

JOURNALISM 177

WAR (AND OTHER) STORIES: THE MEDIA, THE MILITARY; NEWS NARRATIVES THEN AND NOW

**WEDNESDAY 3 – 5:30 P.M.
WESCOE 1005**

“Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.”
Founding father Thomas Jefferson

“Our mission is to speak the truth to power. We send home that first rough draft of history.” --
Journalist Marie Colvin

"When I realized there was a job that existed in this world where I could be in the middle of huge world events and actually get paid for it, it was an epiphany for me." — Journalist Bob Woodruff

“If I had my choice I would kill every reporter in the world, but I am sure we would be getting reports from Hell before breakfast.” – Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman

Welcome to Journalism 177

This is a course about storytelling.

It’s a course about heroes and villains, power and vulnerability, chaos and order, conflict and peace. It’s a course about two U.S. institutions that are essential for a functioning democracy: the media, which rely on First Amendment to do their jobs, and the military, which protect those First Amendment rights. And it’s a course about the tensions between these two institutions.

This semester, we’ll explore how journalists report on the military, the stories they tell, and how these stories keep us informed about our government. We’ll look at military reporting from today and from long ago. We’ll discuss how these stories shape our views of the military, government, politics, and culture – and we’ll look at how these, in turn, shape the stories journalists tell.

Throughout the semester we’re going to be asking:

- **Who** tells the stories about the military? Who are the journalists and who are the news sources that shape our understanding of how the military works?
- **What** events do journalists report and why?
- **When** does the story start? When does it end?
- **Where** do the stories take place?

- **Why** should we care?
- **How** do journalists get their stories? And how do they present them to us?

We'll talk about these questions throughout the semester. And **talk** is the key word here. You want to be prepared to come to class ready to share your ideas, insights, and experiences.

What we'll learn

Our goals this semester are to:

- Learn about the roles the media and the military play in U.S. democracy.
- Learn how the media and military work together—or don't—in telling stories.
- Learn how to analyze media messages about the military.
- Learn how to identify credible news sources.
- Read and learn about how technology has changed the way journalists tell stories.
- Discuss ethical storytelling.
- Think critically about how government, culture, and politics have influenced journalism – and how journalism influences politics, culture, and government.
- Read, view, analyze, and enjoy journalists' stories about the military.
- Think about how to tell your own stories.

How we'll learn

There's no textbook for this class. (You're welcome.) Instead, we'll read and watch news stories about the military. You'll want to review these stories before you come to class so you can participate fully in our discussions.

You'll also complete a series of assignments outside of class this semester. Here's a summary of what we'll do.

- **Critical analysis.** You'll analyze three news articles (these can include photos or videos). I'll provide a worksheet to guide you through this.
- **Reflection papers.** You'll write three reactions to what you've read or seen. This can be a reaction to a news story, advertisement, or press release, or it may be a reaction to some of the "field trips" we take as a class. Think of these as blog posts. You'll write your personal thoughts, but you also want to make logical arguments to support your views.
- You'll conduct *two interviews* and write two short news feature stories based on those interviews. One interview will be with a person serving in the military or a veteran. The other will be with someone whose life has been affected by the military; for example, a family member, a business owner, even a journalist.

How your work will be evaluated

I was a student for a long time, so I know that students are concerned about grades. I'll do my best to evaluate your work fairly, to give you constructive feedback, and to give you feedback in a timely manner. Your responsibility is to do the best work you can, to turn in assignments on deadline, and to keep an open mind to new ideas.

Here's how your work will be evaluated:

The total number of points you can earn in class is 550. Here's how you can earn them.

- **Critical analysis.** You can earn a maximum of 25 points on each paper, for a total of 75 points.
- **Reflection papers.** You'll write three papers, worth 50 points each, for a total of 150 points.
- **Interview stories.** You won't have a final exam, but you will have a two-part final assignment. Your first story will be worth 100 points, and your second will be worth 125 points, for a total of 225 points.
- **Attendance.** Think of this as a way to boost your grade, just by showing up. You'll receive 6 points for each class you attend. The maximum points you can earn is 100.

At the end of the semester, I'll add all your points. The total points for the class is 550. To get your grade, I'll divide the number of points you earned in class by the total number of points for the class. For example, if you earned 450 points in class, your final grade will be 82 or B- ($450 / 550 = 81.8$). If you earned 500 points, your grade will be 90 or A- ($500 / 550 = 90.9$ or 91). If your grade ends in .5 or above, it will be rounded up to the next number. If it ends in .4 or below, it won't be rounded up.

Even though you have a number total for your final grade, KU requires professors to assign a letter grade. Here's how the numbers translate into letters.

