

Loyola University Chicago

Spring 2017

Reporting Basics II — COMM 208-202

Thursday, 7 - 9:30 p.m.

School of Communications, Room 015

Instructor: Kalyn Belsha

Email: kbelsha@luc.edu

Phone: 631-833-4326 (cell)

Office Hours: Thursday from 5:45 – 6:45 p.m. in Lewis Towers 900
(or by appointment)

Course description: In this course, you'll learn the fundamentals of basic technology for reporting and telling stories. You will learn to apply news judgment to audio, video, and other digital tools to produce well-planned, well-written, and well-edited stories. You'll also learn how to use technology to brand yourself and your content as a credible source of journalism. By the end of this course, you'll get a taste of different mediums and technology to help you choose your path within journalism.

Course materials:

- 2014 or later Associated Press Stylebook (print copy or app)
- External hard drive/flash drive (minimum 4 GB)
- Course readings/viewings will be available online

For photo, audio and video assignments you may use your own equipment (including the recorder or camera on your cell phone/tablet) or borrow equipment from Loyola. Audio recorders and digital video cameras for this course can be checked out from the Owl Lab in SOC 004. Technology coordinator Andi Pacheco can be reached at apacheco@luc.edu or x58830. Some tools may be checked out through Loyola's [equipment loan program](#). A list of software available in the digital media labs is available [here](#).

Though some of these technologies may be new to you, it is up to you to troubleshoot as best you can if you are having problems. If you require additional assistance using any equipment or software, you can contact me, visit/contact the Owl Lab or visit/contact Loyola's [Digital Media Services](#).

Course policies:

Attendance: Absences may be excused due to emergencies, serious illness/injury, a religious observation or because you will be attending an event as a representative of Loyola (athletics, debate, model government).

Please make every effort to notify me at least 24 hours in advance of your absence. To be excused, you must provide documentation explaining your absence by your first day back in class. (Acceptable documentation depends on the circumstance. Examples include: note from doctor or nurse, receipt of medicine you purchased, obituary, copy of memorial program, etc.) If your excuse is valid, you may make up whatever you missed. Unexcused lateness or absences will result in a lower class participation grade, in addition to zeros on missed in-class assignments.

Deadlines: In this class, you will be treated like a working journalist. Deadlines are extremely important. Late assignments will receive point deductions.

- Up to one hour late = grace period
- Every 12 hours an assignment is late = 5 points off

Style: We'll be following AP style in this course. Errors in style, grammar, spelling and facts will result in point deductions.

Academic integrity: You cannot copy someone else's writing, audio, video or visuals from the Internet or any other source without proper attribution. Any use of another journalist's work should be limited and clearly warranted in your story. At all times possible, a link to the original work should be provided.

Make sure to consult with me and your other professor(s) before attempting to submit work with similar or overlapping content. It may be permissible to cover a similar topic for more than one course if: 1) the stories are in different formats (such as audio and print), and 2) the professors know about and approve of the arrangement.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Committing plagiarism results in an automatic "F" for that assignment, though depending on the severity of the case it can also result in an "F" for the course. All instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the journalism section head and the dean of the School of Communications. Cheating will result in similar low grades. In journalism, you cannot invent quotes, facts or other material.

Special needs: If you have a special circumstance that may impact your coursework and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me as soon as you can so arrangements can be made with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). I will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course. It is your responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet your own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including

eligibility for services, can be found on the [SSWD website](#).

Email: I try my best to respond to questions via email as quickly as I can, but please keep in mind I am a working journalist with a full-time job (and deadlines of my own!) Please allow up to 24 hours for a response, especially on weekdays. If it's an emergency, you may call my cell phone (number listed at top of syllabus).

Professionalism: For this course you'll likely be using your laptop, phone or tablet to do research, complete in-class assignments and take notes. Using technology for purposes unrelated to class will result in a lower class participation grade.

Publishing: Your assignments will be published on your website, YouTube/Vimeo, SoundCloud and Loyola's Hub Bub website. Make sure your sources are aware of this.

To receive the highest score, your posted work will include an SEO headline, hyperlinks where appropriate, and a photo or video with credits and captions. You are expected to follow AP Style and standards rules of grammar/spelling/punctuation.

Class participation: Contributing to class discussions, completing in-class assignments and asking questions of guest speakers all factor into your class participation grade.

The grading scale for class participation is as follows:

A (100): Student often contributes to class discussion, provides meaningful insight and demonstrates knowledge from readings.

B (86): Student often contributes to class discussion and provides meaningful insight.

C (76): Student occasionally participates in class discussion.

D (66): Student only participates when called on.

F (0): No class participation.

In-class presentations: Each week, one or two students will lead a **15- to 20-minute discussion** at the start of class about a timely topic related to journalism and technology or multimedia reporting. You are expected to find and email relevant materials that support your discussion at least **three days in advance (by Monday at 7 p.m.)** to your classmates and I. The supplemental materials may be articles, studies, podcasts, videos, data visualizations, a social media campaign, etc.

