

ENG 208: Introduction to Digital
Journalism
Fall I 2020 – ONLINE COURSE

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Virtual Office Hrs.: Tuesdays, 2 pm – 3 pm

Our course is online at

Blackboard

bbhosted.cuny.edu

-AND-

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ENG 208: Introduction to Digital Journalism

Course Description

*From the LaGuardia Course Catalog**

The purpose of Introduction to Digital Journalism is to provide students with a basic working knowledge of online journalism today, including the technical skills using blogs and social media, producing video, audio and still digital photographs to enhance written stories. Students will look at existing examples of professional digital journalism and create their own content combining writing, photos, videos and / or audio on their own blogs or custom websites.

For Our Course

Welcome to the world of 21st-century journalism! Today, journalists are expected to produce more than words. We need to be able to produce audio, video and even web content beyond written copy. We need to know how a content management system (CMS), such as WordPress, works in order to power online publications – including personal blogs – of all sizes. We need to be able to cover a story, do an interview, in words and pictures with just a smartphone. We need to know the basics of HTML, CSS and visual design. We need to know how Twitter and social media can be used responsibly by journalists to further our craft. This course will show you what's out there in today's media landscape with some award-winning / popular 'digital news packages' and give you the basic skills and knowledge to produce your own blogs, audio podcast, photos and a photo slideshow with captions and audio, and / or a short video interview. We will look at the 'deep structures' (or theory) of different kinds of digital journalism for both full browsers and mobile news, with practical examples. We also will read

and respond to existing online journalism in order to understand what it is and what 'best practices' are available in this exciting, ever-changing field. The techniques we learn will also apply to any career in media today, even for online tools and platforms that haven't been invented yet.

E-Books (Textbook and Course Pack):

SECTIONS OF BOTH THE TEXTBOOK AND COURSE PACK WILL BE POSTED AS PDFs EACH WEEK. If you have access to a printer, you are encouraged to print out readings as we go through the course.

- Briggs, Mark, *Journalism Next*. 4th ed. CQ Press, 2019. (ISBN 978-1544309446.)
- ENG 208 Course Pack

***Links to current examples of digital journalism will also be posted for most every class at djlinks.publishproject.com – under the Digital Journalism Links menu option on Blackboard and eng208.publishproject.com. Please make time to explore the online materials each week. The more you explore, the more you will become familiar with current digital journalism today.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

***New materials will normally be posted on Tuesday of each week (since our F2F class would have met on TU/TH). So our weekly schedule runs from the Tue. / Mon. of each week.*

Please see below for details.

<i>WEEK 1</i> <i>9/14-9/21</i>	Course Introduction / Digital Journalism Today • Using Blackboard and eng208.publishproject.com: Discussion Groups, Online Activities, Our 'Workflow' for the Course • Intro. to digital journalism • Legacy vs. online journalism • Looking at online journalism sites: MSM vs. start-up vs. student (and J-School) examples • Consuming news: 'lean-forward,' 'lean-back' and 'stand-up' modes • The Continuous / Immersive / Interactive triangle • Print vs. desktop vs. mobile journalism
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	Reading: Preface and Introduction, <i>Journalism Next</i>, , pp. xv-xx, 1 – 6 Lab Activity: Exploring examples of current digital journalism
<i>WEEK 2</i> 9/22-9/28	• A short history of digital journalism Reading: “The Evolution of the Digital News Package,” Ch. 2, <i>Principles of Multimedia Journalism</i> (online)
	Blog and WordPress Fundamentals • Setting up WordPress / Hosting options • Responsive design / Themes • Dashboard / Plugins • Web Design 101
<i>WEEK 3</i> 9/29-10/5	More on Blogs and Online Writing Reading: “The Power of Publishing...,” Ch. 2, <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 45-55, 66-75 • BLOG ASG. #1 – WRITE A ‘WELCOME POST’ ON YOUR WORDPRESS BLOG – DUE THU. 10/1 (11:59 pm)
<i>WEEK 4</i> 10/6-10/12	Professional vs. Amateur Blogs • Sample professional blogs • Kinds of blogs / online ‘beats’ (and finding your interests) • Original content vs. aggregation • Blog post on a hyperlinked story Reading: “Finding Stories,” Ch. 3, <i>Convergent Journalism: An Introduction</i>, Course Pack, pp. 34-48 Online Writing Fundamentals • Guidelines for writing effectively online • Chunking vs. the inverted pyramid • Ledes / nuggets / kickers • Voice / focus / audience / opinion / reported stories

