

Community Media (JMC:2500:0001)
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:45 p.m. W336 AJB

Instructor: Dr. Brian Ekdale, E324 Adler Journalism Building, brian-ekdale@uiowa.edu

Course Objectives: The boundaries of community can be set in many ways—by geography, age, ability, race, ethnicity, religion, status, profession, interest, advocacy, or the intersection of several of these factors. Stories in the news, in advertisements, in film, on television, and in books tell us about communities that we don't inhabit or interact with. In this course, we will engage deeply with media representations of different types of communities, both representations created by others and those you create yourself.

We will open the semester discussing basic concepts of identity and community by exploring some of the major fault lines, biases, and privileges in contemporary life. We will analyze and critique common stereotypes that often show up in media coverage of unfamiliar groups. We will then turn to practicing storytelling across difference, focusing on how you can capture multimedia stories that reflect the perspectives of those who inhabit communities outside your personal experience. Finally, we will work together on a large community storytelling assignment during the final month of the semester.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Use simple smartphone tools to construct digital stories in multiple forms
- Analyze media content and recognize the structural foundations of media misrepresentation
- Practice techniques such as active listening that help in developing empathy and understanding of diverse viewpoints
- Collaborate with your peers to produce a large-scale community storytelling project

SJMC Learning Outcomes: The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes on the SJMC Website.

This course contributes to these learning outcomes by helping you understand analyze media representations of communities and develop your own digital stories. Achieving these outcomes means the ability to:

- Analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.
- Learn how to create and disseminate media messages in various forms.
- Gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.
- Produce media that serve the needs and interests of diverse communities and reflect their voices and experiences.
- Work with members of diverse groups to engage publicly over issues of community interest.

Readings: There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be provided on the course ICON in link or PDF form. You should complete assigned readings by the start of the class.

Class Rules and Conduct: In this class, we practice active learning, which means you will learn by continually practicing the skills we'll develop in class. Active learning requires a supportive learning environment and engaged students who come ready to give focused attention and participate in all class activities. We will often use class time to practice skills, offer feedback, or revise work. To be successful in accomplishing course objectives, you will need to come to class ready to learn and participate, and to give your full attention to class lessons, discussions, and activities. Using class time for anything other than the work of this course will get in the way of your learning and that of your fellow students. Please do NOT use cell phones, tablets, or laptops during class, unless you're using them for a course project.

Course Discussion: Some of the topics we discuss in class will be sensitive and uncomfortable. To help us have frank and fruitful conversations, I expect everyone to adopt the five strategies outlined by Keith Wood in his chapter "Talking Across Difference" in *Cross-Cultural Journalism*.

- Be honest: don't let fear get in the way of candor
- Seek clarification: don't be quick to judge but, instead, ask follow-up questions
- Challenge without poison: if and when you disagree, do so respectfully
- Be open to change: approach conversations with an open mind
- Stay in the room: don't give up on yourself or each other

Grading: In this class, assignments will be graded not just on the finished product but on commitment to the process. This means you'll be graded on your Personal Story, but also on your participation in a story circle, the first draft of your script, your peer critique of others' scripts, and your final digital story. All assignments will have detailed rubrics that explain what is expected and the standards by which assignments will be assessed.

A+	97-100%	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-63
						F	59 and below

Makeup Work: Quizzes and assignments completed in class cannot be made up. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to learn what was covered that day and acquire notes from your fellow classmates. Please, do not send me emails asking "What did I miss?" or "Did I miss anything important?" The answers are "Lots" and "Yes." I am happy to discuss missed materials during my office hours, but I cannot cover the material in the same amount of detail as I can during class.

Late Policy: Each assignment will have a specific due date/time. Work submitted after the assigned due date/time will be considered late and will be marked down 10% immediately. Late work will be marked down an additional 10% for each 24-hour period after the original due date. Assignments turned in more than 5 days after the due date will be awarded no points.

