

Data Journalism in Enterprise Reporting

COMM 4221~Wed/Fri 9:10-11:00 a.m.

SPRING 2018

Office: The Lantern, 275B Journalism

Phone: 614.247.7030

Office hours: Wednesday, Friday 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

(or by appointment.)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION/GOAL

For the past few years, you have been learning the journalism skills that will prepare you for a career in media, including story development, reporting, interviewing, writing, editing, and photography. This course will add another set of tools that are increasingly in demand among media outlets looking to hire the most talented candidates.

In this class, we will practice data journalism, a technique that is also called computer assisted reporting. Also called precision journalism, this reporting strategy uses computers to analyze the ever-increasing amount of publicly-available data to create unique and compelling stories. This course will teach the fundamentals of such techniques and combine your analysis of publicly available data into a semester-long enterprise-reporting project. You will create a story, or a series of stories, that spring from the records you analyze.

This is your Journalism Major capstone course. We will set a project goal and then you—individually or with a partner—will develop and produce that project by semester's end.

Each individual or team will then tell this story with the skills journalists must know—writing, photography, graphics and the strategic use of social media.

Aside from database analysis, which you will learn here, the skills you need for this class will come from your prior Journalism Major courses, and you will use all of them to:

1. Find and research a topic that's compelling and important.
2. Use the results of your analysis to identify and connect with sources and people who will help tell the story your data reveal.
3. Take copious and quality notes from your interviews with those sources.
4. Craft those notes into a powerfully written, streamlined article that has a clear nut graph and clear narrative structure.
5. Create supporting multimedia pieces, which can include photos, visualizations and graphics built from your data analysis.

6. Edit, edit and edit some more...
7. Present your project to the class.

Textbook (suggested)

Computer Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide, Brant Houston – is a great resource, but not required.

Similar to the Practicum class (COMM 2223), I will provide you with numerous links to access through Carmen, and you will be responsible for reading and reviewing these links prior to each class period.

Also, you will need:

Email account you check daily

Computer (including Internet and word processing) access

A thumb drive and/or computer hard drive capable of storing large amounts of data

To follow my Twitter account for attendance (@spencerhuntosu)

GRADING (points) — Percent Final Grade

Professionalism (50) — 5%

Twitter attendance (75) — 7.5%

Final Presentation (75) — 7.5%

Story Outline (100) — 10%

Digital Journal: (150) — 15%

Midterm draft (150) — 15%

Final Project (400): Story development (100) Research (100) Writing (100)
Multimedia (100) — **40%**

These points tallied together will give you your final grade of the following (100-93=A; 92-90=A; 89-88 B+; 87-82=B; 81-80=B ; 79-78=C+; 77-72=C; 71-70=C ; 69-68=D+; 67-60=D; 59 and below=E).

Please note: I am not able to negotiate grades, either during or after the semester.

DATE OF FINAL EXAM: This class has no final exam but a final presentation.

Instructor Methods

You must prepare for each class by reading the required links in Carmen. Our class time, particularly at the beginning of the semester, will be divided by a short presentation followed by hands-on practice with data analysis software and techniques.

I believe that this will help you quickly master a reporting technique that might be new for you, but is increasingly expected of new reporters entering the field. Many of the first courses will work like a lab.

This will help us work more closely and will help me to assess and understand your individual needs and goals.

Since this is the second time this class has been offered, changes in Carmen modules and schedules are likely. Any such changes will be announced through emails. Please let me know if you have other ideas for what might augment our class or better serve your learning experience.

I encourage you to email and tweet any and all questions that arise, and to share any information you find useful outside our class content, and to meet with me during office hours.

Class Tools

To better serve the needs of the class, the classroom-provided computers will include all of the applications needed to learn the basics of data journalism. These will include Microsoft Excel, the Microsoft database manager, Access, and ArcMap, a database mapping program. If your personal computer lacks these applications there will be time allotted during classes to perform the analyses you need to complete your stories.

Many of these applications are available for download through the university's site license program. Information on how to request the software for student use is available here. <https://ocio.osu.edu/software> Students should note, however, that Microsoft does not make its database manager, Access, available for Apple products. Likewise you should be wary of any program available on the web that offers to make Access functional on Apple computers.

It is important, however, that you be able to store and back up your data on something that's yours, a flash/thumb drive or your own computer's hard drive so that they are not lost to the whims of the computer gods power surges or usually-reliable Ohio State computing equipment.

CLASS PROFESSIONALISM

College is intended to prepare you for the real world. You can and will make a lot of mistakes here, but the goal is to learn from them and not to make them again. To that end, I will treat you professionally and I need you to do the same.

