

The University of Iowa
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Fall, 2022

Title of Course: Community Media (JMC:2500:0001)

Course meeting time and place: Tuesday/Thursday, 2-3:15pm, W332 AJB

School of Journalism & Mass Communication (SJMC): <https://journalism.uiowa.edu/>

Course ICON site: To access the course site, log into [Iowa Courses Online \(ICON\)](#) <https://icon.uiowa.edu/index.shtml> using your Hawk ID and password.

Course Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the home of this course, and CLAS governs the add and drop deadlines, the “second-grade only” option (SGO), academic misconduct policies, and other undergraduate policies and procedures. Other UI colleges may have different policies.

Instructor

Name: Brian Ekdale (he/him), Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

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Student drop-in hours: 11am-1pm Tuesdays; 1-2pm Thursdays; by appointment

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SJMC DEO: Associate Professor Melissa Tully, E332 AJB, melissa-tully@uiowa.edu

Course Description

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 to 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.

Course Learning Objectives

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 storytelling project that benefits a community partner

General Education Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the CLAS General Education requirement in Diversity and Inclusion. As such, the course has the following learning outcomes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion:

- Students explore the historical and structural bases of inequality.
- Students learn about the benefits and challenges of diversity.
- Students reflect critically on their own social and cultural perspectives.
- Students increase their ability to engage with people who have backgrounds or ideas different from their own.

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. 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.

Textbook/Materials

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.

Academic Honesty and Misconduct

All students in CLAS courses are expected to abide by the [CLAS Code of Academic Honesty](#). Undergraduate academic misconduct must be reported by instructors to CLAS according to [these procedures](#). Graduate academic misconduct must be reported to the Graduate College according to Section F of the [Graduate College Manual](#).

Storytelling and Academic Misconduct

When creating stories and writing papers, 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.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is dedicated to equity, anti-racism and social justice. A fuller statement of this commitment can be found [here](#). We strive to serve our students well in this regard, and consider diversity, equity, and inclusion as social resources that inform our learning environment. We train our students to achieve cultural competency across the diversity of groups that inhabit our global society. Among other things, this involves enhancing students' ability to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds and experiences. In our classes, we discuss these themes through the concepts of media representations, bias and resulting stereotypes, and the effects of discrimination and structural inequalities as they pertain to all aspects of the media, from foundational concepts to advanced professional and graduate training. In accord with the First

Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and the dictates of academic freedom, we support an open discussion of all relevant viewpoints, even those with which we disagree. We encourage conversation that is based on facts and documentation, and on a mutual respect for one another.

Course Conduct

In this course, 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 and Sensitive Topics

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

Student Complaints

Students with a complaint about a grade or a related matter should first discuss the situation with the instructor, and finally with the instructor's immediate supervisor, the Associate Dean for the Natural, Mathematical, and Social Sciences.

Undergraduate students should contact [CLAS Undergraduate Programs](#) for support when the matter is not resolved at the previous level.

Drop Deadline for this Course

You may drop an individual course before the deadline; after this deadline you will need collegiate approval. You can look up the [drop deadline for this course](#) here. When you drop a course, a "W" will appear on your transcript. The mark of "W" is a neutral mark that does not affect your GPA. Directions for adding or dropping a course and other registration changes can be found on the [Registrar's website](#). Undergraduate students can find policies on dropping and withdrawing [here](#).

Grading System and the Use of +/-

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 in-class workshops, 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.

Final grades will be awarded based on the following ranges:

A	B	C	D	F
A+ 98-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F < 59
A 93-97	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

Course Assessment

Final course grades will be assessed based on your performance in the following activities (400 points total):

Assignment 1: Personal Story (50 points)

You will tell an original story about yourself, focusing on an identity characteristic that is central to who you are. Your Personal Story will be an audio slideshow that combines still photos and audio narration. You will have opportunities in class to develop your script and participate in peer workshops. You will also write a short reflection paper about creating your personal story as well as viewing your peers' completed stories.

