

J556
convergence capstone
Multimedia Reporting

Professor:

Elizabeth Osder
Visiting Professor
ASC 303A
213-821-6615 (office)
osder@usc.edu (best way to contact)
<http://www.osder.com> (cyberspace)

Office Hours: By appointment (preferred)
Hours:

Specialized Instructor:

Bob Berger
bberger@usc.edu

Course:

Studio C

Wednesday 2-4:40

Credit: 3 units

Overview:

J556 Convergence Capstone is a specialized reporting seminar in which students working in teams utilize their print, broadcast and online writing, reporting and editing skills to do an in-depth exploration of a social justice issue.

Possible topics include under-reported neighborhoods and community issues in Los Angeles and/or in depth reporting on investigative topics like the educational funding, the INS, the border, the Patriot Act and others (final topic to be decided on in class).

This is a new and entrepreneurial course, our stories will determine the best form of presentation; different stories require different story forms. Over the course of the semester students will be able to work in two or more media (one being online) to report, write and edit a professionally produced packages or story elements that demonstrate their skills as ambidextrous convergence journalists. Emphasis will be placed on developing a final class website that will bring together examples of their work and provide an outlet for exploring storytelling in multiple media.

There are no pre-requisites, all students are welcome and will be given

Journalism 556
Convergence Capstone
Annenberg School for Communications
School for Journalism

the creative space to participate in projects in ways that best support their area of concentration and professional aspirations.

Course Objectives:

- Students should gain a deeper understanding of investigative/project journalism through working on an in-depth reporting project on a single social justice issue.
- Students will draw on each of their core sequence classes. Emphasis will also be placed on further refining the skills mastered in the required courses of CAR and Investigative Reporting.
- Students should gain a greater understanding of convergent media and be able to develop an articulate story board for presenting their class project for print, broadcast and online.
- Students will be able to present elements of their reporting in print and broadcast.
- Students will develop a digest or diary of their reporting and research as a blog, using the online publishing tool blogspot.
- Working as a team, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, students will develop an online multimedia site that presents their semester long reporting project.
- Students should develop an advanced understanding of website planning and production including user interface design, storyboarding, and project management.
- Students will work with Dreaweaver, Photoshop and other web based software to develop their class site.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Unexcused absences will not be tolerated. Students are expected to make up all work and assignments from each session.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

- You will also be responsible for reading all materials listed as URL's on the syllabus and for any additional handouts provided.

DAILY NEWS READINGS

Please subscribe to and read daily the OnlineJournalism.com and Poynter's Romanesko and Monday's media section of The New York Times.

ASSIGNMENTS

This is a specialized reporting course so there are a limited number of weekly assignments. Instead students are expected to research, investigate, report, write and produce an investigative social justice package. The class will be divided into three sections.

- The first, investigation and pitching presents a time for students to investigate topics and to pitch them to their classmates in an actual story meeting.
- The second segment of the class is designed for students to research, report, write, storyboard and plan an investigative reporting project.
- The third and final is production. In this last section students will edit their work and develop it for a multimedia presentation. Class time will be spent on production but time will be required outside of class to conclude reporting and also to complete production tasks.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is a seminar and will rely heavily on class participation and student collaboration. You are expected to come to each class prepared, this includes having read the material, discussing it and participating in discussions and exercises.

GRADING

Class Participation	25 %
Teamwork/Producing	30 %
Research/Reporting	25 %
Writing/Shooting/Editing	15 %
Production	5 %

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

There are no exceptions to this policy.

Since its founding, the USC Annenberg School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence.

Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on

Journalism 556
Convergence Capstone
Annenberg School for Communications
School for Journalism

examinations or purchasing papers or other assignments will immediately receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism.

DISABILITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301. Its phone number is 213-740-0776.

