Washington University – University College
Communications & Journalism
Course: U49 Comm 378.01
Title: Communications Technology and New Media: How professionals write, edit and post multi-media to blogs
Fall 2016

Instructor: Lisa Brown 314-322-5185, lisarbrown@wustl.edu
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 embed 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 smartphone) 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.)

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

Grading:
50% - Weekly Discussion Forum Assignments and Participation
10% - Midterm Exam
15% - Final Project
15% - Final Exam
10% - Submitted Assignments

Course Outline:
1. Week of Aug. 29: Introduction DUE 8/31
   Discussion: Why news is news. Assignment: Identify and describe news events in your life. DUE 9/2
Discussion: What is journalism for? Assignment: Write a news story (300-400 words) DUE 9/11

Discussion: Why is a great photograph great? Assignment: Make several photographs, and share them with the class. DUE 9/16

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 9/23

5. Week of Sept. 26: Principles of blogging. Readings: Journalism Next, Chapter 1, “We are all Web workers now.” Scour the Web for blog posts; Analyze their worth and interest. DUE 9/28
2. Identify blog topic. DUE 9/30


1. Discussion: What are news “beats”? And what might they be in your life? DUE 10/12
2. Pick a news story and first blog attempt DUE 10/14

FALL BREAK Oct. 17-18

8. Week of Oct. 19: How to gather sources. Readings: Journalism Next, Chapter 3, “Crowdpowered collaboration.” Dissect several news stories to identify information sources, and list them by name, title and valuable information. DUE 10/20
Discussion: What is a source? Where do you find one? Assignment: Pick your beat, and identify specific sources – with name, contact information and the information you expect they can provide. Due 10/21; Apply readings to blog DUE 10/21
Discussion: Identify basic questions and interview tactics. Assignment: Interview sources. Transcribe the interviews (length, 300-500 words each). DUE 10/26; Transcribe interview, DUE 10/28

10. Week of Oct. 31: How to write a news story. Readings: Journalism Next, Chapter 4, “Going mobile.”
Discussion: How is a news story written? What is its structure? Assignment: First blog post, DUE 11/2; Trim and post edited version, DUE 11/4; Wrote Twitter tease DUE 11/4

11. Week of Nov. 7: How to edit a news story for brevity, accuracy and form.
Discussion: Two big ideas to watch for when editing, and edit last week’s post.
DUE 11/9; Create Wordpress account, DUE 11/11

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 11/16; Journalism and verification, DUE 11/18.

Discussion: How are your projects coming? Any questions?

14. Week of Nov. 28: 3 Blog posts DUE 11/30

Complete blog project due. Six posts, minimum, each of at least 250 words (tightly edited), each with at least one form of multimedia embedded. Share with class. Blog project DUE 11:59 p.m., Dec. 4

15. Week of Dec. 5: Final Exam – Principles and Practice of Convergence Journalism. LAST DAY OF CLASS: 12/9;

FINAL ESSAY DUE 12/11

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_14/Instructor/015_Browser_Support 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.

Technical Support
This is a fully online, technology-based course. Because computers are not perfect, plan on having technical issues at least once during the term. While this can cause some incredibly frustrating moments, the overall benefits of the technology do outweigh any issues that may arise. Just be ready to contact technical support in the event of difficulties. Send an email to student.technology@wustl.edu or call 314-935-8200 with any questions/problems concerning Blackboard. (This is technical support for any problems you experience within the Blackboard classroom only, not other external software). For additional Blackboard resources, visit the Blackboard Help Page (https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student).

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 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.

Statement Regarding Academic Honesty:

Students are bound by the University College policy on academic integrity in all aspects of this course. All references to ideas and texts other than the students’ own must be so indicated through appropriate footnotes, whether the source is a book, an online site, the professor, etc. All students are responsible for following the rules outlined in the document regarding the university academic integrity policy: http://ucollege.wustl.edu/faculty/academic_integrity

All students are expected to abide by the citation and attribution techniques explained here: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/

Academic Support:

All University College students are encouraged to take advantage of the following Academic Support services on campus:

- **Cornerstone:** Cornerstone provides access to academic peer mentoring, assists students with essential study and test-taking skills, and offers disability resources
to students in need. In addition, Cornerstone connects first-generation college students to leadership programs and offers academic, research and career opportunities. Visit http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/ for more information.

- **Writing Center**: The Writing Center staff members are writers helping writers through the process of revision. They are undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty members who love to write and to help others clarify their thoughts and ideas. The Writing Center and The Speaking Studio at Washington University in St. Louis provide free, one-on-one tutoring to all WUSTL students for any writing or public speaking project. Students interested in using the Writing Center should call in advance to make an appointment. Visit http://writingcenter.wustl.edu/ for more information.

- **Arts & Sciences Computing**: Arts & Sciences Computing operates two labs that are open to students, faculty, and staff. Visit http://computing.artsci.wustl.edu/labs for more information.

- **Library**: Washington University Libraries boast an impressive array of services, including course reserves, interlibrary loan, reserved study spaces, the Arc Computing Lab, and so much more. Visit http://library.wustl.edu/ for more information.

**Student Accommodations**

Washington University is committed to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) assists students with disabilities by providing services and arranging for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and equal academic opportunities. Students wishing to request services or accommodations must register and provide appropriate documentation to the DRC at cornerstone.wustl.edu. The DRC serves as a resource and advisor to students with disabilities and welcomes opportunities to consult with students, families, faculty, and staff. This online course has been designed with accessibility in mind. Be sure to visit Blackboard’s accessibility statement at: http://www.blackboard.com/platforms/learn/resources/accessibility.aspx