550 – 511 = A	422 – 401 = C
510 – 495 = A-	400 – 385 = C-
494 – 479 = B+	384 – 368 = D+
478 – 456 = B	367 – 346 = D
455 – 440 = B-	345 – 330 = D-
439 – 423 = C+	329 or below = F

We'll discuss each assignment in class before you're asked to complete them. I'll also provide instructions and grading rubrics (to show you how your work will be evaluated) on our course Blackboard site. However, here are some general guidelines on how your work will be evaluated.

A = Wow! This is superior work. The ideas are clearly stated and supported. The work is well-organized, and it's easy to read and understand. The student's work shows, not only critical thinking and analysis, but also creativity. The student went above and beyond what was expected. There are no significant grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes.

B = I'm impressed! This work is very good. The majority of the ideas are clearly stated and supported. The work is organized, but additional explanation or rewriting could help improve the work. The work shows the student has thought creatively and critically about the assignment. The work is above average, but there may be some room for minor improvements. There may be some grammar, spelling, or punctuation mistakes.

C = This is good. The student has done the minimal amount of work required for the assignment. However, the work may not be well-organized; ideas may not be clearly stated. The work shows minimal critical thinking. The student does not offer support for all ideas or arguments. There is not much evidence at creativity. There are many grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. There is much room for improvement.

D = This is close to disaster. The student has not followed assignment directions. Ideas are not clearly stated. There is little evidence to support those ideas. There are serious problems with the way the assignment is organized. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors make this work difficult to read or understand. The work is below average of what's expected in college.

F = This is unacceptable. The assignment shows little concern for organization or clarity. There is no evidence the student thought critically about the work. There is no evidence of creativity. The student shows little concern for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Again, we'll talk about grades and assignments during class. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

How to keep in touch

In this class, we'll use the university's Blackboard system: <http://courseware.ku.edu>. You can log on to it with your student user name and password. You'll be able to see class assignments, the syllabus, readings for each week, and other announcements. You'll also be able to see your grades (although no one else will be able to see them.)

Because I can't see you every day, we'll use Blackboard to communicate with each other. When we're outside of class, we'll communicate primarily through email. If I need to contact you, I'll do so through your KU email address. If you want to contact me, start with email. If we need to talk by phone or meet in person, we can do that as well.

My email is barnettb@ku.edu

My office phone is 785-864-0604.

My office is located at 203-B Stauffer Flint Hall. My office hours are 1 – 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 1 – 2 p.m. on Wednesdays. You can also make an appointment if those times don't work for you.

Professional behavior

My responsibilities in this class are to help you understand the topic and the assignments; to give you constructive and timely feedback; to come to class prepared; to help you learn to ask questions and evaluate the answers you get; and to make this class as interesting as possible.

But you have some responsibilities, too.

College will be your “job” for the next four years. So, you want to get in the habit of acting as a professional would in the work place. Here are some courtesies we all want to observe in class.

- Show up every day.
- Be on time.
- Come to class prepared. This means you need to read the assignments beforehand.
- Don't wander in and out of class. Take restroom, food, and water breaks before you come to class. (We'll have some built-in breaks during the class.)
- Keep your focus on your work. This means no cell phones, no computer use (even for note-taking), no surfing the web during class.
- Be respectful of each other. If someone says something you don't agree with, listen first, then share your comments, but don't demean or ridicule the other person. Make this a safe space to share ideas and concerns. You can't learn if you're worried that someone is going to attack you or your ideas.
- Observe deadlines. I won't accept any late papers.

Never ever do this. Never. Ever.

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications doesn't tolerate plagiarism or fabrication. Neither do I. Here's some explanation.

- Plagiarism means that you take someone else's work and present it as your own. All the work you do for this class must be original. It should reflect your ideas and thoughts (which, by the way, are as good as anyone else's). You should get in the habit of citing sources to make it clear where ideas and quotes come from.
- Fabrication means you've made it up. You exaggerated, you presented something fictional as a fact, or you invented something that isn't true.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Cutting and pasting from the Internet is not acceptable. Just because it's on the Internet doesn't mean you can use it without attribution.

- Don't recycle assignments from other classes and use them for this class. Don't recycle assignments from high school (this has happened). Again, your work in this class must be original.
- If you quote someone, you must be 100 percent accurate. Don't change their quotes to make what they've said sound better or more interesting. This qualifies as fabrication.
- Details are important. Make sure you spell names of people and places correctly.

And a couple more things ...

Coming to college is a big adjustment. You're living in a new place, meeting new people, getting used to a new "culture," managing your own time and schedule. You can be homesick and miss your family, friends, and hometown. There is a lot to do (both work and fun), and it can be pretty overwhelming. Remember that your professors are here to help you. Let me know if you have concerns about assignments. Also, let me know if there are problems that might interfere with learning.