Academic Misconduct: In short, academic misconduct occurs when you (intentionally or unintentionally) present someone else's work as your own. According to the University of Iowa Academic Policies, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Using direct quotations without quotation marks and/or without crediting the source
- Paraphrasing information and ideas from sources without crediting the source
- Fabricating quotations or sources
- Submitting video footage, images, or sounds created by someone else as your own work or without proper attribution

Students are responsible for understanding this policy. If you have questions, please ask me for clarification. Clear evidence of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the course. Per college policy, we are required to report academic misconduct the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Electronic Communication: As per university policy, you are responsible for all official correspondences sent to your University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu).

Communication with Brian: I make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours. Typically, I respond sooner than that. While I prioritize my interactions with my students, I do have other commitments (e.g., meetings, research, family, sleep, etc.) that may keep me from immediately responding to your emails. I am happy to offer feedback and answer specific questions over email, but I will not answer a barrage of questions or review full drafts of assignments over email. If your email would take me more than 5 minutes to answer, I will advise you to visit my office hours or schedule an appointment.

Equipment: Equipment used in this class is available for checkout in the equipment room located on the first floor of the Becker Communication Studies Building. You are welcome to use your own equipment, but I will only provide technical support and training for the equipment reserved for this course. The same goes for software—you are free to use other software, but I will only provide support for the software I teach.

Checkout Procedure: You will reserve equipment using Checkout@UIowa: <http://checkout.uiowa.edu/>. Visit the site to read the full list of guidelines.

Technology Help Site: If you need help with hardware or software furnished by SJMC, please reference our help site: <http://multimedia.jmc.uiowa.edu/help/>.

ASSIGNMENTS

Specifics details and requirements for each assignment will be provided during the semester. There are 500 points possible.

Assignment 1: Personal Story (50 points)

You will use still photographs and an original script to introduce audiences to a community you inhabit. We will use the StoryCenter model of digital storytelling to develop these digital personal essays. You will have opportunities in class to develop scripts and participate in peer critiques.

Assignment 2: News Critique (75 points)

You will critique news representations of a community we discuss in class. You will critically analyze media stories to identify which stereotypes and “stock stories” repeatedly show up in stories about that community.

Assignment 3: Listening Post (50 points)

Part of getting to know a community well enough to tell stories with them is spending time in that community. You will go to a place relevant to a community you do not inhabit, talk to someone there, and write up your observations.

Assignment 4: Oral History (75 points)

To practice your interview skills, you will interview someone from a community you do not inhabit, asking questions about their life and experiences. For example, you may want to interview someone you met during Assignment 3. You will audio record this interview and edit it down to a shorter, final audio story.

Assignment 5: Community Story (175 points)

The culmination of our coursework will be our community story project. We will develop the parameters of this assignment in collaboration with our community partners.

Reading Quizzes (25 points/5 points each)

There is not a lot of assigned reading, but what we do have is crucial to course understanding and discussion. Six times during the semester you’ll have an unannounced quiz on the readings for that day. Reading quizzes may include closed-ended and open-ended questions. You cannot make up reading quizzes if absent, but I will drop your lowest-scoring quiz. Quizzes will not be open book, but you can use any reading notes you made.

Attendance and Participation (50 points)

Your participation grade will reflect your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. While attendance means being present by the start of class, preparedness means completing the assigned readings and tasks on time, cooperation means working well with others during class discussion and group exercises, and contribution means adding value to class discussions and activities. In short, you need to do more than just “show up.”

- Every student gets one “grace” absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5-point deduction from your Attendance and Participation grade. For example, 3 unexcused absences from discussion section will result in a maximum Attendance and Participation grade of 40/50.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus is a living document, subject to change. Any changes to readings or deadlines will be announced in class and on ICON. Read the assigned reading **before** the classes each week, unless otherwise noted.

Week 1

Tuesday (8/21) – Course overview

Thursday (8/23) – Who am I?