1. You will be graded primarily on your writing and editing, and how you work as a writer.
2. Fact and style errors, and misspellings are also VERY important in the pursuit of journalistic skill, so they are weighted heavily in this class.
3. Come on time and ready to work on the material for the day.
4. Staying in class: I know you have things to do. We all do. But we have committed to being in class together for two hours twice a week.
5. You are missed when you are absent: Twitter attendance, described later only works when you are here and attendance is part of your grade.

6. Treating classmates/coworkers with respect: Everyone's ideas have merit, and allowing a civil discussion, even when we disagree, is a key to future success.
7. Dressing for success: I know this is college, but you never know who might come to class who could help you with an internship or guide your academic or professional career. Please know I don't want to discuss appropriate class dress with you, but I will if need be.
8. **Deadlines are deadlines:** Assignments must be submitted in the Dropbox by the pre determined time and cannot be accepted late, barring a medical excuse or an attempt to reach me prior to the deadline.
9. I believe in using social media in class. I encourage you to use your devices, and require Twitter for attendance, and our research in class will use all electronic devices. Remember, if I can see what you post—so can future employers. Be responsible in how you present yourself online.
10. We never interview or quote friends, relatives, roommates, etc. In our industry, it's considered a conflict of interest.
11. We never write on topics of which we have a personal stake or relationship (places where we work, groups of which we are a member, etc...)
12. We always tell sources we are interviewing them for an article ***that could be pitched to The Lantern.***
13. Only if a Lantern editor accepts the article idea will we say we are writing for the paper, but we will always write with the goal of being published in *The Lantern.*
14. That means we do not tell sources we are "writing for a class assignment."
15. Lying, cheating or stealing will get you fired: In this class, if you plagiarize anything you will fail the course and I will report you to academic misconduct.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Not all classes fit your schedule or your academic plan. Please know, however, that I very much wish to meet with you before you drop to see what we can do to work through any challenges together. If you do have questions about how to drop or the impact on your transcript or financial aid, please visit the Academic Advising website.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Although many classes may ban or limit the use of mobile technology, in this class we will learn to use your mobile phone and tablet for reporting and disseminating news—in other words, for good and not evil. Keep it out and be prepared to use it for class work, which will include tweeting, posting to Instagram and Facebook, and finding sources on LinkedIn. That said, this is not the time to text and tweet your friends or surf the web.

EQUIPMENT:

You will be able to use the cameras and video cameras from COMM 3226, if they are not in use by the other class. You are welcome to use your own equipment, but

please know that it is up to you to determine if it is compatible with our computers and software, and you will need to do any necessary conversions. The COMM 3226 equipment is available for checkout from the Lantern photo department in room 275 of the Journalism Building.

Once again, you must have appropriate storage media, a hard drive and/or USB flash drive (aka thumb drive, jump drive, pen drive, Gizmo (USB key), to keep copies of your work files.

ASSIGNMENTS

Professionalism (50 points)

Treating this class like a job will go a long way toward helping you be prepared for your post-graduation life. Your ability to come on time, contribute to discussions, turn in work on time, treat classmates with respect, dress appropriately, and communicate respectfully and clearly in person and in writing will earn you professionalism points. Everyone starts with zero points—you build them up through professional behavior throughout the semester.

Twitter Attendance (75 points)

To help build that skill—and brand, we take attendance through Twitter, which means every student gets credit for attendance by tweeting something insightful or asking a question from each class session, with the goal of engaging the outside world. In addition, social media is extremely useful for journalists, and your ability to use it responsibly and constructively will help you establish your personal brand and, hopefully, get employed in the future. The goal is we all learn the potential impact of Twitter in “talking” to the world—and learn how to prevent negative impacts.

Use my Twitter handle @spencerhuntosu, AND the hashtag #capstoneclass for all posts. Please make sure to follow me to help me track down tweets that lack the tag, which sometimes happens. Please also make sure that your account is not private. I cannot receive tweets from private accounts.

Final Presentation (75 points)

Every individual or team will be responsible for showing us the final project. We can then read the article and discuss the writing with you. Team members must both be present and able to discuss their work to receive the same grade. The schedule for the presentation will be determined as the semester draws to a close.

Digital Journal (150)

Spending time analyzing data, researching records and the notes you take from interviews are key parts of this story. You will keep a digital journal of your participation, describing in detail each time you met with your subjects and what happened during those sessions. I will check it through the semester—both on the scheduled dates and randomly—so you will need to provide me the link by our second session of class. It can be a Google doc or a blog. You must also provide in this journal a list of contacts and phone/email. I will be touching base with your sources to evaluate the contact and content of your time.

Story Outline (100)

You will provide a description of your project, what EXACTLY your project is about. We need as much detail as possible about your story, what makes it newsworthy, the data and records involved, sources and how they will contribute to your article. Please include an **interview or transcribed notes** with **one source** from your project. Include **all source contact info. Put in Canvas dropbox.**

Midterm (150)

As a midterm, you will turn in your first draft of the written portion of, your project, with a data AND multimedia component. It will be placed dropbox in Carmen. This should have the look and feel you are intending for your final project, but it is open for editing until the final version is complete.