In class, you'll present a summary of your research, demonstrate why you think the topic is relevant to our course and pose **at least five questions** to your classmates to encourage discussion. Articles about controversies, innovations and ethical questions often make for good discussions. You may use a PowerPoint presentation as a visual aid, or present your

work orally. You may also play short clips of audio or video or show an image as an aid. This presentation counts as **10 percent of your overall grade**.

Examples of sources to consult include, but are not limited to: [Poynter](#), [Wired](#), [Nieman Journalism Lab](#), [the public editor's blog](#) at the New York Times, the [On the Media](#) radio program from WNYC, the Gimlet podcast [Reply All](#), [MediaShift](#) and the [Columbia Journalism Review](#).

Grading breakdown:

For each graded assignment, we'll tackle a new format, technology or reporting skill. Throughout the course you'll receive feedback aimed at helping you to improve.

In-class presentation	10 percent
Class participation & attendance	15 percent
Audio project	15 percent
Video project	15 percent
Assignments (6)	15 percent
Final project	30 percent

Grading scale:

95-100	A	90-94	A-
87-89	B+	83-86	B
80-82	B-	77-79	C+
73-76	C	70-72	C-
67-69	D+	65-66	D
< 65	F		

*Note: I do not calculate grades until the end of the semester when all projects have been completed. It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades along the way.

Grade disputes: If you do not agree with your grade, you may write one to two paragraphs explaining why and set up a time to discuss the matter during my office hours or on the phone. I expect you to communicate grade disputes with me within 48 hours of receiving your graded assignment.

Class schedule

Note: I'll try my best to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes due to guest speaker availability, special circumstances, etc.

****For weekly reading assignments and details about your upcoming assignments and projects be sure to check Sakai >> Resources >> Week of your class****

Week 1 — Jan. 19

In class: Introductions, review syllabus, skills survey, sample in-class presentation. Covering beats. AP Style and newswriting review.

Homework: Complete newswriting exercise, print and bring to class on Jan. 26 for review. Beat topic proposal due to me via email by Wednesday, Jan 25 at 7 p.m. (one day before next week's class).

Week 2 — Jan. 26

In class: Content management system basics: Uploading photos and embedding videos/social media. Online journalism ethics: Source attribution, hyperlinks and using photos from the web.

Homework: Assignment #1 history of an issue due by start of class, Feb. 2. Post on your website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

Week 3 — Feb. 2

In class: Photo techniques. Writing captions. Editing in Photoshop. Photo ethics.

Homework: Assignment #2 photo essay due by start of class, Feb. 16. Post on your website and email me a word document (include your name, a link to the assignment and the caption text. No need to paste the photos into the word doc).

Refine blog template, title and "about" section by start of class, Feb. 9.

Week 4 — Feb. 9

In class: Introduction to finding and recording audio stories. Interviewing for audio.

Homework: Assignment #3 Q&A due by start of class, Feb. 23. Post on website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

Pitch for audio project due by Wednesday, Feb. 15 at 7 p.m. (one day before next week's class). Please write your proposal in a word document and email to me.

Week 5 — Feb. 16

In class: Guest speaker, writing for audio.

Homework: Work on audio project due by March 9 at 7 p.m.

Week 6 — Feb. 23

In class: Audio editing.

Homework: Work on audio project due by March 9 at 7 p.m.

Week 7 — March 2

In class: Using technology to report on daily deadline. Social media for journalists. Work on Assignment #4 using Storify.

Homework: Work on audio project due by March 9 at 7 p.m. Assignment #4 Storify due by start of class, March 16. Email me a link to your finished product.

Week 8 — March 9 — Spring Break, no class

Audio project due by 7 p.m. Please email me a link to the finished product posted on your website.

Week 9 — March 16

In class: Finding video stories. Interviewing for video. In-class exercise: Person-on-the-street interview.

Homework: Pitch for video project due by Wednesday, March 22 at 7 p.m. (one day before next week's class). Please write your proposal in a word document and email to me.

Week 10 — March 23

In class: Shooting video and writing video scripts. Guest speaker.

Homework: Work on video project due by April 13 at 7 p.m.

Week 11 — March 30

In class: Editing video

Homework: Work on video project due by April 13 at 7 p.m.

Week 12 — April 6

In class: Data journalism. Work on Assignment #5: Create a Google map using Excel and KML files.

Homework: Work on video project due by April 13 at 7 p.m. Complete Assignment #5 Google map by start of class, April 20. Embed the map on your website and email me a link.

Week 13 — April 13 — Easter Break, no class

Video project due today by 7 p.m. Embed the video on a post on your website and email me a link to the final product.

Week 14 — April 20

In class: Finding and analyzing documents on the web. Assignment #6: Annotate a document using DocumentCloud.

Homework: Work on final presentation and project

Week 15 — April 27 — Last day of class

In class: Present final projects (what you have so far)

FINALS WEEK — May 4 — Final projects are due by 9:30 p.m. (end of class time)