	Reading: "Writing Across Platforms," Ch. 2 & "Structure and Storytelling," Ch. 5, <i>Convergent Journalism: An Introduction</i>, Course Pack, pp. 13-33, 49-63
<i>WEEK 5</i> <i>10/13-10/19</i>	WordPress Dashboard (with Photos) • Organizing online content / tags / sluglines • Adding photos to online stories in WordPress • Headlines, sub-heds and photo captions Screencast: Adding a sample story on WordPress with photos & tags Digital Photography Basics • Fundamentals of digital photography for blogging • Photo Editing 101: the basics • Adding photos and captions to your stories Reading: "Visual Storytelling with Photographs," Ch. 5, <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 153-184; • BLOG ASG. #2 IS DUE ON THU., 10/15 (11:59 pm) – RESPOND TO AN EXISTING PIECE OF DIGITAL JOURNALISM
<i>WEEK 6</i> <i>10/20-10/26</i>	Screencast: Adding photos to WordPress Reading: "Photography," Ch. 6, <i>Convergent Journalism: An Introduction</i>, Course Pack, pp. 64-94 Photo Essays and Slideshows / Carousels Reading: Ch. 5 (continued), <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 179-205 Screencast: Creating a basic photo slideshow with captions in WordPress
<i>WEEK 7</i> <i>10/27-11/2</i>	Podcasts and Audio Journalism • Introduction to podcasts • Radio vs. podcasts Online Activity: Exploring podcasts Reading: "Making Audio Journalism Visible," Ch. 6, <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 211-234; Ch. 6 (continued), <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 229-237; "Writing for Broadcast"

	Interviewing Basics with Phones • Interviewing basics in the digital age • Recording audio and video on your phone / Tips and best practices Lab Activity: Exploring sample interviews Reading: “Audio and Video Journalism,” Ch. 8, <i>Convergent Journalism</i>, Course Pack, pp. 95-116 Hands-On Activity: At home mock interview practice exercise • BLOG ASG. #3 IS DUE ON THU., 10/29 (11:59 pm) – RESPOND TO A PIECE OF JOURNALISM THAT USES A PHOTO ESSAY / SLIDESHOW
<i>WEEK 8</i> <i>11/3-11/9</i>	Digital News Packages • Copy + photos + audio + video + data journalism + visualizations + virtual reality (+ what’s next?) • The Continuous / Immersive / Comprehensive Triangle up close with examples • Professional examples (and some innovative media organizations) Screencast: Exploring Digital News Packages Reading: “Classification of Digital News Packages,” Ch. 3, <i>The Principles of Multimedia Journalism: Packaging Digital News</i>, Course Pack, pp. 190-221 Online Activity: Exploring a sample of digital news packages
<i>WEEK 9</i> <i>11/10-11/16</i>	Digital Video Basics • Introduction to digital video • Recording live events: what to shoot / guidelines & some best practices from video experts Reading: “Telling Stories with Video,” Ch. 7, <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 145-157; Data Journalism / Visualizations • Some effective examples from the MSM and start-ups • Accessing public datasets • Using Tableau (and a quick look at Google Earth)

