

Public Issues Writing/Reporting

JOUR 4180-001/M50 & JOUR 6180-001, Fall 2021

Class Meeting: MW 12:40-2:05 p.m., MJ 208

Prof. Jessica Jaglois

Office: MJ306

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

You will learn investigative and analytical techniques that are essential in covering issues impacting our communities. This includes instruction in records, interviewing and how to use these tools in your reporting.

Prerequisites

JOUR 3120 & JOUR 3526

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- *The Investigative Reporter's Handbook: A Guide to Documents, Databases and Techniques*, by Brant Houston and Investigative Reporters and Editors Inc., fifth edition. (Earlier editions may be substituted.)

Classroom format

Class will meet in person in masks. The course will include lectures and hands-on experience.

ATTENDANCE: You get 2 free absences. After that, your grade will be affected (25 points deducted per absence). Do NOT come to class if you are sick. Talk to me PRIOR to the class you'll be absent and I'll provide a virtual link.

LATENESS: Make every effort to be on time. We WILL start on time.

CELL PHONES: Not allowed during class unless part of the lesson. Please put your phone on Do Not Disturb and put it away. Do not keep it on vibrate.

ASSIGNMENTS: News is all about deadlines, you must turn in assignments ON TIME. If you do not, they will not be accepted.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 4180 – 001/6180-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

You will investigate three of the biggest issues impacting the City of Memphis right now: crime, blight,

and COVID-19. You will be broken into groups and each group will turn stories related to the topics using interviews, video/pictures, and public documents. For example, everyone in class will cover crime but your group may cover the suspect in a crime or a victim, but not both. You will turn in three stories throughout the semester but the elements for those stories will be required to be turned in more frequently to gauge your progress, and will be graded. Finally, you will receive weekly pop quizzes related to the reading and/or current news events.

Grading

15 weekly pop quizzes	20 points each = 300 points total
10 elements for stories	40 points each = 400 points total
3 completed stories	100 points each = 300 points total
Total	1,000 points

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%

B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%

C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%

D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%

F 0-59.4%

Other issues

A critical admonition: Cheating and unethical behavior will not be tolerated. As a journalist, you are entrusted with certain privileges and responsibilities. Your research will require you to collect sensitive information on individuals including dates of birth, home addresses and possibly even social security numbers and more. Any misuse of this information – identity theft, trolling, doxing, etc. – may be grounds for an automatic “F” or more. Be warned. We are here to learn and to serve the public good, not to serve our own interests or to harm others.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Aug. 26 & 28: Introduction

--What is investigative journalism: systemic issues/incompetence or corruptness

--Who are you and where are you going?

Assignment due Aug 31: Chapter 1

Assignment due Sept 2: Chapter 2

Week 2: Aug 31 & Sept 2: Memphis is unlike any other place

--3 issues affecting Memphis, how Memphis works, break into teams

Assignments due Sept 7: *Identify a local news story (Commercial Appeal, Daily Memphian, Action News 5, Fox13, Local 24 or WREG Channel 3) that focuses on a recent crime that occurred in Memphis. Who is the victim? The suspect? Where did the crime occur?*

Assignments due Sept 9: *Chapters 3&4*

Week 3, Sep 7 & 9: Crime: Suspects, victims, enforcement, location

--Public database: Crime Maps - heat v. chloropleth maps; types of crimes; locations

--Court records: How to find information; what should we know about a suspect; what should we report?

Assignments due Sept 14: Using the same local news story, tell me what should have been reported and what should not have been reported about the suspect, victim, location, etc.

Assignments due Sept 16: Chapters 5&6

Week 4, Sep 14&16: Crime

--Sourcing & interviews: Using social media to find witnesses, family members; what should we know about a victim and what should we report?

Assignments due September 21:

Assignments due Sept 23:

Week 5, Sep 21&23: Crime

--Interviewing

Assignments due September 28:

Assignments due Sept 30:

Week 6, Sep 28&30: Crime

--Public documents & FOIA

Assignment due Oct 5: Crime story due

Week 7, Oct 5&7: Review stories, guest speaker

Assignments due Oct 14:

Week 8, Oct 14: Blight: High grass, abandoned homes, trash, sidewalks

--Public database: 311 tracker

Assignments due Oct 19:

Assignments due Oct 21:

Week 9, Oct 19&21: Blight

--Who to talk to

Assignments due Oct 26:

Week 10, Oct 26&28: Blight

Assignments due Nov 2:

Assignments due Nov 4:

Week 11, Nov 2&4: Blight

Assignments due Nov 9:

Assignments due Nov 11:

Week 12, Nov 9 & 11: COVID-19: Masks, vaccines, hospitals, worker shortages

--Public database: Tennessee and Shelby County Departments of Health

Assignments due Nov 16:

Assignments due Nov 18:

Week 13, Nov 16&18: COVID-19

Assignment due Nov 23:

Week 14, Nov 23: COVID-19

Assignment due Nov 30:

Week 15, Nov 30: COVID-19

*****Final project due by Dec 9*****

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations,

design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. *(Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018)*

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing

Faculty, staff, students and visitors are expected to monitor current health and safety measure requirements posted to our website and shared through other official communication channels including, but not limited to University email. Definitions related to those requirements and enforcement mechanisms appear in the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy \(GE2040\)](#). **Please be reminded that the University currently requires that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors and in places where appropriate social distancing is not possible.**

Classroom experiences from recent semesters have shown that the campus community generally understands and complies voluntarily with the mask requirement. The policy does permit faculty members to take action for non-compliance of mask use. Additionally, if students have concerns about faculty or staff mask use, contact Human Resources at hr@memphis.edu or 901.678.3573. Faculty who are delivering on-campus instruction may remove their face mask to teach, provided they are located within a delineated teaching area that is no less than 6 feet from students.

Student Health

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu or 901.678.2187.

Testing & Notification

The University will continue to provide testing for the entire campus community. The details regarding test availability and locations can be found [here](#). Do not come to campus if you are experiencing symptoms, are in isolation or quarantine due to positive

test results or exposure, pending test results, or have reason to believe you have come in contact with the virus.

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Fall 2021

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet when possible.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and outside when social distancing isn't possible.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Air purifiers must run at all times during class meetings.