

JOUR 352 – Online Journalism

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Class time: Section 0401, Mondays 7 -9:45 p.m.

Office hours: Immediately before class in Knight Hall (starting at about 6 p.m.) or by appointment

Closings and delays: I will post notes to our class blog to notify you of any class time or assignment changes due to snow, ice, blizzards, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, Godzilla attacks, San Jose Sharks losses (not really) or other incidents that make coming to campus hazardous. When in doubt, please check our blog or ELMS before setting out.

In addition, the [university website](#) posts notices about campus closings; if the university is closed, we may meet electronically or reschedule.

Absences due to illness: If you must be absent from class due to medical conditions, please notify me before class, and bring a note when you return stating the reason for the absence. In cases of extended absence, you'll need to bring documentation for your illness from a health care professional. A miss on a day of a test or a day when an assignment is due will absolutely require a note from a health care professional. On long-term assignments, the deadline will stand firm despite a short-term illness.

Religious holidays: Please let me know in writing within the first or two weeks of the course if you have a religious responsibility that will cause you to miss class. By doing this, we can make sure you don't miss any important information.

Students with Special Needs: Please talk to me at the end of the first class.

Learning Outcomes / Goals: This is a hybrid discussion/skills journalism course in which we'll explore trends in journalism, digital media and social platforms and grow your expertise in digital news publishing. The class will include lectures on emerging media themes, such as the ethical and legal implications of publishing online in a 24/7 environment; best practices for doing research on the Internet; and the impact of blogs, crowdsourcing and other social media on mainstream media.

A core portion of the class will include hands-on assignments. Students will be introduced to basic HTML, CSS, content management systems, web design and photo editing tools. You will learn about website structuring and navigation, headline writing and search engine optimization, link writing, and basic layout, while building a resume package and a multimedia news feature package.

You will also participate in a class blog, learn how to create your own personal blog using Wordpress, create RSS readers on Google, and use social media tools like Twitter, Facebook and others for reporting, marketing stories and interacting with users. We will also touch on topics imperative to the business of journalism, such as business models for digital media organizations, monetization and analytics.

Finally, we'll work with free online interactive tools to create maps, polls, quizzes and other visuals to help tell stories.

Prerequisites: You must have taken JOUR 202 or 262 before entering this class.

Books & Materials: We will be using a combination of required textbooks, handouts and online resources to absorb and learn.

Textbook: James C. Foust's "**Online Journalism: Principles and Practices of News for the Web**" Third edition -- available at the campus bookstores and at online bookstores, such as Amazon.com. Check to see if the campus bookstore is offering rentals and electronic copies of the book at reduced costs.

Stylebook: **Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual** (for print). Please bring the stylebook to class with you to aid in lab work. 2011 Edition is preferred. If you have a slightly older edition of the stylebook, that is OK. (Just be aware that AP recently changed its rules on referencing email and websites.)

Personal website/blog: You'll also be creating a personal **WordPress site**. You may either create a free one through WordPress.com or purchase a URL (i.e. YourName.com) and set it up there. If you prefer the latter, we will go through how to do it in class.

Social media accounts: You should have accounts with and actively using at least Facebook and Twitter. You should be at least familiar with Foursquare, Google+, Pinterest and others.

Data backup: A Google Drive account, Dropbox or Box.net account or a good-sized USB drive.

Additional Readings: A list of pertinent blogs, trade journals and tech websites will be listed on the class blog. You're encouraged to check in on them occasionally to keep up on the latest. I'll also send out or post articles I find of particular interest as the semester progresses.

Standards, Ethics and Academic Integrity: In short, do your own work. If you get caught plagiarizing, there will be no hesitation in reporting you to the Student Honor Council.

Now, for the academic discourse: Students are expected to adhere to the strictest journalistic and academic standards. For this class, you must do all work yourself, without collaboration with classmates or others, unless I tell you otherwise.

Along with certain rights, students also have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism (including use of unauthorized photos, graphics, text or layout from the Web) will not be tolerated.

Any abridgement of academic integrity standards will be referred directly to the campus judiciary. Confirmation of such incidents could result in the earning of an "XF" grade for the course and may result in more severe consequences, such as expulsion. Students who are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty should consult the university publication called "[Code of Academic Integrity](#)," administered by the Student Honor Council. This code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information on the code or the council, please visit <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>.