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JOUR 4801/6801: Reporting Social Justice (Syllabus)

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Reporting Social Justice

JOUR 4801/6801-001

Spring 2021

Meeting: Tu/Th 1:00-2:25 p.m.

Zoom/MJ202/MJ206

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Office Phone: 901-678-4784

Office Hours: by appointment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Writing and reporting news and feature stories on issues concerning social justice.

Prerequisites

JOUR 3120 or 3629

JOUR 3526

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

- Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (2016). Paperback, ISBN 0553447459.

Classroom format

Hybrid/LLB: Class will meet virtually in the timeslot on Zoom during assigned lecture date and time. MJ 202 & 206 will be open for students to use as a classroom space during our allotted times. Students may choose to work entirely off campus if desired. (COVID-19 pending)

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JOUR 4801/6801-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

Students will complete three stories on a social-justice issue. Social justice is a broad term that can encompass matters ranging from race, religion, gender, sexuality, and disability to socioeconomic fairness, criminal justice, environmental equity, and more.

The first two stories may be on *any* social-justice issue, though students should get the instructor's approval of the topic beforehand. The third story will focus on an issue related to a common class project.

Although the bulk of the course primarily consists of practical reporting assignments, students will also take occasional quizzes and perform other activities during the semester.

(In addition, graduate students must also write a 10-page essay based on two books. They should get the professor's approval of these titles before beginning their reading.)

Assignments & Grading

Assignment categories and points or percentage weights.

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%
B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%
C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%
D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%
F 0-59.4%

Grading in JOUR 4801

Story 1: 25 percent
Story 2: 25 percent
Story 3: 25 percent
Quizzes, homework, assignments, and participation: 25 percent

Grading in JOUR 6801

Story 1: 20 percent
Story 2: 20 percent
Story 3: 20 percent
Paper: 20 percent
Quizzes, homework, assignments, and participation: 20 percent

Other issues

Discussion and debate are welcomed and encouraged in this course. At the same time, students must exercise courtesy and basic civility. That doesn't mean everyone has to agree; it does mean showing respect for others and exhibiting an open spirit of inquiry.

Telling someone's story brings with it a tremendous responsibility to get it right and to be fair. Accuracy is paramount, and ethical behavior is fundamental. Journalists are never perfect, but they must always strive to do excellent work. In this class, you will also be representing our department, our university, and our profession in the community, so please act accordingly. In other words, do the right thing.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (Jan. 19, 21): Course introduction.

Week Two (Jan. 26, 28): Understanding social justice.

Week Three (Feb. 2, 4): Writing and reporting basics.

Week Four (Feb. 9, 11): Writing and reporting basics.

Week Five (Feb. 16, 18): Storytelling tools.

Story 1 due

Week Six (Feb. 23, 25): Storytelling tools.

Week Seven (March 2, 4): Audiences.

Week Eight (March 11): TBA

Story 2 due

Week Nine (March 16, 18): TBA

Week 10 (March 23, 25): TBA

Week 11 (March 30, April 1): TBA

Week 12 (April 6): TBA

STORY 3 due

Week 13 (April 13, 15): Completion of projects

Week 14 (April 20, 22): Completion of projects

Week 15 (April 27): Completion of projects

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in JOUR 4801/6801

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Gain familiarity with ethical issues in reporter neutrality and objectivity in coverage of

controversial issues

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Relate stories to intended audience
- Think critically regarding story sources and information gathering
- Demonstrate an ability to prepare reports and write about controversial issues, feature stories, legal stories, and historical stories.
- Acquire ability to conduct interviews, gather information in person, by phone, and digitally, as well as conceptualize a story
- Demonstrate basic video shooting and editing skills

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Become aware of the professional protocol such as story meetings and reporter responsibilities
- Learn about the importance of critical thinking in justice stories.

Understanding

- Understand the ethical and professional challenges facing a journalist today
- Appreciate the role of social media and the internet in today's journalism industry
- Study the principles of effective storytelling

Application

- Develop story ideas, setting up interviews, selecting appropriate sources for stories, writing news stories in various formats, editing
- Take weekly news quizzes
- Give and receive criticism by peers when stories are reviewed collectively in class

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect.

Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing

All students, faculty and staff will wear masks in all public spaces, including our classroom (lab) per the COVID-19 policy. The first time a student enters a classroom without wearing a face covering, the student will be asked to leave the class until they return a covering. Further violations will be referred to the Office of Student Accountability. Students who repeatedly or flagrantly violate these community expectations may be referred for discipline under the Student Code and, if appropriate, immediately removed from campus by the Dean of Students.

Student Health

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu.

Student Accommodations

If and when we return to class, students seeking to remain remote for health or other serious reasons should discuss their options with me. Students with accessibility issues or with other learning accommodation needs due to a disability should contact Disability

Resources for Students (DRS) to submit an official request for course accommodations. Contact DRS at 901.678.2880 or at drs@memphis.edu. (<https://www.memphis.edu/drs/index.php>)

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Spring 2021

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home and join class virtually.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and on campus.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.
- Have phone or Zoom meetings with professors and classmates. Do not meet face to face, if possible.