

PRE-FALL 2025
August 5 - September 5
T, W,Th,F 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm, Fisk 307

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Course Description & Goals

This course will introduce you to the fundamentals of news gathering and journalistic writing while simultaneously considering the history and current state of racial/ethnic bias within journalism and bias created by journalistic efforts. Through the lens of The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Report, we'll trace journalism's historical and current challenges with accurate and fair coverage when it comes to race, ethnicity and other historically marginalized identities, with specific attention to the 2024 presidential elections. You will report and write stories on deadline. These activities will allow you to dip your toe into Medill's two, first-year skills courses: 201-1, Fundamentals of Reporting & Writing News and 201-2, Fundamentals of Video Journalism. Goals:

- Understand the definition of news.
- Develop an interest in current events.
- Learn and practice interview techniques.
- Summarize and synthesize large amounts of information.
- Write leads and other forms of journalistic writing on deadline.
- Revise and polish your writing incorporating AP style.
- Research and deliver a final presentation on your favorite journalist.
- Understand how white supremacy has impacted journalism.

Course Materials & Estimated Cost

A laptop and cell phone that you can use as a video camera. All other reading/listening/viewing materials are on Canvas.

Assignments & Coursework

See Syllabus

AP Style Quizzes- Tuesdays/Thursdays

Current Events Quizzes-Wednesday/Fridays

Reflection Writing Documents (RWD) are designed to help you with daily class discussions

Attendance & Deadlines

Class meets every Tuesday – Friday for four weeks. Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time. If you are ill or will be late you should email both instructors before class starts.

Evaluation & Grading

Writing Assignments - Complete/Incomplete with significant feedback which you are expected to review and apply to future assignments

Graded Writing Assignments

- 1) Final Print Assignment – 25 %
- 2) Final Broadcast Assignment – 25 %
- 3) Quizzes -15%
 - a)Current Events
 - b)AP Style
 - c) Broadcast Style

- 4) Final Project – Journalist You Should Know – 25%.

For this assignment you will select a Chicago journalist to profile for via slides and verbal presentation. Extra credit will be award to those who secure and interview with their person and include an audio or video clip with that journalist in your presentation

- 5) Class Participation/Professionalism – 10%

Grading:

94-100 = A

90-93 = A-minus

87-89 = B-plus

84-86 = B

80-83 = B-minus

77-79 = C-plus

74-76 = C

Media Outlets:

WBEZ - RADIO
 WBBM – RADIO
 WLS-TV
 WMAQ-TV
 WBBM-TV
 WGN-TV
 WTTW-TV
 UNIVISION CHICAGO
 TELEMUNDO CHICAGO

[Chicago Sun-Times](#)
[Chicago Tribune](#)
 Chicago Defender
 Block Club Chicago
 City Bureau
 El Dia
 TRiiBE

*Access digital versions for free: <https://libguides.northwestern.edu/pressreader>.

Course Schedule

Day	In Class	Homework
1-Tu 8/5	Lecture: Elements of News, The Five W's & 1 H <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introductions 2. Community Building 3. Course Summary 4. AP Style Quiz 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events ID. See Canvas for Example and Instructions 3. Review Reflective Writing Document

2-W 8/6	Lecture: Ledes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Building 2. Review: Current Events Id 3. Exercise: Partner Interviews <p>Writing Assignment #1: Write a 100-word story with a one-sentence, anecdotal lead. Assume you're doing a feature story on your person for an NU audience. Post on Canvas by 5 pm.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events ID (Due Friday) 3. Listen: Public Media and the Limits of Diversity 4. Watch: Kerner video 5. Complete RWD for next day's discussion
3-Th 8/7	Lecture: Parts of the Story <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Building 2. AP Style Quiz 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Kerner Report – p. 201- 203 (Stop before “The Media and Race Relations”) 2. Study AP Style Sheet 3. Current Events ID. See Canvas for Example and Instructions 4. Complete RWD for next day's discussion
4- F 8/8	Lecture: Interviewing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review: Current Events ID 2. Interview 4 people in downtown Evanston <p>Writing Assignment #2: Write up the questions you asked 4 people in Evanston and your best quotes. Post on Canvas by 5pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events ID. 3. Read Kerner Report - p. 203-206 (Stop before “Ghetto Reactions to the Media Coverage”) 4. Complete RWD for next day's discussion 5. Write a 300-word story #3 about the Big Fork Festival (extra practice). Due Monday, 8/19@ 2:30 pm.
5-Tu 8/12	Lecture: Asking the Good Questions – Guest TBD <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Building 2. AP Style Quiz 3. Homework Discussion <p>Writing Assignment #4</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Kerner Report – p. 206 -210 (Stop before “Reporting Racial Problems in the US”) 2. Engage w/ news 3. Complete RWD for next day's discussion