Reading: *Cross Cultural Journalism*, Chapter 1: Conceptual Understanding

Assigned: Personal Story

Week 2

Tuesday (8/28) – Personal storytelling

Reading: *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*, Chapters 1 & 2

Thursday (8/30) – Technology training; peer review

Due: Personal Story draft script

Week 3

Tuesday (9/4) – Work on Personal Stories

Thursday (9/6) – View Personal Stories

Due: Personal Story

Week 4

Tuesday (9/11) – Who are we?

Reading: *Cross Cultural Journalism*, Chapter 3: Who is American?

Assigned: News Critique

Thursday (9/13) – Stereotypes and stock stories

Reading: Jordyn Blaise. (2018, August 3). “Nia Wilson and the formula for covering black death.” *The Atlantic*.

Week 5

Tuesday (9/18) – Work on News Critique

Thursday (9/20) – Guest speaker: Amy Maxmen, senior writer at *Nature*

Reading: Amy Maxmen. (2015, January 27). “How Ebola found fertile ground in Sierra Leone’s chaotic capital.” *National Geographic*.

Due: News Critique

Week 6

Tuesday (9/25) – Bridging difference

Reading: *Cross Cultural Journalism*, Chapter 2: Talking Across Difference

Assigned: Listening Post

Thursday (9/27) – Reflexivity
Readings: Editorial (“To rise above”) and article (“Skin deep”) from *National Geographic: The Race Issue*.
Due: Listening Post proposal

Week 7

Tuesday (10/2) – Listening Exercise
Reading: David Plazas. (2018, Jan. 30). “How *The Tennessean* hosts meetings with alienated audiences to listen and understand.” *American Press Institute*.

Thursday (10/4) – Guest speaker: KC McGinnis, freelance photojournalist
Reading: Simon Romero. (2017, Nov. 13). “Covering a mass shooting, and adding to a town’s pain.” *New York Times*.

Week 8

Tuesday (10/9) – Conducting interviews
Readings: Wendy Pearlman. (2017). *We Crossed a Bridge and It Trembled: Voices from Syria*, selected portions; Alessandria Masi. (2018, February 28). “Writing Syria: Wendy Pearlman’s ‘Oral History of the Revolution.’” *Syria Deeply*.
Assigned: Oral History
Due: Listening Post

Thursday (10/11) – Interviewing exercise

Week 9

Tuesday (10/16) – Technology training; peer review
Due: Oral History draft questions

Thursday (10/18) – Visitor: Lisa Schlesinger, Associate Professor
Reading: “Background” *Syria Deeply*. The Basics; The Regime; The Opposition; Understanding ISIS; Global Players

Week 10

Tuesday (10/23) – Ethics and engagement
Reading: StoryCenter. “Ethical Practice”

Thursday (10/25) – Work on Oral History

Week 11

Tuesday (10/30) – Listen to Oral Histories
Due: Oral History

Thursday (11/1) – Preparations for Community Story assignment
Assigned: Community Story

Week 12

Tuesday (11/6) – Community Story work

Thursday (11/8) – Community Story work

Week 13

Tuesday (11/13) – Community Story work

Thursday (11/15) – Community Story work

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14

Tuesday (11/27) – Community Story work

Thursday (11/29) – Community Story work

Week 15

Tuesday (12/4) – Community Story work

Thursday (12/6) – Community Story work

Finals Week (time/day TBA)

Due: Community Story

CLAS POLICIES

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at <http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook>.

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2, k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See <http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/> for more information.

Academic Honesty

All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies

The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar, generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams are offered only during the official final examination period. **No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes.** All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be shared with instructors and students. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook). The DEO for the School of Journalism & Mass Communication is Prof. David Ryfe, phone 319.335.3486.

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom

The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University's Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, diversity@iowa.edu or visit diversity.uiowa.edu.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the [Department of Public Safety website](#).

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) and the University of Iowa *Operations Manual*.

Resources for Students:

Writing Center – 110 EPB, 335-0188, <https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>

University Counseling Center – 3223 Westlawn, 335-7294, <https://counseling.uiowa.edu/>

Rape Victim Advocacy Program – 335-6000, <https://rvap.uiowa.edu/>

Student Disability Services – 3015 Burge, 335-1462, <https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>