Washington University – University College  
Communications & Journalism  
Course: U48 Comm 378  
Title: Communications Technology and New Media: How professionals write, edit and post multi-media to blogs  
Fall 2014  
Instructor: David Hunn, 314-238-4386, dhunn@post-dispatch.com  
Office hours: None set. Call and leave a message or send an email and I will return your message within 24 hours during the week and as soon as possible on the weekend.

Objectives: This course covers the principles and practice of modern multimedia or “convergence” journalism. It will teach you how to identify news, write short news stories, shoot photos and video, record audio clips, find electronic documents – and imbed them all into blog posts. If successful, you will finish the course with the skills essential to working in a modern newsroom or starting your own blog.

Requirements: Command of written English. Comfort with and access to word-processing programs, email, and the internet. A camera (such as one on a smart phone) that can shoot simple video and photos and upload them to the web. An audio recorder that can transfer files to your computer. (Most smart phones can.) Participation in discussions. Attention to assignment and project due dates. (Late assignments may not be accepted.)

Grading:  
10% - Participation  
10% - Midterm Exam  
40% - Weekly assignments  
20% - Final Project  
20% - Final Exam

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to do their own work, write their own stories, and turn in their own assignments. Plagiarism, fabrication, intellectual theft and cheating (or helping someone else plagiarize, fabricate, steal or cheat) will require repeating the assignment. A second incident will also lead to the loss of a letter grade. Repeat offenders will fail the course.

Disability Services: The university is committed to accommodating students with documented disabilities. Contact the Disability Resource Center: 314-935-4062 or http://disability.wustl.edu.

Textbooks:  
• The Associated Press Style Book  
• The Elements of Journalism - Bill Kovach & Tom Rosenstiel  
• Journalism Next - Mark Briggs

Course Outline: (Readings are discussed in each class; assignments are started in class and due before the next class.)

   A survey of a variety of blog posts.  
   Discussion: Why news is news.  
   Assignment: Identify and describe news events in your life. DUE: Aug. 31

3. Week of Sept. 8: Principles of a well-made photograph. Readings: *Journalism Next*, Chapter 6, “Visual storytelling with photographs.” Analyze the qualities of several photographs, and identify what makes them effective. Discussion: Why is a great photograph great? Assignment: Make several photographs, and share them with the class. DUE: Sept. 14

4. Week of Sept. 15: Principles of effective audio and video recording. Readings: *Journalism Next*, Chapter 7, “Making audio journalism ‘visible,’ ” and Chapter 8, “Telling stories with video.” Watch several short news videos, listen to several short audio clips, and identify what makes them effective. Discussion: Why include video or audio clips? Assignment: Shoot your own video and audio, edit it for length, and share it with the class. (length, 2-3 minutes) DUE: Sept. 21


   Discussion: How is a news story written? What is its structure?
   Assignment: First outline, then write three news stories (or blog posts) on your beat (length, 300 words each). DUE: Nov. 2

   Discussion: Why is editing so important?
   Assignment: Edit your three news stories (or blog posts). DUE: Nov. 9

   Discussion: Can one be a journalist, but not practice journalism of verification?
   Assignment: Read one of several accounts of journalists caught cheating. Identify key mistakes. DUE: Nov. 16

   Discussion: How are your projects coming? Any questions?
   Assignment: Finish blog project.

14. Week of Nov. 24: Complete blog project due. Six posts, minimum, each of at least 250 words (tightly edited), each with at least one form of multimedia imbedded. Share with class.
   Blog project DUE Nov. 30


TECHNICAL GUIDELINES:

**Notice on Java Updates and Supported Browsers**
- Blackboard works best in Mozilla Firefox. Some Blackboard features will not work well in Chrome or Internet Explorer. You can visit [https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_12_and_SP_13/Student/040_Browser_Support_for_SP_13](https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_12_and_SP_13/Student/040_Browser_Support_for_SP_13) and click on “Browser Support” for more detailed information on which browser works best for Blackboard, based upon your computer’s operating system.
- Be sure you have downloaded the most recent version of Java. This is a free software program that helps you to be able to access Blackboard. You can check which version of Java you currently have and update it (if necessary) by visiting [www.java.com](http://www.java.com).