Final Project (400)

In your dropbox will be all of the written photo, video and graphic modules in their full and completed forms, shaped into a singular and comprehensive project. Please note: *Every person in a team must participate in the research, creation and presentation to receive full credit. You will complete a standard questionnaire about the contribution of each teammate in addition to an evaluation of your own performance. These will be compares and any major discrepancies will be investigated before a final grade is posted. Post to dropbox in Canvas.*

Multi-Step Process

No matter what topic becomes your focus, you will need to use a multi-step process to fully report on it and produce a professional level enterprise story project.

1. **Identify the story.** Use traditional print library resources, Web sites and social media like Facebook and Twitter to find your topic/subject/issue.
2. **Research/analysis.** Using the sources above, along with in person or telephone interviews, write a 1-2 page outline of the subject selected. The outline should include likely sources of data local, national and/or international that will help form the basis for the story.
3. **Reporting.** Your data analysis is just a starting point. Your story will grow from the places that data point to. Statistics are dry and impersonal. The people who are affected by them are not. Regularly update your progress in the Google file and write entries that will help you write your midterm and final stories.
4. **Write/produce.** Start putting everything together into a story package that includes as many of the following as possible: text, photos video and graphics
5. **Review/edit.** You should be doing this constantly. Class time also will be used to do it in your partnerships or as the "4221 newsroom " as we edit your drafts together.
6. **Rewrite, re research and redo** anything needed to complete the final project. Your continuing reporting, as well as discussions with classmates and the instructor should aid this process.
7. **Completion.** Put it all together in the most effective way possible using words and images. The goal: is to get all or part of the project used by The Lantern or another media organization. *You will be presenting your projects to the in the last class period or during finals week.*

ADDITIONAL INFO WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

One of your most important journalistic tools will be the computer, so all of our assignments are turned in electronically. Always include a contact list with phone numbers and emails from your sources. Be sure to **put your name** on everything you submit.

EXTRA CREDIT

There is a maximum of 30 extra credit points available in this class, which will be applied to the final class point total. Extra credit projects are awarded at my discretion and will follow guidelines and goals set between instructor and student.

OFFICE HOURS

My office hours are listed on the front of the syllabus, and I would love to meet with you to get you extra, article assistance. I am always available to provide feedback on rough drafts before they are submitted. Keep in mind that you should look for the feedback, days, not hours before the submission deadline.

SYLLABUS

Every effort has been made to create a syllabus that is as comprehensive and accurate as possible, but each class is a living entity and changes may arise. Most things will work as planned, but some things may need to be adjusted as the semester proceeds. If that happens, I will notify you in writing of the changes to be sure everyone is aware and can adjust accordingly.

SAFE & HEALTHY

Keeping students healthy and preventing the spread of illness is important to your University—and to me. You are encouraged to stay home if you are sick, and you may be asked to leave class if you are coughing/sneezing. Students who are sick and cannot attend class must contact me **BEFORE** class to receive class any materials and turn in assignments via the drop box or email. If you do not notify me, your assignment will not be accepted.

MANAGING STRESS

College can be a stressful time, and I am always here to help you—in this class and beyond. If, however, you feel you need more support, I encourage you to reach out to the Student Advocacy Center at 292.1111. They will always work with professors on your behalf.

HONOR CODE & CODE OF ACADEMIC CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335 31 02). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

I will vigorously pursue any suspected cases of plagiarism, cheating or other violations of the University Code of Academic Conduct, whether completed or merely attempted.

SPECIAL ACOMMODATIONS

I am happy to make academic adjustments for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities if this applies to you. The Center for Students with Disabilities is located in Room 101 of the Admissions/Student Services Complex, located on the north side of Main campus, next to Admissions. For more information, call (310) 434- 4265 or (310) 434- 4273 (TDD)

DAILY SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Before Class Reading (Links in Carmen)	Assignment/Due
		Activity	
Week 1 1-1 W 1/10	Introduction to class	Read: The World Needs Investigative Journalism. Intro to Investigative Reporting	<i>Assignment: create a short list of ideas or issues you'd want to spend weeks on to develop into an enterprise story. Reach out to prospective teammate if desired.</i>
		Activity: Review syllabus discuss grades, projects and computer assisted reporting.	
1-2 F 1/12	Understanding Precision reporting and introduction to Data reporting	Read: C.A.R. What is it? The Golden Age of C.A.R. Digging for Truth with Data	Due: Declare partnerships or single work project.
		Activity: Declare partnerships or single project	
Week 2 2-1 W 1/17	Developing your Story. How to identify, outline and plan an enterprise story	Read: What is Enterprise Reporting? Choose 1 Enterprise Story; 10 Steps to Better Enterprise Ideas; Narrative Journalism Activity: Discussing story ideas, hurdles	<i>Assignment: Narrow down list of story ideas, teammate. Identify potential sources of records and data.</i>
2-2 F 1/19	Guest Lecturer Data and Schools	Activity: Columbus Dispatch Education Reporter Bill Bush discusses schools attendance and ECOT	Due: Hand in final story ideas, teams for approval, if not approved already.