Assignment 2: Media Critique (50 points)

You will collect news stories about food insecurity and then write a short paper that critiques media coverage of the topic and those portrayed. You will have opportunities in class to develop your critique through peer workshops.

Assignment 3: Service Reflections (50 points)

You will accumulate service hours at the Coralville Community Food Pantry, assisting in an area of need as determined by the organization. You will write short reflections before and after each service engagement. Information about how and when to volunteer at the food pantry will be provided during the semester.

Assignment 4: Oral History (50 points)

You will conduct an hourlong interview with an individual associated with the Coralville Community Food Pantry. This could be with a staff member, volunteer, or food pantry member. After your interview, you will edit the interview down to a shorter audio story that captures the most impactful moments from your interview. You will have opportunities in class to develop your questions and participate in peer workshops.

Assignment 5: Community Story (150 points)

At the end of the semester, you will work with your peers on a collaborative media project produced for and with the Coralville Community Food Pantry, matching your skills with the needs of the organization. We will create the project requirements and expectations together later in the semester. This project will be our primary focus during the last third of the semester.

Reading Quizzes (25 points)

To ensure that you are completing the course readings and understanding the material, regular quizzes will be given. The reading quizzes will be worth 5 points each. Starting in week two, the quizzes will be offered at

roughly one to two-week intervals. They will evaluate key information presented in the course readings for the time covered by the quiz.

Participation (25 points)

Regular and prompt attendance is required for this course unless specified in the weekly schedule. Beyond that, your participation is assessed by your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. 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.”

Date and Time of the Final Exam

While this class will not have a final exam, we will be meeting during finals week to present the final Community Story project. The final examination date and time will be announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes and it will be announced on the course ICON site once it is known. **Do not plan your end of the semester travel plans until the final exam schedule is made public. It is your responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.** According to Registrar's final exam policy, students **have a maximum of two weeks after the announced final exam schedule** to request a change if an exam conflict exists or if a student has more than two exams in one day (see the [policy](#) here).

Calendar of Course Assignments and Exams

Below is the preliminary course schedule for the semester. Due to the nature of the course topic, this schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and posted on ICON.

Detailed assignment sheets will be provided for all assignments. All readings and exemplars will be posted on ICON.

Week 1

Tuesday (8/23) – Course overview and introductions

Thursday (8/25) – Communities and identities

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

Week 2

Tuesday (8/30) – Telling personal stories

- Reading: *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*, Chapters 1 & 2
- Assigned: Personal Story

Thursday (9/1) – Introducing the Coralville Community Food Pantry

- Reading: Hunger in America 2014, *Feeding America*
- Visit by John Boller, Executive Director, Coralville Community Food Pantry
- Assigned: Service Reflections

Week 3

Tuesday (9/6) – Personal Story script workshop / Photography training

- Reading: Rob Dunsford (n.d.), 8 Portrait Photography Tips Every Photographer Should Know, <https://photographypro.com/portrait-photography/>
- Due, beginning of class: Personal Story draft script

Thursday (9/8) – Software training (Audacity & Soundslides)

- Reading: Audacity Support, Editing Audio, <https://support.audacityteam.org/basics/audacity-editing>

Week 4 (Brian out of town)

Tuesday (9/13) – Personal Story editing workshop

- Due, end of class: Personal Story
- Assigned: Personal Story reflections

Thursday (9/15) – View Personal Stories

Week 5

Tuesday (9/20) – Social categories and stereotypes

- Reading: *Cross Cultural Journalism*, Chapter 3: Who is American?
- Due, beginning of class: Personal Story reflections
- Assigned: Media Critique

Thursday (9/22) – Media representations

- Reading: Diane Kendall (2011), “Fragile Frames: The Poor and the Homeless”

