

JRN501: REPORTING & FACT-CHECKING

MOLLY YANITY, Ph.D.

FALL 2020

9-11:50 a.m., Mondays

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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesdays & Thursdays (10 a.m.-noon), Wednesdays (9:30 a.m.-noon)

Office hours will be held *by appointment** in CCE 267, or via Zoom at my [personal meeting room](#) (873 158 5327), which will be open during the above hours. *Office hours are typically drop-in, but because of social distancing requirements, I request students make appointments this semester.

COURSE OVERVIEW

Welcome to JRN501: Reporting & Fact-Checking. You are embarking upon a graduate level reporting and writing course that will emphasize the tools, tasks and tribulations behind GREAT STORYTELLING.

First, **the tools**.

To succeed in this course, the tools you will need are **CURIOSITY, COURAGE** and **TIME & EFFORT**. You need curiosity to *find* great ideas and potential stories. You need courage to *ask* people about those ideas and stories. And, you need the time and effort to turn your ideas and someone's answers into great stories.

Next, **the tasks**.

In order to learn about different narrative styles and the kinds of reporting required to employ those styles, you need **READ** different narrative styles and kinds of reporting. This is Step 1 – you have to read. If you haven't done the reading, don't even bother coming to class because you will waste your time and your classmates'. Speaking of reading, you will begin with vignettes about people you see every day. But, to find out about those people, you will need to know how to *interview well, what kinds of questions to ask, what public documents you need to triangulate and verify* information and, ultimately, you need to **WRITE**.

Lastly, **the tribulations**.

We will meet in person and we will do our best to stay six feet apart, wear our masks and respect each other while attempting to keep everyone healthy. This is a discussion-based class; I hardly lecture in it. So, be prepared to contribute orally every week.

We will talk a lot about **FAILING**, about not getting the job done. You will be given the opportunity to fail, to do a not-so-great job... wait. *What is she talking about?* This is a class and you want an “A.” I know that. But, to figure out what works, you will need to go through what *doesn't* work. This course is as soft a landing as you will have and we will work through struggles, shortcomings and failures – together – in order to figure out how to report, to strike a voice and, ultimately, to tell a great story.

COVID-19, tragically, is also a tribulation. My attendance policy, course policies, etc. have changed a bit due to the pandemic – and my syllabuses are way longer! Further, being in public to observe and interview people is going to be more challenging. It will require you to observe health and safety standards. *If you have an issue, concern or problem when it comes to field work, please meet with me individually and well before a deadline so we can find solutions.*

PURPOSE

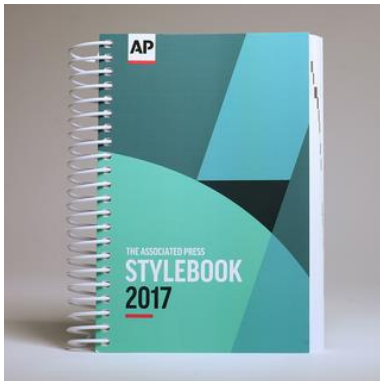
At the conclusion of this course, the assigned readings, class discussions and completed assignments should have helped you to be able to:

- Identify and appreciate great journalism
- Conduct strong interviews
- Understand where to find and how to get public documents
- Triangulate information for full verification
- Use that information to put together strong, narrative journalism articles

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- AP Stylebook (or, digital subscription to APStylebook.com)

TEXTBOOKS



GRADING

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

Homework assignments	40 points
Attendance/Engagement	20 points
FINAL Article	40 points: Story pitch 10 points; First draft 5 points; Second draft 5 points; Final 20 points

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Engagement

Attendance and *full engagement* are expected. This means:

- 1.) You need to come to class.
- 2.) You need to come to class *prepared*. (As previously mentioned, that you have done the reading, thought about it, prepared questions and discussion points.)
- 3.) **This is a graduate course and respectful dialogue is expected.** You will regularly present your writing, your ideas, your opinions. You may be challenged. Respect and civility are expected. So are your voice and uniqueness.
- 4.) While in class, you need to be on task. If you are working on other materials or engaged in activities beyond the course, you may be asked to leave and that will count as an absence.
- 5.) Attendance and engagement points are awarded at my discretion – but you will automatically receive ZERO POINTS if you miss more than one class without informing me prior to the missed class*. **IF YOU MISS CLASS, it is YOUR responsibility to makeup work. Do not ask the professor what you missed; ask a classmate.**

***COVID-19 PROCEDURES**

That said, there may be instances in which students must quarantine or become ill. In the former circumstance, the course will be available via Zoom and quarantined students will participate via Zoom. Doctor's notes confirming illnesses will also negate the one-absence policy. Deadlines will be adjusted on an individual basis.

OTHER COVID-19 POLICIES

- **Face coverings.** The University policy is that face coverings must be properly worn (covering both nose and mouth) in the classroom and in all public places at all times. Students with questions about medical exemptions for masks should contact the [Office of Student Accessibility](#).
- **Social distancing.** The University policy is that everyone must practice social distancing, staying at least six feet away from others at all times. Students should respect the personal space of their instructors and fellow students at all times.
- **Entering/exiting the classroom.** Maintain social distancing as they enter and exit the classroom, staying at least six feet away from others in a single-file fashion.
- **Cleaning your workspace.** The University policy is that everyone must clean their workspaces/desks at the end of each class period. Cleaning supplies provided by the University are available in every classroom.
- **Zoom recordings and privacy concerns.** Zoom sessions are recorded. Cameras must be turned on for the duration of synchronous online classes. If you aren't able to turn on your camera, please inform the instructor *before* class begins.
- **Symptom checking and tracking.** Please see and [follow university protocols](#).

CONTACTING PROFESSOR YANITY

The best way to reach me is via email (Molly.Yanity@qu.edu) or at my office phone (203-582-5031). *PLEASE DO NOT TEXT ME FOR CLASS-RELATED THINGS UNLESS IT IS AN EMERGENCY.* I'll respond within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends, although I'll usually get back to you much sooner. I routinely send out emails and may post announcements via Blackboard, so be sure to check your QU email and our course Blackboard page frequently.

SYLLABUS REVISION DISCLAIMER

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus, class schedule or assignment guidelines at any point during the semester if I deem that changes are necessary. I will inform you of any changes in class, via email and on the course website. I'll also send and post any revised documents.

UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Quinnipiac University has established Essential Learning Outcomes and learning paradigms. They include Interpersonal Proficiencies: Written communication, oral communication, responsible citizenship, diversity awareness & sensitivity and social intelligence, and Intellectual Outcomes: Critical thinking & reasoning, scientific literacy, quantitative reasoning, information fluency, creative thinking and visual literacy. More on these outcomes is [available here](#).

The Department of Journalism states that its mission is “to prepare journalism professionals who reflect and can effectively report on the diversity of the human experience.”

Students who graduate with a degree in journalism should be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to research, report, write and edit news stories that conform to professional journalism standards, including the ability to apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.
2. Demonstrate command of the techniques used to produce and present news in print, broadcast and digital environments, and understand the interconnectedness of these systems.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the history of journalism, its social responsibility and the underpinnings of its practice in a culturally and racially diverse society.
4. Understand the implications of the First Amendment and the role journalism plays in democracy.
5. Engage in the ethical practice of journalism.

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY/BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Quinnipiac University is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me.

If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with the Office of Student Accessibility, to begin this conversation or to request reasonable accommodations. Quinnipiac University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Please contact the Office of Student Accessibility by emailing access@qu.edu, or by calling (203) 582-7600. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the Office of Student Accessibility, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.