	Asking Good Questions press conference worksheet. Post on Canvas by 5pm.	
6-W 8/13	Lecture: Covering Speeches and Events <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current Events Quiz 2. Homework Discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events 3. Read Kerner Report – p. 210 -213 4. Complete RWD for next day's discussion
7-Th 8/14	Lecture: Types of Stories <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AP Style Quiz 2. Homework Discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events 3. Read: Navigating the Complexities of the Asian American Experience Amid Rising Racism at Home by Medill Professor Mei-Ling Hopgood 4. Complete RWD for next day's discussion
8-Fri 8/15	Lecture: Finding the Story <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Building 2. Current Events Quiz 3. Homework Discussion 4. Idea Trees <p>Writing Assignment #5 Create an Idea Tree – explore 4 possible story ideas from the topic you select. Post on Canvas by 5pm.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study AP Style Sheet 2. Current Events 3. Historymakers Excerpt featured on 60 minutes 4. Browse Historymakers/Journalism section via NU LIBES and other sources for Final Project. You must select a person by next Wednesday, August 20. Review previous examples on Canvas. Person does not have to be from Historymakers database. 5. Review: latest RTDNA Diversity Survey 6. Print/Digital News Survey in flux 7. Nieman Lab 8. Journalists Perspectives on Newsroom Diversity
9-Tu 8/19	Introduction to Broadcast Writing & Video Editing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print vs Broadcast Writing Style 2. Write and rewrite a broadcast script. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with Current Events on Your Own 2. Study Broadcast Style Sheet 3. Finalize Selection of Journalist You Should Know...Due Tomorrow 4. Convert your assigned print story to a 30 sec. script.
10-We 8/20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Journalist You Should Know Check-in 2. Current Events Quiz 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with Current Events 2. Study Broadcast Style Sheet 3. Research Journalist You Should Know for Final

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review broadcast script Broadcast Style Quiz Studio Delivery Tips 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Convert your assigned print story to a 30 second broadcast news script.
11-Th 8/21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcast Style Quiz Deliver your broadcast script from the studio Rewrite broadcast script and deliver a second time. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Study Broadcast Style Document Current Events Work on JYSK for Final CNN Medill Alum Arrested Research Omar Jimenez and Prepare Questions for Q & A with him tomorrow.
12- Fri 8/22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Current Events Quiz Q & A with Omar Jimenez Prepare and Intro Script w/ Q & A and practice delivering with your partner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work Final Draft on Journalist You Should Know (JYSK) Final Review Broadcast Style Work on JYSK for Final
13-Tu 8/26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Q & A from studio with your partner ad-libbing responses and switch. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review Broadcast Style Work on JYSK for Final
14-We 8/27	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Q & A from studio with your partner ad-libbing responses and switch. (second & final chance) Critique on set presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work on JYSK for Final
15-Th 8/28	Finals – Part 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Broadcast style quiz JYSK Final Presentation 	
16-Fri 8/29	Finals – Part 2 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conferences Survey Surprise! 	

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Course Details Subject to Change

Please note that the specifics of this course syllabus are subject to change in the case of unforeseen circumstances. Instructors will notify students of any changes as soon as possible. Students will be responsible for abiding by the changes.

Statement regarding AI-generated Content:

With the rise of generative artificial intelligence tools, I acknowledge that the way we approach our work, and our assignments may look different from how we did before. Generative AI tools can be helpful to you in completing your assignments, and I encourage you to use them ethically and empathetically. However, the advent of generative AI tools is not a substitute for learning and practice.

Within this class, you are welcome to use free generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to supplement your work, but are expected to be transparency about your use of generative AI tools, citing where those tools were used and how they were used (e.g., what was the prompt, how did you revise the AI model's original output for your submissions, what did you learn).

Your citation could look like a statement at the bottom of your assignment that says:

"I used ChatGPT to brainstorm an initial draft for this email. But I edited and rewrote the draft afterward and the language I am submitting for this assignment is my own."

"I used ChatGPT to brainstorm a list of sources to reach out to for this story."

Ultimately, any work you submit will still be subject to the [Medill Integrity Code](#), as well as [Northwestern University's academic integrity policies](#). While you will be allowed to use generative AI tools in this class, you should be mindful of how those tools can produce fake, made-up, and incorrect information, and how bias can be encoded into AI systems. You will be responsible for any inaccurate, biased, or offensive work you submit, and you should take steps to verify and edit information given to you by generative AI tools. With these disclaimers in mind, I still encourage and welcome you to use generative AI tools to do your work more efficiently, as they can be immensely helpful to you for your work in this class and in the future.

Guidance on Class Recordings

Instructors can determine whether or not they would like to record class sessions, or portions of class sessions. You may decide, for example, to record lectures but not class discussions. Guidance around this decision can be found [here](#). If you plan to record, we ask that you include the following statement on your syllabus and also verbally let students know that you are choosing to record class sessions.

