



## **MPJO-900-40: CAPSTONE**

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

Tuesdays, 5:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. | Summer 2017

Downtown campus, Room C116

Meetings: Tuesday 5:15-8:15 at various times throughout the semester.

**Faculty Director: Brooke Van Dam**

#### **Capstone Advisers:**

Matt Apuzzo

Alicia Caldwell

### **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 a beat 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



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## 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, or via email.

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 PROCESS GUIDELINES

See attached process document. In order to receive full points in the process area you must utilize the structure set up and communicate with your adviser regularly.



## ASSIGNMENTS

Separate handouts will be posted on Canvas detailing assignment requirements:

- Enterprise Story- pitched during the beginning of the semester to either the City Paper EIC or an approved publication editor. It will be done via email.
- Editors will then work with each student to create the appropriate story (likely multimedia in nature) based on the content. If the story is not chosen for publication, the faculty director will give platform specifics for each story as well as a timeline of due dates.
  - 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 find an outlet and editor to pitch to and potentially published with, approved by the Faculty Director
- The Enterprise story is the bulk of your grade, 60% and most of the term will be devoted to this longer in-depth piece
- Daily Spot News Story- Students will produce a 300-400-word written spot news story that will be completed within one day. The student will attend a Congressional session, a court hearing, a local governmental meeting or an advocacy meeting/protest and turn over the story within 24 hours.
- Video/Photo Story One Week Turnaround- Students must produce a video (1:30-2:00min) or photo story (10-12) where framing, lighting, sound (if applicable) and narrative will be evaluated. It will be assigned by the FD and due within one week of the assignment.
- 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.

**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:



Spot News Piece	10
Video/Photo Story	10
Enterprise Story Pitch	10
Enterprise Outline	5
Enterprise Story	45
Ethics Presentation	10
Process	10
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</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 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](mailto: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



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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. The instructors will make every effort to provide as much advance notice as possible for any alterations.



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## CLASS SCHEDULE

\* Week 1, May 23<sup>rd</sup> - Overview and Training at Georgetown SCS

\* Week 2, May 30<sup>th</sup> - Training at Georgetown SCS

Week 3- June 6<sup>th</sup> Reporting Week

Spot Story Date Chosen

Check in with Adviser

Week 4- June 13<sup>th</sup>, Meet with Adviser, Pitch date set with FD and adviser no later than this date

Week 5- June 20<sup>th</sup>, Reporting Week

Week 6- June 27<sup>th</sup>, Outline Due

\* Week 7, July 11<sup>th</sup> - Mid Term Class Check In at Georgetown SCS

Week 8- July 18<sup>th</sup> Reporting Week

Week 9- July 25<sup>th</sup> Reporting Week, Draft Stage

Check in with FD

Week 10- August 1<sup>st</sup> Reporting Week

Check in with Adviser

Latest Date Spot Story Due

\* Week 11, August 8<sup>th</sup> Ethics Presentation

Latest Video Story Due

\* Week 12- August 15<sup>th</sup>, All Work Completed and Submitted to Faculty Director and Adviser

\* Denotes in class meeting Tuesday 5:15-8:15

\* **Unless noted everything is due to [mpsicapstone@georgetown.edu](mailto:mpsicapstone@georgetown.edu) by 5pm on the date listed**