceptable. When information from outside sources is used, proper credit must be given to the original source. The University's academic integrity policies and procedures are posted on the registrar’s page, [here](http://www2.mansfield.edu/counseling-center/).

**Plagiarism:** You have plagiarized when you represent someone else's words or ideas as your own. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. If you plagiarize in this class, your offense will be reported to the Provost's Office. Consequences may range from failure of the assignment to expulsion from the university. See the link above for the university's academic integrity policies and procedures.

**Note:** Readings are more effective and valuable when done before class on the indicated date.

**Tentative lecture and discussion schedule:**
Day 1  Introduction and Syllabus
   6 Theories of How Journalism Affects Society
   Principals of Journalism
   [http://www.journalism.org/resources/principles](http://www.journalism.org/resources/principles)
Why Journalism Matters by Jack Lessenberry (Posted on D2L)

Day 2  The Truth by Terry Pratchett up to page 50
Day 3  The Truth by Terry Pratchett up to page 125
Day 4  The Truth by Terry Pratchett up to page 200
Day 5  The Truth by Terry Pratchett up to the end
Written response - 500 words about why people were upset about the advent of a newspaper and how they came to realize it served a valuable function in their society.

Day 6  Discussion: The social effects of gossip and sensationalism vs. information necessary for self-government. Can we have one without the other?

Social effects of tabloid magazines
   http://www.helium.com/items/2184688-social-effects-of-tabloid-magazines

Trust Me on This by Donald E. Westlake up to page 75

Day 7  Trust Me on This by Donald E. Westlake up to page 150
Day 8  Trust Me on This by Donald E. Westlake up to page 225
Day 9  Trust Me on This by Donald E. Westlake up to the end
Written response - 500 words about the role of truth in tabloid newspapers. When does such reporting cross the line between necessary and useful information and entertainment? Is this necessary for our society to function? What happens if the government forbids it?

Day 10  Discussion: Is investigative reporting necessary for the smooth functioning of a democratic society? What would happen if you didn’t know what your neighbors were doing? If you didn’t know what the town council was doing? The school board? The federal government? Social and political organizations? Corporations?

What is investigative journalism?
   http://www.journalismfund.eu/what-investigative-journalism

Fletch by Gregory McDonald up to page 75

Day 11  Fletch by Gregory McDonald up to page 150
Day 12  Fletch by Gregory McDonald up to the end
Written response - 500 words about the role of investigative reporting. Who pays for it? Is it necessary for the smooth functioning of society? How can we tell investigation from “gossip”?

Day 13  Fletch (Movie to be watched in class)
Day 14  Fletch (Movie to be watched in class)
Day 15  Midterm exam
Day 16  Discussion: How small does a media outlet need to be? How large may it be to effectively cover the information citizens need for self-government? How would small towns be affected if they only had remote sources of information?

Future looks bright for small town newspapers

The Shipping News by E. Annie Proulx to page 75

Day 17  The Shipping News by E. Annie Proulx to page 150
Day 18  The Shipping News by E. Annie Proulx to the end
Day 19  The Shipping News starring Kevin Spacey — film will be shown in class
Written response - 500 words about the role of newspapers in small towns. What happens to Mansfield and the surrounding area when the Wellsboro Gazette goes out of business? Who is going to report on high school sports? The school board? The borough council? How will this change the information available to voters?

Day 20  The Shipping News starring Kevin Spacey — film will be shown in class
Day 21  Rumor Has It by Charles Dickinson to page 75
Day 22  Rumor Has It by Charles Dickinson to page 150
Day 23  Rumor Has It by Charles Dickinson to the end
Written response - 500 words about the role of the editor in guiding the production of news, the importance of the editor in creating a publication. What effect does the editor’s role as gatekeeper have on the information available to readers?

Day 24  State of Play — Series to be shown in class
Day 25  State of Play — Series to be shown in class
Day 26  State of Play — Series to be shown in class
Written response - 500 words about the differences between reporting in England and in the United States. Is investigative reporting important in other societies?

Day 27  Basket Case by Carl Hiaasen up to page 100
Day 28  Basket Case by Carl Hiaasen up to the end
Written response - 500 words about the corporate takeover of news. Why does a small town need a newspaper? What happens when they lose it?

(As needed)
Day ??  Selections from The Future of News

Evaluation/Assessment Techniques:
• Written responses will be evaluated using a rubric common to all responses.
• In-class participation will also be evaluated for quantity and quality.