

JRN275: NEWS REPORTING

MOLLY YANITY, Ph.D.

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SECTION 1

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OFFICE HOURS in CCE 267: 9-11 a.m., Mondays & 9:30-11:30 a.m., Tuesdays

COURSE OVERVIEW

This is your first dive into the world of hard news, investigative reporting. **Welcome!**

Thomas Jefferson famously said in 1787, "The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and *were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.* But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them."

The founding father meant that journalism is needed to hold power to account – *and* that citizens need to be educated to make sound decisions.

Time and again, the free press has lived up to that responsibility. From the turn of the 20th century when Ida Tarbell profiled John D. Rockefeller and Standard Oil, and Upton Sinclair exposed the ills of the Chicago meatpacking plants to the uncovering of what really happened in Vietnam by David Halberstam and Seymour Hersh, journalism has shaped the course of global history.

And, of course, nothing altered the path of this nation the way Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein did when they doggedly pursued the story of the Watergate Hotel break-in that led to the resignation of Richard Nixon.

Today, we see a revival of investigative journalism as an unorthodox president tests the limits of the U.S. Constitution.

In this course, you will learn the basics of news reporting – how to identify, access and use public documents, as well as how to prepare for, conduct and best use interviews to put together sound investigative stories.



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PURPOSE

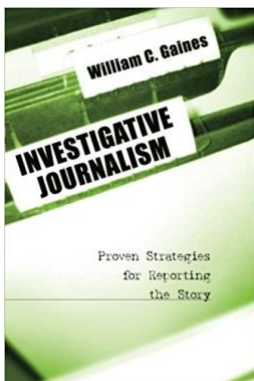
At the conclusion of this course, the assigned readings, class discussions and completed assignments should have helped you to be able to:

- Identify and pitch a fully developed story idea that includes a source list and list of documents
- Determine appropriate sources for research and interview material
- Use online databases and Web sites for gathering data
- Conduct face-to-face interviews and ask good questions
- Transcribe interviews efficiently
- Use resources on the web, at the library and elsewhere for supportive data
- Search and locate public records, including court and legal documents
- File a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request
- Practice ethical research within the context of assignments
- Understand contemporary issues related to privacy, and political implications associated with restricting public record availability

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- Gaines, William C. (2008). *Investigative Journalism: Proven Strategies for Reporting the Story*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN 978-0-87289-414-3.
- [The Associated Press Stylebook](http://www.apstylebook.com) (can be found online at www.apstylebook.com, or in paperback)
- An audio recorder is *highly recommended* for interviewing. Accurate note-taking is not only expected, but it is essential to capture what is stated, and transcriptions of interviews are required as part of certain assignments.
- Additional readings will be posted on course site

TEXTBOOKS



GRADING

Your grade will be comprised of the total score of the following:

Assignment #1: Info Scavenger Hunt	10 percent
Assignment #2: Investigate a Crime/Biz/NP	20 percent
Assignment #3: Interview assignment	10 percent of the final assignment grade
Movie assignment	10 percent
Midterm examination	20 percent
Final Assignment	25 percent (includes Assignment #3)
Quizzes/Homework	10 percent
Attendance/Engagement	5 percent

COURSE POLICIES

Quizzes

Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. There will be *no make-ups*.

Attendance/Engagement

Attendance is mandatory. Engage; you're here so you might as well learn. Attendance and engagement points are awarded at my discretion and will be the determining factor for grades "on the edge." **IF YOU MISS CLASS, it is YOUR responsibility to makeup work: do not ask the professor what you missed; ask a classmate.**

Technology and Respect

Out of respect for your professor and fellow classmates, laptops, tablets and phones are not permitted for use in class unless specified by the professor beforehand. They should be stored, in the off/silent position. Note-taking should be done via pen/paper and can be transferred to electronic format outside of the class time.

Assistance

If you have health or educational needs, please inform me ***within the first week of the semester***. Consistent with its responsibilities, Quinnipiac University also provides [reasonable accommodations to promote equal educational opportunity](#). If you require assistance beyond what I can provide, please contact John Jarvis, Coordinator of Learning Services at 203-582-5390 or John.Jarvis@Quinnipiac.edu.

Supplemental Assistance

Understanding and using the basics of grammar, punctuation and writing structure are expected. If you are having difficulty with this, please seek assistance from the QU Learning Center at TH 119, or call (203) 582-8628.

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with Quinnipiac University's policy on Academic Integrity. ([Available in full here](#).) *Along with the University's policy, understand that made-up sources, made-up quotations will result in failing and/or lower grades.*