Week 3 3-1 W 1/24	Getting your Data and Records	Read: Finding Data, and Your Right to Data	
		Activity: How to file FOI requests and other strategies to pursue information and records.	
F 3-2 1/26	Working with Excel	Read: Basic Steps in Working With Data.	
		Activity: Basic functions, pivot tables.	
Week 4 4-1 W 1/31	Writing/reporting issues for long form stories.	Read: The Hourglass; The Five Boxes Approach; The Nut Graf Story Approach	<i>Assignment: Prepare online journal and entries for review.</i>
		Activity: How to organize notes, records and data. Wrapping database management training.	
F 4-2 2/2	Working with Access	Read: Data tutorials in Carmen	. Due: First journal entry
		Activity: Linking lottery and census data tables and analyzing them using access	
Week 5 5-1 W 2/7	The Pitch: Outline your project	Read: Pitch Me a Story; Pitch Guidelines for the WCJ	<i>Assignment: Refine outline. Prepare online journal for second check</i>
		Activity: Finish creating story outline in class for submission. Wrapping up how to recognize deal with bad data.	
5-2 F 2/9	The Good, the Bad, your Data	Read: Carmen Links	Due: Second Journal Entry
		Activity: In class exercise with Lottery data.	

Week 6 6-1 W 2/14	Prepare the Pitch	Activity: Spending class time working on the pitch.	Due: STORY OUTLINE
6-2 F 2/16	Mapping your data	Read: Carmen Links on Arc GIS Activity: Using GIS in class	Due: 3rd journal
Week 7 7-1 W 2/21	Multimedia Storytelling	Read: Multimedia Storytelling, Learn the Secrets Activity: Wrapping up work with ArcMap, if needed	<i>Assignment: By 9 a.m. Friday, post to your journal your reporting and research activities. Share any photos taken so far for discussion in class.</i>
7-2 F 2/23	Photos and Photo Essays	Read: Creating a Photo Essay; Five Types of Photos that Make Strong Essays Activity: Discussion of photos you have shot to show your progress and work on footage	Due: 4th journal check: Photos of your subject
Week 8 8-1 W 2/28	Sources and the Longform Story		<i>Assignment: By 9 p.m. Friday, post to your journal the progress you've made on your project.</i>
8-2 F 3/2	Data Visualization and Graphics	Read: Data Journalism is the New Punk; Data Visualization DIY Activity: Learning about various options for data viz	JOURNAL 5 DUE
Week 9 9-1 W 3/7	Bias and Truth in the Long-Form Story	Activity: Class discussion involves three enterprise story examples.	<i>Assignment: complete Midterm Draft Report</i>

9-2 F 3/9	Prep the Midterm	Read: Activity: Review session for Midterm which is due at EOD	DUE: MIDTERM DRAFT, by end of day (EOD)
Week 10	No Class	Spring Break	No Class
Week 11 11-1 W 3/21	Planning Your Social Media Strategy	Read: Social Media Tips and Tools for Journalists; What Audiences Think of Journalists' Social Media Use; Social Media Isn't Optional Activity: Bring in project materials related to data to work on graphics	<i>Assignment: Bring in data or elements to develop into graphic.</i>
11-2 F 3/23	Exit Interviews	Activity: Class room available for data work, research	<i>FINAL JOURNAL DUE</i>
Week 12 12-1 W 3/28	Writing with Data	Read: 10 Suggestions; Writing the Investigative Story	<i>Assignment: By midnight Friday, post to your journal what activities you did during class time</i>
12-2 F 3/30	Writing with Data 2		
Week 13 13-1 W 4/4	Your final presentation: Elements of a strong last effort	Activity: Examining past presentations to identify what works and what doesn't.	

13-2 F 4/6	The last stages: Don't write a paper, write a story	Activity: Reviewing and discussing the challenges of organizing and writing a strong, compelling story.	<i>Assignment: Plot out final steps for project wrap up.</i>
Week 14 14-1 W 4/11	Work Session	Activity: One on work in Class for final touches to projects, presentations and story writing	
F 4/13	PRESENTATIONS	DAY ONE	PRESENTATIONS
Week 15 W 4/18	PRESENTATIONS	DAY TWO	PRESENTATIONS
F 4/20	PRESENTATIONS	DAY THREE	PRESENTATIONS
Week 16 M 4/23	Last day of classes for the semester.	BY MIDNIGHT	FINAL PROJECT DUE
