

Loyola University Chicago

Fall 2014

Technology for Journalists — COMM 208-202

Thursday, 4:15 - 6:45 p.m.

SOC 003 at 51 E. Pearson St.

Instructor: Kalyn Belsha

Email: kbelsha@luc.edu

Office Hours: Thursday, 6:45 – 7:45 p.m. in Lewis Towers 900 or by phone appointment

Course description:

This course is designed to teach the fundamentals of basic technology used by journalists to report events and tell stories. This course will cover blog writing, social media, photography, audio-video production and data visualization. By the end of the semester you should feel confident in using a variety of technologies to create well-written and well-produced stories across platforms and learn how to brand yourself and your content as a legitimate source of journalism. The overall goal is to gain exposure to different mediums and technologies so that you will be able to make sound decisions about the best way(s) to tell a story and what path you might like to pursue within journalism.

Course materials:

- Associated Press Stylebook (2011 or later, print edition or phone app is OK)
- Course readings/videos will be available online
- External hard drive/flash drive (4 GB or larger)
- Audio recorder, camera, video recorder (can borrow from Loyola or use your own)

Occasionally, there will be additional assigned readings, videos or audio stories related to current events or guest speakers, which I will send to you via email at least one week in advance.

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 (Kodak Zi8 and Zi12) for this course can be checked out from the Owl Lab in SOC 004. Checkouts are handled by Andi Pacheco (apacheco@luc.edu; 312-915-8830), the SOC's video and audio coordinator. 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](#).

Grading breakdown:

Seven blog assignments/social media	30 percent
In-class assignments/class participation	10 percent
Audio project	15 percent
Video project	15 percent
Final multimedia package	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		

*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.

Special Needs:

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work 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 course content and processes. 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](#).

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, etc).

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. Unexcused lateness or absences will result in a lower class participation grade.

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

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

Class decorum: For this course you'll likely be using your laptop/cell phone/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.

Email: I try my best to respond to questions via email as quickly as I can, but please allow up to 24 hours for a response, especially from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. on weekdays.

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

Class participation: Contributing to class discussions, presenting your work and asking questions of guest speakers all factor into your class participation grade.

The grading scale for class participation is as follows:

100: Student often contributes to class discussion, provides meaningful insight and demonstrates in-depth knowledge from readings.

86: Student often contributes to class discussion, provides some insight and demonstrates some knowledge from readings.

76: Student occasionally participates in class discussion, demonstrates little knowledge from readings.

69: Student only participates when called on, no insight from readings.

0: No class participation or insight from readings.

Presentations: Each week, one or two students will lead a **10-minute discussion** at the start of class about a news story related to technology in journalism that was published in the last two weeks. You are expected to email a link to the article(s) at least 48 hours in advance of your presentation to me and your classmates, present a summary of the article in class and bring **at least five questions** that you will ask your classmates to encourage discussion. Articles about controversies and ethical questions often make for good discussions. This presentation will factor into your class participation grade. Examples of sources to consult include, but are not limited to: [Poynter](#), [Wired](#), [Nieman Journalism Lab](#), [The Atlantic's tech page](#), [Media Equation columns](#) by David Carr at the New York Times, the [On the Media](#) podcast from WNYC, [PBS Mediashift](#) and the [Columbia Journalism Review](#).

Your blog: You'll be posting assignments to your blog throughout the course. Each assignment will tackle a new format or technology. You'll choose a topic based in Chicago at the beginning of this course and follow it throughout the semester.

To receive the highest score, posts will include an SEO headline, hyperlinks where appropriate, a photo or video embed and credits and captions for images. Blogs are expected to follow AP Style and standards rules of grammar/spelling/punctuation. You'll be expected to tweet multiple times per week (5-7 times) on your Twitter account about your work and news stories relevant to your beat.

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 or any other act of academic dishonesty will result, at the very least, in an "F" for the assignment. A more severe sanction may be imposed, including a grade of "F" for the course. All instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the journalism section head and to the office of the Dean of the School of Communication.

The School of Communication's full policy on academic integrity is available under this course's documents [on Sakai](#) (log in required to view the document directly from here).

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.*

Week 1 — Aug. 28

In class: Introductions, review syllabus, discuss expectations for your blog. Newswriting and AP Style review exercises.

Homework: Decide on a topic for your blog (topic must be based in Chicago). Email me a few sentences about what you plan to cover. See Sakai for examples from past students.

Week 2 — Sept. 4

In class: Set up blogs and Twitter accounts. How to use WordPress: Uploading photos and embedding videos/social media. Online journalism ethics: Source attribution, hyperlinks

and using photos from the web.

Homework: Write an “about me” section for your blog. Set up your complimentary Twitter account and follow at least 50 relevant accounts/sources for your beat. Post #1 due by start of class Sept. 18: History of an issue with at least one embed from a social media site.

Week 3 — Sept. 11

In class: Headline writing for the web and social media using SEO. Using social media in your reporting. How to use Storify.

Homework: Read [Storify's best uses](#) and [10 ways journalists can use Storify](#). Post #2 due by start of class Sept. 18: Using Storify to cover an event or issue on your beat. Begin using Twitter to accompany your blog.

Week 4 — Sept. 18

In class: Photography for mobile journalists, caption writing and photo editing/ethics.

Homework: Post #3 due by start of class Sept. 25: Photo slideshow with captions. Listening assignments will be emailed to you to coincide with a guest speaker for next week.

Week 5 — Sept. 25

In class: Interview best practices. Intro to finding and recording audio stories w/guest speaker.

Homework: Pitch me your audio story idea by start of class, Oct. 2. Work on Post #4: Q&A for your blog.

Week 6 — Oct. 2

In class: Writing and editing an audio story.

Homework: Post #4 due by start of class Oct. 9: Q&A with an expert with audio excerpt embedded. Work on your audio project.

Week 7 — Oct. 9

In class: Covering a story live at the scene using multiple platforms.

Homework: Your audio assignment is due by the start of class, Oct. 16. Post audio project, a photo and text to your blog and email me a source list. Post #5 due by start of class, Oct. 16: Live tweet an event for at least one hour and round up your posts using Storify/embed.

Week 8 — Oct. 16

In class: Listen to audio projects, part one. Mapping and intro to data reporting.

Homework: Post #6 due by start of class, Oct. 23: Google map.

Week 9 — Oct. 23

In class: Listen to audio projects, part two. Video recording and basic video editing.

Homework: Post #8 due by start of class Nov. 6: 400-word news story with <1:00 footage (incorporate about three shots from scene). Pitch me an idea for your video project by the start of class, Oct. 30.

Week 10 — Oct. 30

In class: Writing video scripts and more video editing.

Homework: Work on video project.

Week 11 — Nov. 6

In class: Document Cloud and introduction to Tableau.

Homework: Post #7 due by start of class Oct. 30: Annotating a document on your beat. Post video project with text to your blog by start of class, Nov. 13. Email me your source list.

Week 12 — Nov. 13

In class: Video project viewing, part one. Creating a multimedia package.

Homework: Assigned readings/viewings to coincide with guest speaker.

Week 13 — Nov. 20

In class: Video project viewing part two. Multimedia packages w/guest speaker.

Homework: Work on your final project

Week 14 — Nov. 27 — Thanksgiving break, no class

Week 15 — Dec. 4

In class: Presentation of final multimedia projects