Weekly Course Outline:

WEEK ONE

January 14, 2004

Course Overview, Story Meeting (pitches and selection)

- Introduction, syllabus review, critical concepts
- Students goals and interests
- What is social justice journalism?
- What is the role of social justice journalism?
- Examples by media:
 - Photography - Jacob Riis and the WPA
 - Documentary - Murrow - Harvest of Shame and Angola Prison
 - TV News
 - Newspapers
 - The Web

Homework:

- Assignment 1 - Story Pitch
- Initial research on the topic, students each bring in interest area.
- Set up a blogspot account and learn functionality
- READ: "The Microcontent News Blogging Software Roundup," by John Hiler <http://www.microcontentnews.com/articles/blogware.htm>

INVESTIGATE: Story Selection and Planning

WEEK TWO

January 21, 2004

Story Meeting (pitches and selection)

Story Discussion, Initial Findings and Assignments

- Story meeting
- Choosing a topic; Building consensus
- Research tactics
- Introduction to Blogspot (<http://new.blogger.com/blogspot-admin/>)

Homework:

- Assignment 2: Finding subjects
- Review Telling multimedia Stories:
 - Review: The Big Picture - Decision 2002
<http://www.msnbc.com/modules/BigPicture/elex/default.asp>

Journalism 556
Convergence Capstone
Annenberg School for Communications
School for Journalism

- Baggage Screener:
http://www.msnbc.com/modules/airport_security/screenerBroadcast_stories

WEEK THREE

January 28, 2004

Reporting your story across media

- Looking for visuals
- Sounds
- Ways of telling the story

Homework:

- Book reports and background ideas

WEEK FOUR

February 4, 2004

Structuring a non-linear narrative

Developing assignments

Homework:

- Review: [Elements of Digital Storytelling](#) by Nora Paul and the Institute for New Media Studies, UMN
- Using numbers:
 - Minnesota Public Radio - Budget Balancer
http://news.mpr.org/features/2004/03/10_newsroom_budgets_im/
 - Waterfront Renaissance
<http://waterfront.heraldnet.com/develop2.cfm#top>

REPORT: Research and reporting (all media)

WEEK FIVE

February 11, 2004

Research and Reporting Update

- Review "One Process Fits All."
 - Defining the project
 - Developing site structure
 - Visual design
 - Production and Q & A
 - Launch and Beyond

WEEK SIX

Research and Reporting Update

WEEK SEVEN

February 25, 2004

Research and Reporting Update

WEEK EIGHT

March 3, 2004

Research and reporting update

WEEK NINE

March 10, 2004

Research and Reporting Update

WEEK TEN

March 17, 2004 -- Spring Break

PRODUCE: Producing and Editing

WEEK ELEVEN

March 24, 2004

Producing, storyboarding and project management

Homework:

- Develop content inventory
- Develop a storyboard for our site and be prepared to discuss in class.
- Bring in examples of sites that you like.

WEEK TWELVE

March 31, 2004

Producing, Site Design and UI

- Develop site maps

WEEK THIRTEEN

April 7, 2004

Producing, copy inventory and review

- Assign roles and leadership on various production and editing tasks.

Homework:

- Vivian Rothstein
- Captions for all images
- Editing sessions on profiles (set with Bob and Paritosh)
- Reporting/Editing of Issues (Heather and EO)
- Set appointments as necessary with EO and BB

WEEK FOURTEEN

April 14, 2004

*Visual storytelling opportunities
Producing, copy inventory and review*

In Class

- Vivian Rothstein update
- Book presentations (where they are relevant)
- Hand in captions (digital to Eric and paper)
- Issues update (Heather lead)
- Profile Update (Paritosh lead)
- Review final elements (design, questions, stats, thermometer, etc)

Homework:

- Final copy for Issues of Issues
- Final copy for profiles
- Final copy for captions
- Follow up Reporting
- Production schedule and assignments
- Info graphics, etc.

WEEK FIFTEEN

April 21, 2004

Producing, pulling it all together

In class

- Final copy due (issues, profiles, captions)
- Site review
- Final requirements (do we want to make a push? More reporting?)

Homework

- Production assignments and work schedule
- Final copy - headlines, decks (Heather and Paritosh)
- Final copy edit issues and profiles (Janna)
- Index page (Janna)
- Statistics and date round up page (Matt)
- Production (Eugene, Eric)
- Credits page (Eugene, Eric)

WEEK SIXTEEN (last Class)

April 28, 2004

Review and Discussion

- Site review
- Event planning
- Final production
- QA process and schedule

- Conclusions and Discussion

WEEK SEVENTEEN - May 6th

Final Presentation