JMS 430 Digital Journalism
Syllabus & Calendar

Prof. Schmitz Weiss Sec 2 #21900
M 1-3:40 PM   PSFA 358
W 2-3:40 PM   PSFA 358
Office: PSFA 348 Office Hours: MW 8-9 a.m. or by appt.
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NOTE: Please read this syllabus carefully and by accepting this document, you acknowledge that it serves a social contract regarding your expected obligations and responsibilities in this course.

Course Catalog 2015-2016 Description
Using digital and mobile platforms to publish news content and how to use such platforms for news reporting and gathering purposes. Data-driven journalism, online writing styles, web programming, social media strategies, and digital design principles.

Course Catalog 2015-2016 Prerequisites:
Journalism and Media Studies 300, 310W, and 315 with grades of C (2.0) or better in each course. Admission to journalism major. Proof of completion of prerequisite required: Copy of transcript.

Course website: This course has a website on blackboard. Please visit it often as announcements and related course materials will be posted on the site throughout the semester: http://blackboard.sdsu.edu

Objectives
This course will help you:

- Decipher and know when to use digital media terminology;
- Learn and apply digital journalism and mass communication theories to practice;
- Articulate what is digital journalism and its various genres;
- How to critique the content you view online;
- Identify and apply the principles of design to online media;
- Define the principles and ethics of journalism and how they are applied in online media;
- Detect when to apply specific writing techniques to journalistic work;
- Write news stories that encompass the principles discussed;
- Learn how to work with data/datasets and how to visualize data into compelling stories;
- Compare and contrast the influence of technology in journalism routines and practices;
- Distinguish from the various kinds of journalism practitioners in the field and the kind of work they perform in online media;
- Learn and apply the basics of programming languages such as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), CSS to online design and writing;
- Learn how to use web-authoring applications and other multimedia-related programs;
- Be able to distinguish when to use and how best to utilize these web and multimedia-related programs for journalistic work;

Required Materials (Available at the campus bookstore and online)

Briggs, M. (2015). *JournalismNext.* CQ Press: Los Angeles.

Gray, J. Chambers, L. & Bounegru, L. (2012). *The Data Journalism Handbook*. O'Reilly Media.
    (ebook available here: http://datajournalismhandbook.org/)

Optional Materials
The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law. (2015). Basic Books.
Or online version available via subscription: http://www.apstylebook.com/

Supplies and Equipment

- **You will need a Twitter account** and will need to set up a special Twitter list of organizations/individuals to follow that relate to your story topic. (See calendar for due date.)
- **You will need a Storify account.** (See calendar for due date.)
- **Students should have access to an email account and Blackboard** because communication and information about the course will be sent via these methods.
- **You should purchase a /USB key/drive AND/OR portable hard drives for your classwork so you can save your work to it as a backup and in case you want to work on your class assignments outside of class and lab time.**
- **You will also be required to have a website through Wordpress** because the class work you produce will be posted to your website. **This will require you to purchase a special Bluehost Wordpress educational discount website for the semester ($4.95 monthly cost). If you are unable to make this purchase, please consult with Prof. Schmitz Weiss on an alternative option.**
- During the semester you will be using mobile devices (e.g. tablet and/or smartphone) for some class activities. iPads will be provided to all students in class during those class sessions.
- Other supplies will be determined and discussed during the semester. Please see the course site on Blackboard frequently.

Grading

Writing Assignments	30%
Lab Assignments	20%
Participation	10%
Final Project	40%
Total	100%

Grading scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

If at any time during the semester you are concerned with your progress in the course, please make an appointment to see me or stop by during my office hours. If you miss class for some reason, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

Deadlines
In this class, deadlines are firm. There is the expectation that you will manage your time accordingly and complete all assignments on time. **No late assignments will be accepted under any circumstances.** If an assignment is not turned in on time a zero will be assigned. Treat deadlines as you would in the real world as they have real world implications. You would not miss a business meeting you are leading or not to turn in a story to your editor when it is due or forget to turn in a report to your boss - would you? The same goes for this class – **all deadlines are strictly enforced.**

Lab Assignments (points vary for each)
Throughout the semester you will have a variety of lab activities that will help you learn how to write and design journalistic stories for presentation on the web. These assignments will be due usually at the end of the lab session unless otherwise noted. No late lab assignments will be accepted.