	Reading: "Data-driven Journalism and Digitizing Your Life," Ch. 8, <i>Journalism Next</i>, Ch. 8, pp. 243-259; "Data-driven Journalism," Ch. 9, <i>Convergent Journalism</i>, Course Pack, pp. 222-246 Online Activity: Exploring datasets and data visualizations • BLOG ASG. #4 IS DUE ON THU., 11/12 (11:59 pm) – RESPOND TO A PIECE OF JOURNALISM THAT USES A DIGITAL NEWS PACKAGE
<i>WEEK 10</i> <i>11/17-11/23</i>	Intro. to Web Analytics - Analyzing web traffic: Google Analytics Readings: "Building a Digital Audience for News," Ch. 9, <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 271-291; - Audience engagement and management - The possible dangers of metrics for journalism today - How is news consumed and distributed today? Franklin Foer, "When Silicon Valley Took Over Journalism," online and Course Pack, pp. 283-291 Screencast: Google Analytics tutorial for understanding basic web traffic and analytics • PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT IS DUE ON WED. 11/25 (11:59 pm) – OP ED PIECE (WITH 3 PHOTOS WITH CAPTIONS) –OR- PROFILE OF A PERSON BASED ON AN INTERVIEW (WITH 3+ PHOTOS WITH CAPTIONS) FOR INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK
<i>WEEK 11</i> <i>11/24-11/31</i>	Social Media for Journalists - Using Twitter effectively (and responsibly) as a journalist - Tweetdeck for working journalists - Some best practices and ethics - Facebook, Apple News (and Google AMP) Reading: Ch. 2 (continued), <i>Journalism Next</i>, pp. 75-80; "Social Media," "Introduction: Networked Journalism," Ch. 1, <i>Social Media for Journalists</i>, Course Pack, pp. 272-282

	• Citizen journalism / social journalism / the journalist as entrepreneur Reading: "Citizen Journalism and the Public Sphere," Ch. 6, <i>Social Media for Journalists: Principles and Practice</i>, Course Pack, pp. 292-317 • BLOG ASG. #5 IS DUE ON TUE., 11/31 (11:59 pm) – REVIEW A LEADING-EDGE PIECE OF DIGITAL JOURNALISM THAT INCORPORATES DATA JOURNALISM OR A VISUALIZATION OR VIRTUAL REALITY
WEEK 12 12/1-12/7	Digital Journalism Careers • Digital skills needed for the 21st-century newsroom / media organization Reading: Mark Stencel and Kim Perry, "Superpowers: The Digital Skills Media Leaders Say Newsrooms Need Going Forward" (online) Course Wrap-Up • Additional topics as materials as needed (TBA) • YOUR REVISED FINAL PROJECT IS DUE ON MON 12/7 (11:59 pm) – OP ED PIECE (WITH 3 PHOTOS WITH CAPTIONS) –OR- PROFILE OF A PERSON BASED ON AN INTERVIEW (WITH 3+ PHOTOS WITH CAPTIONS) • BLOG ASG. #6 ALSO DUE MON 12/7 (11:59 pm) – REFLECT ON YOUR WORK FOR THE COURSE, THE STATE OF DIGITAL JOURNALISM TODAY AND YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER GOALS ✱ ALL LATE WORK MUST BE POSTED BY WED., DEC. 9th, 2020, NOON. <u>No work can be accepted after this deadline. Please plan accordingly.</u>

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Rules

Since this an online class, ideally you will participate most every week. **NO ONE WILL FAIL THE COURSE BASED ON LACK OF ATTENDANCE ONLY.** That said, you need to participate most weeks in order to complete the 'major' assignments: 6 blog assignments and an original piece of journalism. Students who demonstrate excellent online attendance will have their semester grades adjusted upwards. If you have a lot of online absences, but still complete the work for the class, your semester grade will be slightly lower, but you will still pass the class. You will receive weekly progress reports on your progress in the course. Because of the pandemic, the window for withdrawing -- for a non-punitive W grade -- has been extended until the end of the semester. *The responsibility as an online learner is on you to make time to dig into each week's materials and activities.* We are offering virtual office hours (on Tuesdays, 2 pm – 3 pm) – which will be scheduled at a particular date and time. Everything else about our class is asynchronous. That is you do it any time during the week. You'll receive e-mail reminders and announcements on what's due, but it's up to you to make time and make progress as an online learner. You can do this. By 2020, thousands of students around the world at all levels of education have had excellent experiences with online learning. We're using some "best practices" – ideas that have worked before -- from the CUNY School of Professional Studies – a top-rated online college program, where your instructor has been affiliated over the years.

