



MPJO-900-01: CAPSTONE

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS JOURNALISM

Tuesdays, 5:20 p.m. to 7:50 p.m. | SPRING 2017

Meetings: Tuesday 5:20-7:50 a few times during the term.

One on one meetings with City Paper editorial staff (at the City Paper offices) throughout the term.

Meetings (phone or in person) with adviser during the term as needed.

Faculty Director: Brooke Van Dam

Group Adviser: Linda Kramer Jennings

Group Adviser: Alicia Caldwell

Group Adviser: Carole Feldman

Downtown campus, Room C121

Washington City Paper Office

COURSE OVERVIEW

This final course in the MPSJ curriculum is a culmination of all that students have learned during their time in the program. The Capstone/ Washington City Paper newsroom experience provides students an opportunity to demonstrate their technical journalism skills, editorial ability, ethical standards and initiative necessary to be a professional journalist.

The course acts like a weekly newsroom where students will choose one of four beats and cover stories in it during the term in a variety of different distribution models they have learned in other classes. It takes advantage of Georgetown and City Paper's unique position in the center of both a vibrant city and the home of the federal government.

- Those choosing to not take advantage of the City Paper option will need to complete all of the same assignments and coordinate with the Faculty Director on pitching and assigning editor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will be expected to:

- Produce a variety of professional quality journalism pieces in an assigned beat
- Generate excellent story ideas and content
- Demonstrate ethical judgment and an ability to critically analyze journalistic boundaries
- Assemble a representative sample of work based on skills learned throughout the MPSJ program



RECOMMENDED READING

All students are expected to have the AP Stylebook and use it. Additionally, you will need to read the City Paper style and beat guide.

- If not taking the City Paper option, students must be familiar with style and freelance guidelines for chosen outlet

There is no additional required text for this class, but you should be consuming a lot of news during this time.

ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNICATION

A successful class depends on the active engagement of all students. Students should turn off all cell phones, pagers or other communication devices while in class. Any class discussions whether in person or online should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

Students are expected to attend every class and group meeting on time. If you are unable to come to class or a meeting if you know will not be there on time, you are responsible for notifying your group instructor via email prior to the start of class. There are no excused absences.

As outlined by the university, missing more than two classes will result in a final grade reduction of one level (for example, an A will be converted to an A-). **Absences for classes or meetings, beyond the initial two, will result in further reduction of the final grade.** If you are absent for more than four classes, you will be in danger of failing this course.

Students are expected to stay in touch with their group instructor throughout the semester, including during weeks when the class does not meet. Generally, these check-ins can take place in person, over the phone, via email or on Slack.

In the event of a weather emergency (or any other widespread emergency) that would close the Georgetown Downtown building during one of our in-class sessions, we will plan to meet virtually through online videoconferencing tools.

OTHER GUIDELINES FOR CITY PAPER OPTION

This class maintains an active Slack channel which is where you will communicate both with your advisers and City Paper editorial staff. The channel is called **Georgetown Journalism** and you will be invited once you are admitted and enrolled into the course.



Additionally, all work will be submitted to not only your City Paper editors but via a Shared Google Drive to your Faculty Director and Advisers. These links will be shared with you the first day of the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

Separate handouts will be posted on Canvas detailing assignment requirements:

- Enterprise Story- pitched sometime in the semester to the City Paper EIC based on assigned beat. Editors will then work with each student to create the appropriate story (likely multimedia in nature) based on the content.
 - You will be graded both on your pitch as well as the final piece that you produce
 - * If not choosing the City Paper option, you will need to get outlet and editor to pitch to and potentially published with, approved by the Faculty Director
- 2 Spot News Stories- Throughout the semester students will maintain an active presence on Slack. They will pick up or pitch two stories for the City Paper staff and complete the work by the due date.
 - * If not choosing the City Paper option, you will need to produce stories in your chosen beat for your adviser or another potential publication.
- Video/Photo Story- This may tie into the Enterprise story or one of the other two spot news stories. Students must produce a video story where framing, lighting, sound and narrative will be evaluated.
- Ethics Presentation- On the final day of class, students will outline key ethical issues they confronted throughout the process. The purpose of this presentation is to give you the opportunity to reflect on how ethics have informed and are continuing to inform your development as a professional journalist.

Everything produced will be graded by the Capstone Faculty Director and Advisers. Publishing is not guaranteed by City Paper. Grades will not be affected by whether something is published or not.

In addition to assignments, you will be assessed on your overall process. That includes meeting deadlines, responding to feedback, engaging on Slack and staying on track.

This is a core course of the MPS Journalism program, and students must earn a “B” (83) or higher to pass the course. Please see the Graduate Student Handbook for more details. Students with at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA who receive a final grade of a B- or below may receive one opportunity to retake the course, if approved by the dean.

GRADING



Your course grade will be based on the following:

Daily/Weekly Stories (2)	20
Video Story	5
Enterprise Story Pitch	15
Enterprise Story	45
Ethics Presentation	5
Process	10
Total:	100

Graduate course grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F. **There are no grades of C+, C- or D.**

A	100-93	B-	82.99-80
A-	92.99-90	C	79.99-70
B+	89.99-88	F	69.99-0
B	87.99-83		

The instructors will provide a warning by mid-semester to any student who appears to be on track for a poor final grade.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Georgetown offers a variety of support systems for students that can be accessed on main campus or at the downtown location:

- MPS Writing Resource Program
202-687-4246
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
- Academic Resource Center
202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services
202-687-6985
<http://caps.georgetown.edu/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

Students with documented disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Students with disabilities should contact the



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
School of Continuing Studies
Journalism

Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <http://ldss.georgetown.edu/index.cfm>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. If accommodations are recommended, you will be given a letter from ARC to share with your professors. You are personally responsible for completing this process officially and in a timely manner. Neither accommodations nor exceptions to policies can be permitted to students who have not completed this process in advance.

GEORGETOWN HONOR SYSTEM

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity in pursuit of their education at Georgetown. Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to, failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are held to the Honor Code. The Honor Code pledge follows:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

PLAGIARISM

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in journalism, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the Gervase Programs at <http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/53377.html>. If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing and the need to credit, check out <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

SYLLABUS MODIFICATION

The syllabus may change to accommodate discussion of emerging topics. The instructors will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1, January 17th- Overview and Training at Georgetown SCS



Week 2, January 24th- Training at Georgetown SCS

Week 3- Reporting Week
Check in with Adviser

Week 4- Pitch due to Adviser

Week 5- Reporting Week

Week 6- Reporting Week

Week 7, February 28th- Mid Term Class Check In at Georgetown SCS

Week 8- Reporting Week

Week 9- Reporting Week

Week 10- Reporting Week

Week 11, April 4- Meeting to Check In on Story Progression at Georgetown SCS
Presentation and Job Interview Preparation Workshop

Week 12- Reporting Week

Week 13- Reporting Week

Week 14, April 25- Ethics Presentation at Georgetown SCS

Week 15, May 9- All Work Completed and Submitted to Faculty Director and Advisers