J-GRAD 902 – MULTIPLATFORM JOURNALISM

Spring Semester 2013
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Credit hours: 3
Time: Asynchronous
Office hours: By appointment

COURSE READINGS

Books (in the order they are assigned)


Reports and articles listed below in the weeks during which they should be read.
**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This class is designed to further develop students’ abilities to use journalistic techniques and skills to inform and engage audiences using mobile media to publish to multiple sites and platforms. Students will use written, audio and visual communication to showcase their research, to express their ideas and to create and lead online conversations. Students will study and research digital journalism and evaluate its impact on today’s constantly changing flow of information. The course will emphasize interactive digital discussions via mobile devices. You may complete the class entirely on mobile devices, if you choose. This is an asynchronous distance course.

**COURSE COMPETENCIES**

This course addresses the following competencies:

- Thinking critically and independently
- Evaluating research and online news, reports, information and conversations for fairness, accuracy and relevance
- Writing clearly and correctly in forms appropriate for the publishing platform
- Publishing multimedia formats appropriate for the platform

After completing the course, students will be able to

- DEMONSTRATE familiarity with finding and evaluating online research from individuals, companies and institutions, applying concepts of fairness, accuracy news worthiness and relevance
- PUBLISH text, audio and video to the multiple sites and platforms
- PRESENT a professional talk about an aspect of digital publishing using the tools of the relevant platforms.
- KNOW what makes an effective mobile site or application and how effective mobile communication differs from communication on other platforms
- EVALUATE the pros and cons of a mobile website vs. an application, and discuss the audiences the mobile site or app intends to reach
- IDENTIFY and EVALUATE characteristics of mobile business models.

**ACEJMC COMPETENCIES:** J-GRAD 902 meets the following competencies set forth by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications:

- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the journalism profession, audience and purposes students serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Conduct research and gather information for presentation on the Web.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

**READINGS**: according to the syllabus and as assigned.

**WEEKLY DISCUSSION OF THE READINGS**: (40 percent of your final grade) From your course schedule you can see which readings are due that week. Readings, and their associated Blackboard discussion will be due the following Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. CST. Everyone is responsible for reading all of the assigned material each week, and each of you also will be assigned a discussion to lead on some of the reading material. Unless otherwise stated, you must start a discussion by 8 a.m. Central Time Friday of the week it is assigned. Then you must contribute three more times—responding to your classmates’ answers, refining your own and exploring and integrating the issues—before midnight CST the following Tuesday. My advice: Log in every day, even for a few minutes, to add to the discussion. This will guarantee that you will be part of the conversation. This is a graduate-level course, so the questions will require you to analyze and evaluate what you are reading. You are not simply to repeat what you have read. (See **GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE DISCUSSIONS, GRADING RUBRIC FOR ONLINE DISCUSSIONS** and **GRADING RUBRIC FOR RESPONDING TO ONLINE POSTS** below.) Your contributions to the discussion are worth a total of 45 percent of your final grade.

**MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION**: (10 percent of your final grade) Create a 2-3 minute multimedia presentation in which you explain your research topic. Also create a multimedia presentation for your final project.

**FINAL PROJECT**: (50 percent of your final grade) Throughout the semester, study a social networking site and its mobile app, a business’s mobile site and app and a news organization’s mobile site and app. Compare and contrast how each use their mobile site and/or app and how they differ from the online site. Compare and contrast the amount and quality of information on the mobile site, the app and the online site. Compare and contrast the presence and quality of the discussion. The following questions are guides: How does the app differ from the organization’s other media; who is the intended audience; is the user interface effective; what is the business model; what does the mobile site or app need to do in the next two years to be more successful and how should it accomplish that? Additionally, for all of the sites you study, compare and
contrast effectiveness in informing and engaging the intended audience. Your report should include mobile video or screencast video of you discussing your sites with Power Point or Keynote slides stating your main points. You may also do this with Prezi.com and video that you upload to YouTube. Upload your multimedia report to a site of your choosing that the rest of the class can access on a mobile device. Discuss your project and others on a Blackboard discussion group, give feedback about your classmates’ projects, and take the feedback you have been given to modify and revise your project. Then explain what you changed and why.

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**COURSE PROCEDURES**

This course is an asynchronous distance course, which means that we—you, the students, and I, the instructor—will be engaged in “anytime-anyplace” learning. As the instructor, I will no longer be the “sage on the stage,” as some have put it, but rather the “guide on the side.” As the students in the class, you are encouraged—and expected—to take an active part in your learning. You will learn not only from the readings and from me but also from one another. Instead of meeting in a traditional classroom at a specific time, we will use Blackboard, a course management system, to communicate, access and complete assignments, as well as interact with one another.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.** We will communicate with one another primarily through Blackboard. All you need is a computer with high-speed Internet access.

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**IMPORTANT POLICIES**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an F for that assignment. Repeat offenders will fail the course and could be expelled from the university. Refer to the current Undergraduate Bulletin for details. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication and falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, helping or attempting to help another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, misrepresenting (of illness or other emergency) to avoid academic work, etc.

**DEADLINES**

Deadlines are important. Discussion boards will be shut down after their deadline. You will receive written instructions for each assignment with clearly stated deadlines. Late assignments will not be accepted and will result in an F. Likewise, deadlines for posting responses to other students’ postings are absolute. Late responses will not count toward your participation grade. Each assignment is due by 11:59 p.m. CST on the due date listed in the syllabus. For those of you who take this course in different time zones, please take the time difference into account. It is important that I have access to all of your assignments by the time stated above.
ASSIGNMENTS
Assignments with poor grammar and/or spelling will be downgraded. Assignments are graded on organization, clarity of issues/arguments, content, as well as on grammar, spelling and punctuation. You are expected to turn in all assignments electronically via Blackboard unless otherwise instructed. Assignments that are submitted via email to the instructor will not be accepted.