

# JOUR 302: Infomania, Fall 2017

**Meeting times:** Mondays & Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**Room:** Stauffer-Flint 204

**Instructor:** [Professor Peter Bobkowski](#)

**Email:** [bobkowski@ku.edu](mailto:bobkowski@ku.edu)

**Office:** Stauffer-Flint 209A

**Office hours:** Mondays, 12:30–1:30 p.m. in Stauffer-Flint 209A; Tuesdays, 7–9 p.m. at the Lawrence Public Library (after fall break); or email to set up an appointment.

**Peer teaching assistants:** Jordan Arnold and Grant Heiman

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**Office hours:** TBA

## Course rationale and objectives

Journalism and strategic communication practitioners must be information experts. Before communicating any information in news or strategic messages, these practitioners must be able to navigate, assess, and synthesize the vast quantities of information that are available to them. In this course, students develop information literacy skills and dispositions by learning to: (1) identify and access information sources; (2) retrieve information from these sources; (3) evaluate these sources and information critically; (4) question their own assumptions; and (5) summarize and synthesize the information they obtain. These skills and dispositions form the foundation of the information-intensive skills students go on to develop in subsequent courses.

**KU Core:** This course satisfies Goal 1 Outcome 1, Critical thinking

## Learning objectives

1. Students will identify a topic of interest, articulate its significance, explain the necessity of researching it, and plan a research strategy.
2. Students will identify diverse information sources to advance their understanding of a topic.
  - a. Students will use digital news databases, business records, public records, population/consumer research, and individuals, as essential sources of information.
  - b. Students will know about other conventional and emerging sources of information (e.g., big data), and will supplement the essential sources from (a) with other information sources as necessary.
3. Students will use effective retrieval strategies, including search and interview techniques, to obtain information from these sources.
4. Students will apply critical thinking to evaluate their information sources, the information they collect, and their own assumptions about the topic.
5. Students will summarize and synthesize the information they collect, and will articulate the results of their critical thinking evaluations.
6. Students will attribute information completely and consistently to its sources.

## Required textbook

Don MacLeod, *How to find out anything: From extreme Google searches to scouring government documents, a guide to uncovering anything about everyone and everything* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2012).

## Assignment categories

### **Reading responses and research reflections**

240 points. Various due dates. See each week's folder for assignment details.

### **Ownership and business use timeline**

100 points. Due Oct. 30 at 11 a.m. See Week 11 folder for assignment details.

### **Stories**

2x 100 points. Due at 11 a.m. either on Nov. 13 and 27 (Group A), or Nov. 20 and Dec. 4 (Group B). See Week 13-15 folders for assignment details.

### **SMP**

60 points. Due Dec. 6 at 11 a.m. See Week 16 for assignment details.

### **Final paper**

100 points. Due Dec. 11 at 11 a.m. See Finals week folder for assignment details.

### **Final presentation**

100 points. Presented Dec. 11, starting at 11 a.m. See Finals week folder for assignment details.

## Grading

All assignments add to 800 points. Blackboard standards for determining letter grades will be used.

The conventional method of rounding fractions will apply.

## Attendance

Students are allowed to be absent four times from this class without penalty. This is like getting paid sick leave in a real-world job. Like with paid sick leave, **a distinction will not be made between excused and unexcused absences. This includes medical and athletic absences. There is no need to email the instructor explaining reasons for being absent.** Beginning with a fifth absence, each absence will reduce a student's final grade by three percentage points. So, if a student has seven absences and ends the semester with 94 (A), the final course grade will be 85 (B) [that is,  $94 - (7-4) \times 3 = 94 - 3 \times 3 = 94 - 9 = 85$ ].

Note that in the grade book on Blackboard, the Attendance column says it's "out of 30." **This is not a grade; it's a tally of how many classes, out of 30, a student has missed.** The number in this column will not be averaged with the other numbers in the grade book.



## Late work, extra credit, grade concerns

Work submitted late will be given a grade of 0. In case of a Blackboard submission malfunction, students must email their assignments to the instructor before the due date/time.

**There is no extra credit in this class.**

Although grades are not negotiable, the instructor will give every consideration to any concerns a student has about an assignment grade, as long as the concerns are identified promptly. Questions or disputes about a particular grade need to be taken care of within a week of receiving that grade. The only grades that will be discussed at the end of the semester are for assignments due at the end of the semester.

## Email etiquette

I encourage you to communicate with me about the course face-to-face during office hours, or through e-mail. If you choose the latter, please be mindful of email etiquette. Compose a brief yet informative subject line. Use a greeting, such as "Hello, Dr. Bobkowski," at the beginning of your message. Write the body of your message using full sentences, proper capitalization and punctuation. Explain your question or concern as completely as possible. Sign your message using your full (first and last) name.

## Plagiarism and academic misconduct

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original, factual, and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards (e.g., fabrication, plagiarism), you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards of academic integrity, you will fail the course, and you may be expelled from the School of Journalism.

Here is the School's official policy statement:

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

In this course, the penalty for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification is a failing grade for the semester. Additional penalties can include expulsion from the School of Journalism. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.

The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as "knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge." The University defines fabrication and falsification as "unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise."

The KU University Council's Academic Misconduct Policy is part of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Click on the link above to review the policy and consequences for violations.

## Students with Disabilities or Special Needs

Student Access Services, part of the Academic Achievement & Access Center, works with all units at the University to insure that every student has an equal opportunity to succeed at KU. The mission of Student Access Services is to facilitate appropriate resources, services and auxiliary aids to allow each qualified student with a disability to equitably access educational, social, and career opportunities at the University of Kansas. We are here to help you whether your disability is physical, medical, sensory, psychological, or related to attention or learning. Students who have special needs may require special accommodations to meet course requirements. Requests for accommodations should be made in advance. To find out more information, please contact [Student Access Services \(http://www.disability.ku.edu/\)](http://www.disability.ku.edu/) to acquire the proper documentation.

Student Access Services, 1450 Jayhawk Boulevard, Strong Hall Room 22  
Phone: 785-864-4064, Email: [achieve@ku.edu](mailto:achieve@ku.edu)

## Academic Achievement and Access Center

This center offers many services and programs to assist students in their academic success and to enhance their collegiate experience at KU. Choose from learning strategy consultations, group workshops or general or course-specific academic assistance, by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Feel free to talk with us and ask for information or direction about academic and personal issues.

## Weapons policy

Individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns **are solely responsible to do so in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#)**. Safety measures outlined in the KU weapons policy specify that a concealed handgun:

- Must be under the constant control of the carrier.
- Must be out of view, concealed either on the body of the carrier, or backpack, purse, or bag that remains under the carrier's custody and control.
- Must be in a holster that covers the trigger area and secures any external hammer in an un-cocked position
- Must have the safety on, and have no round in the chamber.

This class will require students to visit areas where a variety of self-defense weapons may be legally restricted. Students will also be expected to leave belongings such as backpacks and purses away and unattended for prolonged periods. Students who choose to carry a concealed handgun or other means of self-defense should plan accordingly prior to beginning this class. The university does not provide appropriate secured storage for concealed handguns or any other weapons.

Individuals who violate the KU weapons policy may face disciplinary action under the appropriate university code of conduct, including dismissal from the course.