

Data Writing/Reporting

JOUR 4124-001, Spring 2022

Class Meeting: TU/TH 1-2:25 p.m., MJ 202

Prof. Jessica Jaglois

Office: MJ306

Office Hours: 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Advanced use of computer technology and investigative techniques to access, analyze and develop database information in combination with traditional news reporting.

Prerequisites

JOUR 3526, JOUR 3120 or JOUR 3629

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- *Data for Journalists: A Practical Guide for Computer-Assisted Reporting* by Brant Houston, Fifth edition. (Earlier editions may be substituted.)
- [NICAR Course](#) – MAC or PC version (Mac is preferable as that is what I will use)

Classroom format

Class will meet in person in masks.

The course will include lectures and hands-on experience

ATTENDANCE: Each class is worth 10 points. **You will lose points after 3 absences.**

Do NOT come to class if you are sick.

LATENESS: Make every effort to be on time. **If you are later than 10 minutes, it counts as an absence.**

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.

Course Requirements

We will learn how to obtain and use data to strengthen our reporting. Many techniques we will go over in class. Attendance is imperative and if you do not come, it is likely you will fall behind. To learn data journalism, it's important to practice so some of your assignments will help you do just that. The majority of your grade is comprised of one story, which will include interviews, data table(s) and data visualization.

Grading

Attendance (10 x 24 classes)	240 points
Data assignments (5x50)	250 points
Data story	510 points
Story idea: 100 pts	
Rough draft: 175 pts	
Final story: 235 pts	

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, Jan 18 & 20 - Course Introduction

- Who are you and where are you going?
- Syllabus and data presentation

Week 2, Jan 25 & 27 – How/When to Use Data

- Understanding the strengths & weaknesses of CAR
- Assignment due for Jan 25: Read Chapter 1

Week 3, Feb 1 & Feb 3 – Intro to Excel

- Getting around spreadsheets; Functions 101; Sorting
- Assignment due for Feb 3: Read Chapter 4

Week 4, Feb 8 & 10 – Finding Data for Stories

- Where can databases be found without FOIA; recap on Excel
- Assignment due for Feb 8: Read Chapter 2
 - Assignment due for Feb 10: Finish analyzing the budget

Week 5, Feb 15 & 17 – Rates and Ratios

- Making sense of the numbers for our audience
- Assignment due for Feb 15: Student fees assignment
 - Assignment due for Feb 17: Read Ch 5

Week 6, Feb 22 & 24 – Filtering and Pivot Tables

Grouping and filtering to find exactly what we're looking for

-Assignment due for Feb 22: Transit assignment

-Assignment due for Feb 24: Review Chapter 5

Week 7, March 1 & 3 – Excel so far

Recap + guest speaker

-Assignment due for March 3: Salary data assignment

Week 8, Spring Break!

Week 9, March 15 & 17 – Importing and Scraping

Importing data from various websites

-Assignment due for March 15: Review Chapter 2

Week 10, March 22 & 24 – Scraping continued

Importing data from websites

-Assignment due for March 22: Story idea with your data + 2 people you've prescreened

Week 11, March 29 & 31 – Data Cleaning

Understanding the weaknesses of your data and how to clean them up

-Assignments due for March 31: Read Chapter 10 and do exercise 8 or exercise 9 for additional credit

Week 12, April 5 & 7 – Database managers + guest speaker

Intro to database managers + guest speaker

-Assignment due for April 7: Read Chapter 6 + exercise on pg 122

Week 13, April 12 & 14 – Database managers

Using SQL to sort and group data

-Assignment due for April 14: Read Chapter 7 + exercise on pg 132

Week 14, April 19 & 21 – Visualizing your data

Mapping and creating tables/graphs

-Assignment due for April 19: Read Appendix A

Week 15, April 26

Wrap up

-Assignment due for April 26: Rough draft due

FINAL STORY WITH DATA VISUALIZATIONS DUE: May 3

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 Spring 2022

- 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.