



## **MPJO-733-40: FIELD REPORTING**

### **GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: MPS-JOURNALISM**

Wednesdays, 6 p.m. to 9:20 p.m. | Summer 2014

Instructor: Doug Mitchell

Downtown Campus, room C226 (Mac lab)

- Office hours are by appointment.

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

Welcome to the Saxa Trail!

Today, we can report multiple stories and manage multiple communities at once just sitting at a desk and typing, sharing story links or chatting on Twitter or other apps. But there is one kind of shared experience that can only be had away from a desk and out of your comfort zone -- that's going into the field as journalists and talking to real people, in real time and in real conditions.

This course will offer a highly intensive multimedia experience where students will learn the art and craft of location-based multimedia storytelling. The class will work as a team finding and researching stories in Albuquerque, N.M., in preparation for a reporting trip there during the semester.

In class before the trip, we'll discuss what it's like to work on a package of stories across media as well as brush up on reporting and social media skills so that students will be ready to report when they get on the ground out West. Students will also pitch and execute a small field report in the Washington, D.C., area that will give them a glimpse of what it will be like reporting much farther from home. Group travel will take place during the middle of semester, and we'll allow ample time for researching and reporting stories. The class will use Tumblr and Google Drive for in-class sharing and coordinating before, during and after the trip. After the trip, the remaining weeks of class will be spent writing, editing and producing the work done in New Mexico. The final project will be a website that will feature all of the students' work.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Understand journalistic idea generation and proof of concept in reporting
- Understand the logistical and planning sides of reporting from the field
- Understand advanced narrative storytelling with text, images, sound and video
- Understand uses of social media in editorial/promotional settings
- Work on deadline while collaborating as a team
- Have a better cultural understanding of Native peoples in the United States
- Develop a successful Capstone project based on what they have learned in the class about project management and idea generation



## REQUIRED READING

Title: Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production

Author: Jonathan Kern

ISBN: 0226431789

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press

Year: 2008

Price: \$20 (Amazon)

Title: 100 Questions, 500 Tribes: A Guide to Native America

Author: Native American Journalists Association & the Michigan State School of Journalism

ISBN: 1939880386

Publisher: David Crumm Media LLC

Year: 2014

Price: \$9.95 (Amazon)

Title: [Transom.org](http://Transom.org)

This is a site that started with a “radio” focus but has become a must-use place for any and all multimedia journalists. Specifically, you should read sections titled, “[Craft](#)” and “[Brian Storm](#).”

Additional readings will be assigned by the instructor on a week-to-week basis, and students are expected to be prepared to discuss these in class.

Also, we expect that you will follow local Albuquerque and New Mexico news throughout the semester to familiarize yourselves with what is happening on the ground there. We also expect you to start following and reading news related to “Indian Country.” Doing so will give you good context on some of the issues faced by Native Americans around the United States and will likely spark some promising story ideas for the semester. These are some we suggest:

- The Albuquerque Journal: <http://www.abqjournal.com/>
- Weekly Alibi: <http://alibi.com/>
- Santa Fe Reporter: <http://www.sfreporter.com/santafe/>
- KOB4: <http://www.kob.com/index.shtml>
- KOAT: <http://www.koat.com/news>
- Indian Country Today: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/>
- City of Albuquerque Twitter account: @cabq
- Native American Journalists Association on Twitter: @najournalists
- Native Health News: @NewsNHNA

## ATTENDANCE

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, 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.

This class relies heavily on attendance and participation. Punctual attendance is critical. If you have to miss a class – family emergency, medical emergency or other act of God – you must let the instructor know in advance and work out a proposal for making up whatever work you will miss. Exceptions will be made only in extraordinary circumstances.

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE, CLASS PARTICIPATION AND OTHER GUIDELINES**

Students should turn off all cell phones or other communication devices while in class. Class discussions should be respectful and considerate of others' views and opinions.

This is a class focused on teamwork. We're small in number, and we will rely on each other as we learn. Students are expected to be on time to class and punctual to any and all appointments tied to this class. Part of your participation grade will depend on how well you work together as a team.

It will be important to bring an external hard drive to class and on the trip, so that we can have multiple copies of the reporting, interviews, video, photos, audio, etc., that you collect along the way. We want to be prepared for any and all equipment failures, and a way to back up your work is essential. You should have an external hard drive that you purchased when you took Video Journalism.

Students are responsible for making arrangements to check out the equipment they need for the trip. We will work with the digital media manager with the DMC to extend check-out times if that is necessary.

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Deadlines separate journalism from mere writing. You must meet them. All late work will receive a grade of a zero, unless you have asked for an extension of the deadline prior to the piece being due. Students will only be excused from deadlines due to genuine emergencies, but all reasonable effort must be made to notify the instructor ahead of time.

Here are the *graded* assignments for this class:

1. Mini Field Report: Spend a day at least 20 miles AWAY from the Georgetown campus and reporting in an area in which you are *unfamiliar*.

