

Fall 2017 Jour 550 Digital Media/Reporting Syllabus

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<http://www.jourtech.dept.ku.edu/tutorials/tutorial-pages/>

Welcome to this immersive reporting course. Here you'll get instruction and experience to prepare you for professional practice as an intern or entry level news worker. You will develop enterprise coverage and spot news stories for Kansan.com (and its print editions) using digital storytelling tools including video, photos, graphics and social media. Through readings and other assignments, we will also explore the latest trends and practices impacting news workers.

Course Goals:

- Strengthen your newsgathering, writing, multimedia storytelling, data and audience-engagement skills.
- Learn how to generate, pitch and develop high quality content ideas that are meaningful to a diverse student audience.
- Practice the professional and personal skills required to succeed as a reporter for a news organization. These include ethical decision-making, good communication, collaboration, time management, punctuality, reliability, initiative, persistence and good humor.

Course Deliverables and Expectations: (Syllabus elements and schedule are subject to change based on professor's determination of class needs.)

This course will require a high level of commitment of your time and focus. In addition to class time, you will be expected to work 6-9 hours per week developing stories and other content. Some weeks you may need to invest more time, some less, depending on what you're working on. At mid semester I will meet with you to give you formal feedback on how you're doing in the class. As in a newsroom, everything you do will not be given a grade but you will given a clear sense of how I think you're doing along the way and why.

Your grade in the class will be determined by how well you do on the following assignments:

- **Three enterprise pieces. Worth up to 10 points each/30 points total**
- **Three quick turn or spot pieces off the news. Worth up to 10 points each/30 points total**
- **Nine story pitches/budget lines for the spot and enterprise pieces. Worth up to 3 points each/ 24 points total**
- **One 30-minute team presentation on an aspect of digital newsgathering or writing. Worth up to 10 points total**

- **Class participation/professionalism. Worth up to 6 points total**

Final Grades will be based on a 100-point scale:

Grade Scale:

A = 93.34%-100%
A- = 90.0%-93.33%
B+ = 86.67%-89.99%
B = 83.34%-86.66%
B- = 80.0%-83.33%
C+ = 76.67%-79.99%
C = 73.34%-76.66%
C- = 70.0%-73.33%
D+ = 66.67%-69.99%
D = 63.34%-66.66%
D- = 60.0%-63.33%
F = 59.99% and below

-You will be evaluated based on the quality of your work which includes idea generation and pre-reporting for pitching ideas, reporting, writing and developing multi-media and online components. I will provide story grading sheets for specific quality goals. Participation includes coming prepared to class, sharing insights and asking questions. Professionalism includes completing assignments on deadline, ethical behavior, and people skills in dealing you're your editors, classmates, sources and the public.

The strength of our class time depends on what we make it. In that spirit, we'll use the time to talk constructively about the work you're doing, want to do and other people's work. Here's how.

On most Mondays, we'll discuss a topic or skill in reporting, an assigned reading, homework assignment, current events or hear from a guest speaker.

On most Wednesdays, you will pitch your story ideas and/or provide updates on the progress you're making on the stories that are in the works. This story budget meeting is designed to be a discussion of the work you're producing. Budget lines—even for stories you're in the middle of reporting—should be updated every week and posted on the class Google doc no later than 9 a.m. before class. As noted above, you will be graded on the quality of your budget lines.

A few more words about process: Topics for all story and presentation assignments must be cleared in advance with me. If the focus of story needs to change based on what you find out, you should update/discuss with me your new angle or approach.

I will provide instruction for assignments in class. Stories should be emailed to me along with links to visual elements such as photos, graphics, videos, lists, etc. If you don't already have a portfolio page to house those elements create one so you're not sending large files to me in emails. You will be expected to use social media to inform your reporting and promote your stories.

I will personally edit most, if not all, of your enterprise and ask you to fill holes and rewrite before we submit to the Kansan editors who may do further edits. News editors may be first edits on your quick turn stories depending on how soon they should be posted online. For example, when you cover a spot news event, that should be sent to a news editor posted as quickly as possible, no later than an hour or two after the happening.

For your midterm and your final evaluations, you will be required to provide me with web links to your published stories and other content.

-Attendance: You will be allowed a total of one excused absence from our scheduled classes. If you know you are going to be absent, please let me know ahead of time. However, ALL WORK – including budget lines--MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME to earn full points. Should you miss a class in which an assignment was explained, find a classmate you can get the information from.

*****For every additional class you miss, unless it is a documented medical or family emergency, you will lose three points from your final grade.** It is NOT OKAY to schedule an interview during class or other established meeting times. Use your absences for illness, deaths and emergencies.

-Keeping up with the news: I expect each of you to read on a regular basis the web and print editions of the University Daily Kansan and the Lawrence Journal-World. I would also encourage you to read the New York Times, web or print. You should make frequent use of the AP Stylebook, the Kansan Policy Guide and a dictionary.

Ethical Practices Policy:

As reporters, you are expected to follow Kansan policies and adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Society of Professional Journalists. For example, you should

--Inform interview sources that you are a student reporter working on a story for The Kansan.

--Avoid using as sources family, friends or close acquaintances and avoid writing about issues or entities with which you have a personal connection and thus a conflict of interest.

--Never include in a story the work of others without attribution and credit for their contributions.

--Never fabricate facts, sources or quotes.

--Always clearly attribute the source of information presented in your stories. Provide links to source material or added-value information for your audience.

Finally, You CAN Do This! You are in this class to learn, and hone your skills as a reporter. If you listen, work hard, and learn from your mistakes, you will do well. You will be amazed at how much easier complex stories are to research and write at the end of the semester compared with how difficult they may have seemed at the beginning. Your professor begins the semester with admiration for your willingness to work hard in a course known to be difficult, and brave enough to share your work as fledgling reporters with thousands of readers. As far as I'm concerned, you are all beginning the semester as A students

University and School Policies:

School Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication/Falsification

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

Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor(s) of this course.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Concealed Weapons

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.

Lab classes

This course takes place in spaces that will require students to leave belongings such as backpacks and purses away and unattended for the duration of class time. Students who choose to carry a concealed handgun in a purse, backpack, or bag must review and plan each day accordingly, and are responsible for making alternate arrangements as necessary. The university does not provide appropriate secured storage for concealed handguns.

Individuals who violate the KU weapons policy may be asked to leave campus with the weapon and may face disciplinary action under the appropriate university code of conduct.

Inclement Weather and Special Needs - In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW). The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (v/tty), coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.