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes. Your instructor will communicate how members of the class can access the recordings. Portions of the course that contain images, questions, or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

Prohibition of Recording of Class Sessions by Students

Students are prohibited from recording class sessions and are also prohibited from the distribution of class recordings. Please include the following statement on your course syllabi:

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Grading Statement

Your instructor will determine your final grade and it will be posted through Caesar. Grades relevant to this course may be recorded in Canvas. However, grades listed in Canvas should not be relied upon as the sole factors in determining a final grade. Please be aware that the Medill Undergraduate Handbook and Northwestern University Student Handbook contain expectations for behavior and conduct in the Northwestern community and outlines the procedures to be followed when these expectations are not met. The policies presented in the Medill Undergraduate Handbook and Northwestern University Student Handbook, or any other applicable University policy, can override grading details presented in this syllabus. Excessive absences and violations of the Medill Integrity Code are grounds for failure in any course.

Accessibility Statement

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to adhere to the [Medill Integrity Code](#), as well as [Northwestern University's academic integrity policies](#). Academic dishonesty can result in penalties ranging from letters of warning to separation from the university. Your instructor may give a failing grade in this course for academic dishonesty. All student work in this class may be analyzed electronically for violations of the University's academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content.

Exceptions to Class Modality

This statement should be included on syllabi for in-person or hybrid sections:

Class sessions for this course will occur in person. Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU.

Faculty may choose to include this additional statement:

Community health remains our priority. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, do not attend class and follow the steps [outlined by the CDC](#) for testing and isolation. Contact your instructor as soon as possible to make plans to complete your coursework.

Students who experience other personal emergencies should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.

Should public health recommendations prevent in-person class from being held on a given day, the instructor or the university will notify students.

Medill Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The diversity of students, faculty and staff at the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications has been a source of innovation, excellence and leadership throughout our history.

Today, Medill continues its commitment to creating an inclusive environment and to providing equity in opportunities regarding research, teaching, administration and student services. Medill is dedicated to creating a socially just community by strengthening policies, developing programs, and fostering acceptance for a broad range of communities and concepts. We aim to welcome students, staff and faculty from diverse backgrounds and support them so they may thrive in our community. Diversity and inclusion are also essential to the professional skills we teach in preparing our students for careers in media.

The Importance of Diversity and Inclusion for Journalists

Professional journalists routinely seek to include a balanced range of voices and perspectives in their reporting – often reflecting two or more sides to a story, especially in the coverage of sensitive or controversial stories.

Equally vital is diversity among the journalists who gather news and decide how to present it. The more diverse their backgrounds, the more probing coverage can be.

Including a range of voices and backgrounds among sources and journalists themselves can effectively inform audiences on a deeper level. This can spur constructive action and positive social change, and it has the potential to encourage diversity, inclusion and acceptance in society as a whole.

The Importance of Diversity and Inclusion for Integrated Marketing Communications Professionals

Understanding consumers is key to integrated marketing communications. In an increasingly global and complex society, marketers strive to develop deep knowledge of and insight into the perspectives of diverse markets and cultures.

By considering the range of values, backgrounds and identities of an audience, marketing

communications professionals help clients maximize the relevance of their brands in the global marketplace by developing products and services that respond to diverse interests and stakeholders. An inclusive and comprehensive understanding of consumers enables marketers to communicate with audiences directly and engage them meaningfully.

Diverse perspectives among marketing communications professionals themselves is also important. Diversified teams that honor each member's unique contributions and collaborate with mutual respect are in turn better able to engage and communicate with consumers who have a wide range of interests and perspectives.

Sexual Misconduct and Reporting

Northwestern University is committed to fostering an environment where students are safe and free from sexual misconduct. [Confidential resources](#) are available to those who have experienced sexual misconduct. Faculty and instructors are not confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct, whether discussed in your assignments or in person, to the Title IX Coordinator, who can provide information about resources and options. I encourage students who have experienced sexual misconduct to talk with someone to get support. For more information, including how to request interim protective measures and academic accommodations or file a complaint, see [the Get Help page](#).

Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Northwestern University's Policies on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Harassment apply to all members of the University community, including students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed on the basis of his or her race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship, veteran status, genetic information or any other classification protected by law, should contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access at (847) 491-7458 or the Sexual Harassment Prevention Office at (847) 467-6571. Additional information about the University's discrimination and harassment policies, including the campus resources available to assist individuals with discrimination or harassment concerns, is available online on the [Human Resources Equal Opportunity and Access website](#).

Support of Wellness and Mental Health

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

Religious Observance

Northwestern is committed to fostering an academic community respectful and welcoming of persons from all backgrounds. To that end, the [policy on academic accommodations](#) for religious holidays stipulates that students will not be penalized for class absences to observe religious holidays. If you will observe a religious holiday during a class meeting, scheduled exam, or assignment deadline, please let

me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two week of class. If exams or assignment deadlines on the syllabus fall on religious holidays you observe, please reach out so that we can discuss that coursework.