Week 6

Tuesday (9/27) – Media Critique workshop

- Due, beginning of class: Media Critique story selection

Thursday (9/29) – Documentary viewing

- *A Place at the Table*

Week 7

Tuesday (10/4) – Wrap up media unit

- Due, beginning of class: Media Critique

Thursday (10/6) – Bridging difference

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

Week 8

Tuesday (10/11) – Reporting on sensitive topics

- Reading: Natalie Yahr (n.d.). “Why Should I Tell You? A Guide to Less-Extractive Reporting”
- Visit by Alexis Romero Walker, Assistant Professor, Manhattanville College
- Assigned: Oral History

Thursday (10/13) – Interviewing

- Reading: Jo Healey (2020). “The Interview”

Week 9

Tuesday (10/18) – Oral History interview workshop

- Visit by Felicia Pieper, Programs Manager, Coralville Community Food Pantry
- Due, beginning of class: Oral History draft questions

Thursday (10/20) – Audio editing workshop

- Listen: Building a Bigger Table Oral History Project
<https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/food> (select one to listen to)
- Due, beginning of class: Service Reflections

Week 10

Tuesday (10/25) – Oral History workshop time

Thursday (10/27) – Oral History workshop time

Week 11

Tuesday (11/1) – Listen to Oral Histories

- Due, beginning of class: Oral History

- Assigned: Community Story

Thursday (11/3) – Introducing the Community Story

Remaining Schedule – Community Story workshop time
Weekly schedule TBA

Finals Week (time/day TBA)
Due: Community Story

Additional College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) Course Policies

Attendance and Absences

University regulations require that students be allowed to make up examinations which have been missed due to illness or other unavoidable circumstances. Students with mandatory religious obligations or UI authorized activities must discuss their absences with me as soon as possible. Religious obligations must be communicated within the first three weeks of classes.

- Every student receives two “grace” absences. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5-point deduction from your Participation grade. For example, 3 unexcused absences from discussion section will result in a maximum Participation grade of 20/25.

Exam Policies

Communication: UI Email

Students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for any communication with instructors or staff in the UI community. Also, although I make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours, 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 drop-in hours or schedule an appointment.

Where to Get Help

School of Journalism and Mass Communication Resources

- [Journalism Student Center](#): on the third floor of Adler, find our internship coordinator, academic advisor, and peer mentors here
- School of Journalism and Mass Communication social media: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)
- [School of Journalism and Mass Communication labs](#): rooms and hours for our multimedia labs

Help with Classes and Careers

- [Center for Inclusive Academic Excellence](#): Support for historically marginalized and/or first-generation students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- [Writing Center](#): make in-person or online appointments for writing help
- [Tutor Iowa](#): Resources for all kinds of academic support
- [Career Center](#): help with jobs, internships, and other career services
- [Student Disability Services](#): help with course accommodations for students with disabilities

Health Support and Advocacy

- [University Counseling Service](#): mental health counseling support
- [CommUnity Crisis Services](#): free, nonjudgmental emotional support to anyone who needs it via phone, chat or text
- [Student Health](#): Provides medical care to all University of Iowa students
- [Rape Victim Advocacy Program](#): Free, confidential care for people affected by sexual violence
- [Domestic Violence Intervention Program](#): Free services for people affected by domestic violence and dating violence

Basic Needs and Financial Support

- [Financial Aid Offices](#): support and information on loans and other financial support
- [Student Life Emergency Fund](#): support for students in a financial emergency
- [UI Food Pantry](#): free food for any student, staff, or faculty member at Iowa who needs it
- [Being Not Rich at Iowa](#): crowd-sourced resource guide by University of Iowa Student Government

University Policies[Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)[Basic Needs and Support for Students](#)[Classroom Expectations](#)[Exam Make-up Owing to Absence](#)[Free Speech and Expression](#)[Mental Health](#)[Military Service Obligations](#)[Non-discrimination](#)[Religious Holy Days](#)[Sexual Harassment/Misconduct and Supportive Measures](#)[Sharing of Class Recordings](#)