The assignment's focus can be a city, town or neighborhood or narrowed down to an individual who reflects such are area/location. You will write, record, edit and produce your story. Basically, I want to see if you can go someplace you don't already know, get a story, come back,



put it together and have me learn something about that area. Remember, this is an exercise, so we can assess where you are with specific skill sets. This assignment gives us all a chance to do some work before we truly hit the road.

This assignment consists of three parts:

a. Pitch: Write a two-paragraph story pitch for what you plan to report. Grading will be on a scale of 1-5, and your pitch should include the following information:

- Concept (25%)
- Character(s) (25%)
- Answer question “why should I care?” (25%)
- Platform/distribution justification (25%)

**Deadline:** You must send this to Doug via email by **noon on Wednesday, May 28.**

b. Outline: Turn in an outline/road map of your story. This means you have assessed what you have, and you have decided the order in which you are going to present the story - what’s first, second, third, fourth, etc. You must provide an explanation of why you selected certain elements to go in that order.

Grading is as follows: The specifics of the outline will not be graded. As we walk through your story outline, there will be changes/adjustments/clarifications. You will be graded on whether or not you met the deadline. 5 means you met the deadline. 0 means you didn’t.

**Deadline:** You must send this to Doug via email by **noon on Wednesday, June 4.**

c. Story from the field: Two short pieces – one written and the other of your choice (audio, video or photo) that is complementary to the written piece. No more than 3:00 of audio or video.

Students will be graded on a scale of 1 to 5 in in the following areas:

- Writing (10%)
- Media (sound, images, video) (10%)
- Interviewing (10%)
- Editorial decision-making (30%)
- Execution of final product (40%)

**Deadline:** Beginning of class on **Wednesday, June 11**

2. Midterm Assessment: Come to class on June 18 ready for a quiz on what’s happening in New Mexico. Some sources and hints for where you can find out information were listed earlier. The test will be multiple choice. The test will focus on these subject areas:



- Latest news
- Latest sports
- News from Indian Country
- N.M. politics
- Climate/Environment

**Deadline:** Started and completed in class on **Wednesday, June 18**

3. Social media strategy plan: As a team, develop a social media strategy for our project.

Grading on a scale of 1-5 for the following areas:

- Use of social media tools (20%)
- Use of data to support strategy (20%)
- Outline of expected metrics (Who do you expect to be interested and why?) (20%)
- Timeline regarding deployment of strategy (20%)
- In-class presentation (20%)

**Deadline:** 8 p.m. on **Wednesday, June 25**

4. Mock job interview: Doug will distribute a mock job description. Each of the students should “apply” for the job by writing a cover letter addressed to Doug. (The job will not be for a specific job at NPR, but a journalism and media job.) Doug will conduct an in-person job interview scheduled with each student during the week of July 16.

The interviews will take place at NPR, located at 1111 North Capitol Street, NE, in Washington, D.C. Students are expected to treat this as the real deal and so will the class instructor.

The instructor will take into account the following when grading students on this assignment:

- Apparel
- Professionalism
- Attitude
- Knowledge
- Responsiveness
- Creativity

**Deadline:** Send a cover letter that expresses your interest in the mock job to Doug via email by **noon on July 9**. Your individual interview time will be scheduled with Doug during the July 9 class.

5. Final project: More details will come on the final project specs, depending on the story we choose and the class decisions about whether it is a group project or more individually based.



This assignment consists of two parts:

a. Draft: You will have two weeks *after the trip* to put together your individual pieces for the project. This draft should not be considered “rough” but rather your best first take on the project. All elements must be included in this draft, and they must be produced and ready to go on the Word Press site. For example, if you are producing a short video piece, the video must be edited with all the lower thirds, credits, etc., and come with headlines and blurbs. All written work should include headlines, subheads, links, etc. All images should be properly captioned and credited. All audio must be edited and produced with headlines and blurb text.

Similar to the Capstone process, we will provide detailed feedback to each of you on your pieces so that you can work to improve them for the final project deadline.

Grading on a scale of 1-5 of the following areas:

- Concept (What is the story about?) (25%)
- Character development (25%)
- Editorial decision making (35%)
- Platform/distribution justification (15%)

**Deadline:** Noon on **Monday, July 14**

b. Final Project: The final project is expected to be a more polished version of your draft, and we expect you to make changes and to update your pieces in answer to our feedback.