Your Website/Blog Posts (25 points deducted for not posting)
For this class, you will also be required to blog about your progress in the class. Your website will serve two functions:
1) **As a place for you to post ideas and updates on the stories you are developing during the semester**. The blog posts will serve as a form of memos to your editor. **You will be required to make a blog post as instructed in the calendar on specific due dates.** You will not be graded on your blog posts but will receive a check mark for each post, but failure to do them will result in a 25-point deduction for each blog post missed. These blog posts will be used as material for your final project essay.
2) **As a place to publish the stories you work on during the semester.** This will culminate in the final project due at the end of the semester where you will have your stories, your blog posts and final project essay all published on your website.

Story Package (worth 200 points)
For this class, you will put together a story package on your website that consists of the following components. These components will have different due dates in the calendar, so it's important to stay on top of the calendar and plan accordingly. I will provide you with a list of potential topics from which you can make your selection for your story package. You will be asked to make a 5-minute elevator pitch of your story package to the class and instructor. Pitches should be innovative and creative.

Your story package will consist of the following components:
• **One story** (adhere to AP style), worth 100 points
  ○ **Two visuals** to go with story (video, photo or image)
  ○ **One infographic** (based on data collected, analyzed) – to go with story
• **Social media strategy** (at least four tweets, 2 Facebook posts, video/image teaser in Storify and analytics plan), worth 100 points total

Important Note About the Points Awarded in this Class: The points awarded for your story components will be progressive during the semester. You might only receive 25 out of the 100 points on your first draft but this is not your final grade. It means you have many areas for improvement in making your writing better. As you turn in your revisions and dependent on your performance of making the necessary changes and additions. These points are awarded progressively over the course of the semester depending on how well you do with the assignments.

Final Project Essay (worth 300 pts)
Based on the class lectures, readings, your weekly blog posts and assignments, you will have the opportunity to put together a final project essay that is the culmination of your learning in this course – to demonstrate your abilities in digital journalism. This final project essay will be tied into the website you created during the semester where you publish your writing assignments. Specifics of the final project will be discussed during the semester. Please see website examples from previous semesters under the Course Documents area on Blackboard.

Participation
In this class, participation will be counted based on your class activities. You may be called on in class, so always be prepared to talk and contribute thoughtfully and critically about the readings and class work. Attendance is important in this course and will be taken for each class and lab. Those who have perfect or near perfect attendance (less than three absences) will receive extra points toward their final grade. Excused absences will not be accepted, an absence is an absence. So it is to your benefit to come to all classes and labs.

Students with Disabilities
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated. If you have any form of learning, physical or other disability, please let the instructor know as soon as possible so that your learning needs can be discussed and met appropriately.

Academic Dishonesty - Plagiarism and Cheating
The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:
- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from a online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html) and see the Understanding Plagiarism, Paraphrasing and Citing Sources Tutorial here: http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28

Time Management Tip
In this course, you will be asked to complete several assignments that may be done outside of the classroom, in lab or during class. It is in your best interest to stay on top of the readings and lectures as well as be aware of the class assignment due dates. No grievances will be made for late assignments. Give yourself plenty of time for your assignments.

JMS Policy on Student Use of Digital Labs and Equipment

San Diego State University and the School of Journalism & Media Studies provides computing devices, networks, and Internet services for educational purposes and research consistent with the university's educational mission, curriculum and instructional goals. Use is a privilege for JMS students, and compliance with the below policies and rules is mandatory.

1. Student-produced content of all kinds -- text documents, audio files, video files, etc. -- should not be saved to these computers. All content should be saved to an external drive provided by the student or a cloud account, again belonging to the student. JMS wipes all devices clean of all externally created content on a minimum of a semester basis and content wiped will not be retrievable.

2. No food or drinks are permitted in the labs, including all spaces in which a student may sit (tables, chairs and benches). That includes water. All food and drinks must be left by the door, and will be consumed by the student there.

3. Students must exercise common sense and good judgment in the use of these devices, and the following is prohibited: accessing, collecting or posting of inappropriate materials, violations of copyright, malicious use/vandalism and illegal activities of any kind.

4. Students must notify the instructor if a device is broken or damaged. Students responsible for damage will be asked to pay for repair or replacement.