**Technical Support**
This is a fully online, technology-based course. Be ready to contact technical support in the event of difficulties. Send an email to blackboardhelp@wustl.edu with any questions/problems concerning Blackboard. For additional Blackboard resources and assistance, visit the Blackboard Answers &Support page on the University College Website.
Netiquette: Statement on Internet Communication.

- Don’t write it online if you wouldn’t say it in a classroom, face-to-face. What you write is a permanent record and can be retrieved easily. Use courtesy and common sense in all your electronic communications.
- Write in complete sentences and check spelling before you post anything in class.
- DON’T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. This is hard to read and is considered "shouting."
- Respect the opinions of others and be sensitive to the diverse nature of people in the class. Keep in mind that although you cannot "see" your classmates, you can show respect for individual differences. Diversity issues may include the following and others: race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, marital status, urban vs. rural dwellers, etc.
- Don’t use profanity. (This includes writing in punctuation. For example, “##%$#!” is considered profanity and is not permitted.) Also, language expressed in inappropriate acronyms is not acceptable.

Expectations for Student Attendance

You are expected to have an active presence within Blackboard (our online classroom) and that is one of the ways in which I will monitor your attendance in the course. I am able to see when last you logged into Blackboard and how much time you’ve spent in various areas of the classroom. The class is not self-paced because we have specific due dates for all assignments, but you will work on the course at your own convenience within those parameters. Lack of participation in discussions or not answering email messages sent to you will be considered lack of attendance and will result in a loss of points.

General Tips for Success in the Online Classroom:

The following is a list of helpful information that represents habits of students who have succeeded in previous online courses.

1. **GET STARTED:** Remember that this online course begins on day one of the semester. Log in early during the first week to print the syllabus, become oriented to the online classroom, and get to know your professor and classmates. Waiting until the end of the first week to get started may derail your efforts to succeed before you know it.
2. **STAY ORGANIZED.** Bookmark our course websites (Blackboard, Online Dictionary, other websites indicated by professor etc.) Create a special binder or folder to organize any printed materials. Study time will be easier and more fruitful if you are organized and up to date.
3. **INTERACT WITH YOUR CLASSMATES.** Students who study in small groups or pairs tend to be more successful. You can help each other to understand difficult points in the unit simply by participating regularly in the Discussion Forums.
4. **SHOW UP & ASK QUESTIONS.** Visit me in office hours occasionally for extra discussion as needed. Make an appointment and we can talk in real time via Skype or phone. You can also email me any questions that arise or post them in the “Questions?” discussion forum.
5. **DO THE READING.** The assigned reading is a valuable part of the course. Students who consistently stay up to date on the reading tend to receive higher grades than those who do not. In this class, the reading will consist of.... which will prepare you to participate in the classroom discussion forums.
6. **STUDY “OFFLINE” SOMETIMES.** Although this is an online course, you need not do all of your studying online. Spend time studying away from the computer by taking notes on the readings.
7. **DON’T PROCRASTINATE.** Procrastination will ruin your experience in the class in several ways. Not only does it prevent you from learning what you are here to learn, but it will also cause you to lose a lot of points. Refer to the list of assignment due dates in this syllabus and follow the steps outlined in the study guide in order to better understand how to pace yourself appropriately.

8. **HANG IN THERE.** If this is your first online class, the experience may challenge you, but as long as you keep up with the reading and follow your professor’s instructions, you will develop an understanding of the rhythm of the course after the first unit. See me for help as needed; I am your resource and want to see you succeed.

**Guidelines for Discussion Forum Participation**
1. Write the name of the person to whom your message is addressed in the **subject line**. Changing the subject line is the number one way to make sure the intended recipient notices your post.
2. **Sign your name** at the bottom of your messages. Writing your name at the end of each message helps to clarify the author and helps your classmates remember who you are.
3. Before responding to a particular discussion topic, be sure to **complete the reading assignment** of the corresponding unit. Discussion topics are tied to the readings. Take your time and write meaningful discussion forum postings. Grammar, spelling, accents, vocabulary, and sentence structure count as well. Unedited posts do not receive full points.
4. Participate in each discussion over **several days** within the lesson and avoid waiting until the due date to get started. Each discussion requires several posts from you, including replies to classmates. Waiting until the last day to participate minimizes the opportunity to interact with your classmates and me and makes discussion participation much less meaningful for you. It will also result in a loss of points.
5. Finally, the discussion forums are meant to be **engaging**. Check in often to communicate with your classmates and me.