Some resources you might want to know about:

KU Student Access Services. This KU department works to make accommodations for students who have a documented learning disability. The department will work with you and your instructor. You can learn more at the website: <https://access.ku.edu/> You can find the office at 22 Strong Hall. The phone is: 785-864-4064. The email is achieve@ku.edu. Talk to me if you need some additional help in class.

Watkins Health Center. KU wants to be healthy while you're here. You can visit Watkins for confidential preventive care or treatment – everything from prescription medicines, to flu shots, to broken bones. Here's the website: <http://studenthealth.ku.edu/> Here's the phone number: 785-864-9500. Here's the email: health@ku.edu

KU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). CAPS provides confidential counseling services to help you stay mentally health here at school. Here's the website: <https://caps.ku.edu/> Here's the phone number: 785-864-2277.

KU Financial Aid and Scholarships. Here's the website: <http://affordability.ku.edu/> Here's the phone: 785-864-4700. Here's the email: financialaid@ku.edu

Food banks. The Campus Cupboard, operated by the Center for Community Outreach, can help if you need food. You can find the organization on Facebook. Here's the website: <http://www.cco.ku.edu/campus-cupboard-2/> Here's the email: cco@ku.edu. Here's the phone: (785) 864-4073.

Any questions about anything, please see me! I'm happy to help.

We'll work hard this semester. We'll learn a lot, but we'll also have fun.

J177 CLASS SCHEDULE

Here's our tentative class schedule. Since news happens, we may make some changes as we go along. We're scheduled to have some guest speakers visit our class and Skype in. I won't announce those in advance; since they are journalists their schedules change quickly. However, the assignment dates will not change. Any changes in readings will be announced in advance.

Aug. 23 – Introduction to class. Why are you here? What will you learn? What lies ahead?

Aug. 30 – But first a little history. . . . Why study the U.S. military? What have journalists written in the past? What can we learn from these stories?

Sept. 6 – Telling the military's story. How do we start? Where do we start? *We'll work on your first critical analysis in class.*

Sept. 7 – First-year seminar and campus book. Please plan to attend this at the Dole Institute and 7 p.m. I'll meet you there.

Sept. 13 – Telling the story from the battlefield. Telling stories from the frontlines. Drama and danger at "the tip of spear." *Your second critical analysis is due at the beginning of class.*

Sept. 20 – Divided loyalties and storytelling. Can you be a journalist and a patriot at the same time? During this class, we'll visit a new exhibit at Watson Library. This will help us learn about the Vietnam War, and what it was like in Kansas during this time.

Sept. 27 – Telling the story with pictures. Photojournalism. What stories do these pictures tell us? Your third critical analysis is due at the beginning of class. Also, bring a photo to class that you think shows some aspect of military life, and we'll discuss.

Oct. 4 – When the sources become the storytellers. How are stories that the military tell us different from the stories journalists tell?

Do you want to attend Media Day at Fort Leavenworth?

First Lt. Zak Beasley, former KU journalism graduate and current JAG office in the Marine Corps, will visit our class today.

You'll prepare a reaction paper that's due by 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 6.

Oct. 11 – Telling the stories of families. Meet at the Dole Institute to learn about POWs and their families. *Your second reaction paper due by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 13.*

Oct. 18 – No class. Fall break is Oct. 16 and 17 but we'll take off this extra day to work and plan interviews and just catch our breath. Use this time to work on your interviews.

Oct. 25 – D.C. – Telling policy stories. Must they be boring? Who makes the policies that affect the military? How do we tell the stories of people in power? Also, we'll visit the library today to learn more about research.

Oct. 28 – Can we go to the WWI museum?

Nov. 1 – Telling diverse stories. How do the media tells stories about race, gender, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity? *Your third reaction paper is due by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3.*

Nov. 6 – The First-year Seminar colloquium will be held at the Kansas Union ballroom. It begins at 7. Please plan to attend.

Nov. 8 – Telling the story from the homefront. What stories do the media tell us about military families? *First draft of interview story with military person due in class.*

Nov. 15 – Telling the stories of the aftermath. What happens after war is over? What happens to civilians? To people in the military? *Final draft of interview story with military person or veteran due in class.*

Nov. 22 – No class. Thanksgiving break.

Nov. 29 – Fact, fiction? Telling fictional stories about factual events We take a look at how journalists have been portrayed in the movies. What greater truths can we learn from these fictional portrayals?

Dec. 6 – When the storyteller tells the story. Journalists tell their own stories. What can we learn from them? Last day of class.

Dec. 13 – *Final interview paper with someone affected by the military due by 5 p.m.*