

Loyola University Chicago

Spring 2016

Technology for Journalists — COMM 208-202

Monday, 7 - 9:30 p.m.

Corboy Law Center, Room 710

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

**Course description:**

This course is designed to teach the fundamentals of basic technology used by journalists to report events and tell stories. That includes writing on deadline, using social media and learning several tools of the trade.

By the end of the semester you should feel confident using a variety of technologies to create well-written and well-produced stories across platforms. The overall goal is to gain exposure to different mediums and technologies so that you will be able to make good 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 (recent print copy or app OK)
- Course readings/viewings will be available online
- External hard drive/flash drive
- 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. 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, 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. (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. I will occasionally check to verify that you have interviewed people you've listed as sources for your work.

*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](#).

*Email:* I try my best to respond to questions via email as quickly as I can, but I 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/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.

*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:

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.

*News presentations:* Each week, one or two students will lead a **15-minute discussion** at the start of class about a recent news story related to journalism and technology. You are expected to email any relevant links at least **three days in advance of your presentation (by Friday evening)** to your classmates and I.

In class, you'll present a summary, why you think it's relevant to our course 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 public editor's blog](#) at the New York Times, the [On the Media](#) radio program and podcast from WNYC, the Gimlet podcast [Reply All](#), [PBS Mediashift](#) and the [Columbia Journalism Review](#).

*Publishing your work:* You'll be posting assignments on your own website and on sites run by Loyola throughout the course. (I'll edit your work before it's posted to any Loyola websites.)

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.

*Grading breakdown:*

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

Attendance and class participation	15 percent
In-class and shorter take-home assignments*	25 percent
Audio assignment	20 percent
Video assignment	15 percent
Final project	25 percent

\*Note: The in-class and take-home assignments include six pieces of work: writing assignment (2/8), Q&A (2/22), social media assignment (2/29), document analysis (in class 2/29), data assignment (4/18) and data visualization (in class 4/18). This may change, depending on class need. I will let you know in advance if an assignment is added or subtracted from this grading category.

*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.

### **Week 1 — Jan. 25**

In class: Introductions, review syllabus. Sample in-class news presentation and discussion. Newswriting and AP Style review.

Homework: Newswriting and AP Style assignment (please print and bring to class to review on Feb. 1).

### **Week 2 — Feb. 1**

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

Homework: Writing assignment due by start of class, Feb. 8. Post on your website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

### **Week 3 — Feb. 8**

In class: Interview best practices. Intro to finding and recording audio stories.

Homework: Conduct Q&A and bring audio with you to class on Feb. 15.

### **Week 4 — Feb. 15**

In class: Writing and editing an audio story.

Homework: Q&A due by start of class Feb. 22. Post on website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

\*Pitch for audio story is due by start of class, Feb. 22.

Reading: <http://www.poynter.org/2011/the-best-of-storify/116025/>

Reading: <http://zombiejournalism.com/2010/10/10-ways-journalists-can-use-storify/>

### **Week 5 — Feb. 22**

In class: Using technology to report on daily deadline. Social media for journalists.

Homework: Reporting with social media assignment due by start of class, Feb. 29.

\*Work on audio assignment.

## **Week 6 — Feb. 29**

In class: Document analysis and technology.

Homework: Audio assignment due by start of class March 14. Post on website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

## **Week 7 — March 7 — SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS**

## **Week 8 — March 14**

In class: Audio project presentations. Finding video stories and shooting video.

Homework: Pitch for video story due by start of class, March 21.

\*Tape a video interview and bring to class on March 28.

## **Week 9 — March 21**

In class: Shooting video part two and writing video scripts.

Homework: Work on video project.

\*Video interview due by start of class March 28.

## **Week 10 — March 28**

In class: Editing video.

Homework: Work on video project due by start of class, April 4.

## **Week 11 — April 4**

In class: Present video projects. Intro to creating multimedia packages.

Homework: Work on final project.

## **Week 12 — April 11**

In class: Mapping and basic data analysis.

Homework: Data assignment due by start of class, April 18. Post on website and email me a word document (include your name, text, a link to the assignment).

\*Work on final project.

**Week 13 — April 18**

In class: Data visualization and basic data analysis part two.

Homework: Work on final project.

**Week 14 — April 25, LAST DAY OF CLASS**

In class: Wrap up and presentation of final projects