Grading on a scale of 1-5 of the following areas:

- Revision (How well did you respond to our feedback?) (10%)
- Concept (What is the story about?) (25%)
- Character development (25%)
- Editorial decision making (35%)
- Platform/distribution justification (5%)

**Deadline:** Beginning of class on **Wednesday, August 7**

## GRADING

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Mini field reporting pitch:	5 points
Mini field reporting outline:	5 points
Mini field report:	10 points
Midterm assessment:	10 points
Social media strategy:	5 points
Social media execution:	10 points



Mock job interview:	5 points
Draft project:	15 points
Final project:	25 points
Participation/team work:	10 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100 points</b>

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 instructor 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  
Lauinger Library, 217A | 202-687-4246  
<http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu/>
- Academic Resource Center  
Leavey Center, Suite 335 | 202-687-8354 | [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)  
<http://ldss.georgetown.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services  
One Darnall Hall | 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 Academic Resource Center (202-687-8354; [arc@georgetown.edu](mailto: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. Also, the schedules of guest speakers may require some shifting of our agenda. The instructor will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.





## CLASS SCHEDULE

*Note: It is strongly encouraged that you all make a visit to the National Museum of the American Indian in the first week or so of class. It's a good start to immersing yourself in the history of and current issues in Indian Country. The museum also shows the wide diversity among the various tribes and indigenous groups.*

### WEEK 1 (WEDNESDAY, MAY 21)

- Intros/background/goals of class/walk through course syllabus. Doug will Skype into class. Assistant Dean Amy Kovac-Ashley will be in class, in person.
- Hear from 2013 Saxa Trail Class members
- Listening, critiquing multimedia examples from various media

**Assignment:** Mini field report story pitch

**Deadline:** Noon on Wednesday, May 28

### WEEK 2 (WEDNESDAY, MAY 28)

- We'll review story pitches and finalize in class.
- 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.: Kate Myers, a digital strategist/business manager, with NPR will talk to us about social/digital media intersections and keeping pace with all the traffic.
- 7:45 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.: We will Skype with University of New Mexico partners: The focus of this meeting is to introduce everyone and to get familiar and start understanding reporting in Indian Country and around New Mexico.

**Assignment:** Mini field report outline

**Deadline:** Noon on Wednesday, June 4

### WEEK 3 (WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4)

***Doug is away from class.***

- NPR trainer and Georgetown adjunct professor Rolando Arrieta will do a short lesson on the art of gathering and using sound.
- Emily Bogle, a photo editor at NPR, will do a short lesson on photography techniques.
- Story idea generation in class with Assistant Dean Amy Kovac-Ashley

**Assignment:** Mini field report

**Deadline:** Beginning of class on Wednesday, June 11

### WEEK 4 (WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11)



- We will review the mini field report assignments: What worked? What didn't? What did you learn?
- Skype with University of New Mexico partners: What are the story ideas? Let's nail them down. Are we doing a "vertical" project or separate stories?
- Guest speaker: Femi Oke, host of "[The Stream](#)" at Al Jazeera English

### WEEK 5 (WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18)

- Midterm assessment (45 minutes)
- Skype with University of New Mexico partners: Story refinement
- Editorial meeting: We will create a list of story ideas and put in the class Tumblr. Contact information for each story along with any and all relevant information must be included as well. Students should decide whether they want to work as a team taking on parts of a large story or if they want to take smaller stories where characters can be developed individually by each student.

### WEEK 6 (WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25)

- Review with Amy:
  - All travel logistics
  - Flight arrivals and departures
  - Ground transportation
  - Work space on campus
  - Daily timelines such as start and end points each day
  - On-site travel
  - Shared document of contact information and schedule
  - Final refinement of stories, including back-up plans
  - Begin deploying class social media strategy for trip
- Create and develop a social media strategy plan for our project the week we are in ABQ. Someone in class should take the lead and be ultimately responsible while others take on supporting roles. Students will appoint a "content director."
- Final Skype session with New Mexico partners TBD

**In-class assignment:** Develop social media plan

**Deadline:** 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25 (to be presented by content director)

### WEEK 7 (SATURDAY, JUNE 28 through WEDNESDAY, JULY 2)

We will be in Albuquerque for our on-the-ground reporting. More details will come, including a specific itinerary for each day there. Students must arrive no later than 3 p.m. MDT on Saturday, June 28.



**Assignment:** Write cover letter for mock job interview

**Deadline:** Beginning of class, July 9

**WEEK 8 (WEDNESDAY, JULY 9)**

Work on draft of your project in class. We will schedule your in-person mock interviews with Doug during this class time.

**Assignment:** Draft project

**Deadline:** Noon on Monday, July 14

**WEEK 10 (WEDNESDAY, JULY 16)**

**Meet the Hiring Manager**

*The class will not meet as a whole this week. Instead, each student will schedule a separate, in-person meeting with Doug for a mock job interview at some point during this week.*

**WEEK 11 (WEDNESDAY, JULY 23)**

Work on revising drafts. We will discuss feedback on project drafts.

**WEEK 12 (WEDNESDAY, JULY 30)**

Work on revising drafts. We will answer any final questions related to the final project.

**Assignment:** Finish final project

**Deadline:** Beginning of class, August 6

**WEEK 13 (WEDNESDAY AUGUST 6)**

- Final presentations and debrief
- Promotional interviews with Stephanie and/or Serena