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Calendar Key: (Book chapters to be read prior to class are listed in parentheses by letter and number. For example: (JN1) = JournalismNext, Chapter 1)

H- Handbook of Data Journalism
JN – JournalismNext Book
BB – Reading material provided on BB

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Lecture	Labs	Assignments Due
MODULE 1: THE BASICS			
Week of Aug 24	*What is Digital/Data Journalism?*		
Monday	First day of class – Introduction/ Syllabus & Calendar Review		
Wednesday	Introduction/History of online journalism (JN-Intro, BB)	Exploration Surveys	
Week of Aug 31	*Digital Journalism Concepts*		
Monday	Digital Journalism Structures Tools and Technologies of Digital Journalism	Lab Activity	
Wednesday	Web Usability and Web Production Process (JN1)	Lab Activity	

Week of Sept 7	*Newsgathering & Writing Techniques*		
Monday	Holiday- Labor Day		
Wednesday	Getting Started – Finding Story Ideas & Evaluating Information (BB) Writing Techniques Part 1 (BB)	Lab Activity	**Website Due & First Blog Post Due**
Week of Sept 14	*Writing Techniques & Ethics*		
Monday	Writing Techniques Part 2 (BB) Story Package Pitches	Lab Activity	**Story Package Pitch Due**
Wednesday	Digital Journalism Ethics (BB) Story Package Pitches Continued	Lab Activity	
Week of Sept 21	*Multimedia Techniques*		
Monday	Audio and Video Journalism Basics (JN5-7)	Lab Activity	**Blog Post Due**
Wednesday	Visual Journalism Basics (JN5-7)	Lab Activity	

MODULE 2: SOCIAL AND MOBILE			
Week of Sept 28	*Social Storytelling*		
Monday	Social Storytelling (BB)	Lab Activity	
Wednesday	Social Storytelling Part 2 (BB)	Lab Activity	**Storify Discovery Project Due**

Week of Oct 5	*Mobile Journalism*		
Monday	Mobile Journalism Basics (JN4)	Lab Activity **Fast Feedback Assignment.**	**Blog Post Due**
Wednesday	Mobile Journalism Basics Part 2 (JN4)	Lab Activity	
Week of Oct 12	*Social and Mobile Combined*		
Monday	Mobile and Social Combined (BB)	Lab Activity	**Text Story with Visuals Due (revisions will be expected)**
Wednesday	Mobile & Social Combined Part 2	Lab Activity	
MODULE 3: DATA JOURNALISM AND VISUALIZATION			
Week of Oct 19	*Data Journalism Basics*		
Monday	Data Journalism 101 (JN8, H-Introduction, BB)	Lab Activity	**Blog Post Due**
Wednesday	Data Journalism 101 Part 2 (JN8, BB, H-Understanding Data)	Lab Activity	
Week of Oct 26	*Interviewing the Data*		
Monday	Data Cleaning, Analysis (BB)	Lab Activity	
Wednesday	Data Cleaning, Analysis (BB)	Lab Activity	
Week of Nov 2	*Data Visualization Techniques*		
Monday	Data Visualization 101 (BB, H-Delivering Data)	Lab Activity	**Blog Post Due**
Wednesday	Data Visualization 101 (BB)	Lab Activity	**Infographic Due. (revisions will be expected)**

MODULE 4: BUILDING DIGITAL PRESENCE AND UNDERSTANDING ANALYTICS			
Week of Nov 9	*Building Digital Presence and Understanding Analytics*		
Monday	Building Digital Presence (BB, JN9) and Writing Techniques to Build Digital Presence	Lab Activity	**Story Revision Due.**
Wednesday	No Class- Holiday		
Week of Nov 16	*Building Digital Presence and Understanding Analytics*		
Monday	Social Media Promotion/Analytics (BB, JN9)	Lab Activity	**Blog Post Due**
Wednesday	SEO Strategies, Website Analytics (BB, JN9)	Lab Activity	**Social Media Analytics Plan Due. (revisions will be expected)**

Week of Nov 23	*Writing Assignments Catch-Up Week*		
Monday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	
Wednesday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	
Week of Nov 30	*Writing Assignments Catch-Up Week*		
Monday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	
Wednesday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	
Week of Dec 7	*Writing Assignments Catch-Up Week*		
Monday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	
Wednesday	Writing and Lab Work	Lab Work	**Story Package Revision Due and Final Project Due.**
	FINALS WEEK		
Friday, December 11	**Last class day – Presentations of Final Projects – Meet 1-3 p.m. in PSFA 358**		**Final Presentations.**