Readings

All texts will be posted electronically for each week of our online class – along with examples of digital journalism examples (on djlinks.publishproject.com) for you to explore in a web browser. An important part of the online work for this class will be to **read these texts** and **answer questions online** that let you show your understanding and ideas about these readings. Most every reading assignment will have an online activity (online questionnaire) associated with it online for the week's tasks. **You get class participation credit for doing these online activities.** Each week, there will also be a Discussion Board question that will also let you respond to our readings and ideas. **Your success for this class depends on keeping up with both the reading (electronic texts and questionnaires) and writing (blog & formal journalism assignments).** *You can't just turn in the written assignments and expect to pass the course; you have to do the weekly work with readings, questionnaires, and the Discussion Board (as it's worth 30% of your grade).* Of course, doing the reading and other online activities is the way we learn about digital journalism together, besides writing our own blogs and one piece of original journalism (an Op Ed or Personal Essay incorporating about 3 photos with captions).

Blogging

Every student has a personal blog on WordPress. (This has been created by your instructor to save time). A list of blogs is available under **Blog Roll** menu item on **Blackboard and eng208.publishproject.com**. We will be using blogs to respond to the readings from class, develop ideas for your own journalism pieces, publish the finished versions and then reflect on what you have worked on for the course. In all there are 6 blog assignments and 1 Formal Journalism Assignment planned (with revisions).

Formal Journalism Assignment

Besides writing 6 blog posts on a variety of assignments, you will brainstorm, research and write one piece of 'formal' journalism – an Op Ed Piece or a Profile of a Person. This piece will include about 3 photographs, which will probably be 'borrowed' and cited from Internet photos as we absolutely do not want anyone in our class to go out in the world and take photos (in a time of a pandemic). Don't worry -- Real bloggers often use Internet / stock images to accompany their stories, so it's actually a real-world exercise to do this.

The Formal Journalism Assignment will be posted as a preliminary draft (for Week 10) for instructor feedback so you can improve it in time for the final, revised version, which will be due during for Week 12.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the theft or unattributed submission of another writer's work. The rules for plagiarism are slightly different for journalism, but make sure all the work you submit for this class is your own. Plagiarism is an offense that can severely impact your academic and professional life. I WILL REPORT EVERY INSTANCE OF PLAGIARISM THAT I FIND. Committing plagiarism is a quick way to fail this course, so please avoid it.

****COMMITTING PLAGIARISM AS A WORKING JOURNALIST ALWAYS MEANS THE END OF A CAREER IN MEDIA – DON'T DO IT!**

Deadlines

The basic rule for online work is that you can take up to 2 extra weeks to do it – with a late penalty. It is logistically impossible for you to make up all the work at the end.

For blog assignments, online work will be accepted all the way up to the end of the semester with a late penalty (-3%, or one step lower on the grading scale: A becomes A-, B+ becomes B, etc.). See above for our flexible online attendance and withdrawal policies this semester.

Final Grade

Grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

• 1 'Formal Digital Journalism Assignment	20%	
• 6 Blog Assignments (responses to examples of professional digital journalism)	50%	
• Online Work and Participation (including online attendance, online questionnaires / quizzes and Discussion Board contributions)	30%*	
	100%	<i>*In case of low attendance, a different grading scale will be used to allow students who submit most of the Blog Assignments (and the Formal Journalism Asg.), but haven't been able to attend class regularly, to pass the course!</i>