

MCM 465/Online Journalism

Department of Mass Communication, Sam Houston State University, Spring 2008 (3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Marc Edge
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Office Hours: MW 3:30-4:30 p.m. TTh 5-6 p.m. or by appointment

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7:20 p.m. Location: 203 Lee Drain Building

Prerequisites: MCM 232/330 and MCM 262 or 284 or 374.

Description: Students will use techniques drawn from all media to produce well-designed, effective communication packages for online distribution. Working in teams, students will integrate written material, video, sound and graphics into a multimedia online publication.

Objective: To gain factual knowledge, learn fundamental principles, develop specific competencies and creative capacities, learn how to find and use resources, and learn how to analyze and critically evaluate online journalism.

Method: Instruction will include lectures, presentations, class discussion, hands on writing, research and online production work, and assigned readings.

Assessment: Exams and quizzes may include true/false and multiple choice questions. Exams may also include short answer and essay questions. Blog entries will consist of content posted on the student's personal online weblog, as well as comments posted on other blogs. Online journalism assignments may be submitted in written, audio, video, or graphic format, and will contribute to a group project resulting in an Online Journalism Review to be published at semester's end.

Grading:	Attendance and Participation	10%	
	Midterm Exam	15%	
	Quizzes		20%
	Blog entries	15%	
	Online journalism assignments	20%	
	Final Exam	20%	

Texts: James C. Foust, *Online Journalism: Principles and Practices of News for the Web*. (Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway), 2005.

Stuart Allan, *Online News: Journalism and the Internet*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press), 2006.

Readings: Supplemental readings will be available online or posted on Blackboard.

Midterm: The midterm exam will be held on Mar. 6.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of take-home essay questions.

Attendance: Attendance and participation are mandatory and will be used as the deciding factor in grading. Students who do not provide a valid reason in advance for any unavoidable absence will not be allowed to make up any quiz or exam missed. Students with more than three unexcused absences may have their final grade lowered accordingly.

Note:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

Schedule of Classes

Week 1		Readings
Jan. 17	Introduction	
Week 2		
Jan. 22	The digital media revolution	Allan, Ch. 1
Jan. 24	Getting started in online journalism	Foust, Ch. 1
Week 3		
Jan. 29	The rise of online news	Allan, Ch. 2
Jan. 31	Online journalism tools: Hardware and software	Foust, Ch. 2
Week 4		
Feb. 5	The death of newspapers?	Henry, Fine
Feb. 7	Web authoring programs	Foust, Ch. 3
Week 5		
Feb. 12	Convergence	Quinn
Feb. 14	Working in online journalism	Foust, Ch. 4
Week 6		
Feb. 19	Brave new media worlds	Allan, Ch. 3
Feb. 21	Online reporting sources	Foust, Ch. 5
Week 7		
Feb. 26	Online journalism and crisis: Covering 9/11	Allan, Ch. 4
Feb. 28	Web page design	Foust, Ch. 6
Week 8		
Mar. 4	Blogs	Robinson, Thompson
Mar. 6	Midterm exam	
-----Spring Break-----		
Week 9		
Mar. 18	Writing and editing online	Foust, Ch. 7

Mar. 20	Web journalism and sensationalism	Allan, Ch. 5
Week 10		
Mar. 25	Using links in online stories	Foust, Ch. 8
Mar. 27	Web journalism and Iraq	Allan, Ch. 6
Week 11		
Apr. 1	Multimedia and interactivity	Foust, Ch. 9
Apr. 3	Participatory journalism	Allan, Ch. 7
Week 12		
Apr. 8	Legal and ethical issues	Foust, Ch. 10
Apr. 10	Citizen journalism	Allan, Ch. 8
Week 13		
Apr. 15	The economics of online journalism	Foust, Ch. 11
Apr. 17	New directions	Allan, Ch. 9
Week 14		
Apr. 22	Online journalism reviews	TBA
Apr. 24	<i>Sam's Online Journalism Review</i> – Planning	
Week 15		
Apr. 29	<i>Sam's Online Journalism Review</i> – Production	
May 1	<i>Sam's Online Journalism Review</i> – Production	
Week 16		
May 6	<i>Sam's Online Journalism Review</i> – Publication	
May 8	Review	

Supplemental Readings

Feb. 5

Jon Fine, "When Do You Stop The Presses?" *Business Week*, July 20, 2007.
http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/07_30/b4043029.htm

Neil Henry, "The decline of news," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29, 2007. <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2007/05/29/EDGFKQ20N61.DTL>

Feb. 12

Stephen Quinn, "Convergence's Fundamental Question," *Journalism Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2005, pp. 29-38. Posted on Blackboard.

Mar. 4

John Robinson, "Should journalists have blogs?" *The Editor's Log*. http://blog.news-record.com/staff/jrblog/2008/01/should_journali.shtml

Clive Thompson, "Blogs to Riches," *New York*, February 20, 2006. <http://nymag.com/news/media/15967/>