

Fall 2015

J342G/J395 41: Reporting the World: A Critical Examination of the U.S. News Media

Classes: M/W 1:30- 3, CMA 4.152
Instructor: Tracy Dahlby
Office: BMC 3.324
Telephone: 512-471-6272
Email: tracy.dahlby@austin.utexas.edu
Office Hours: M/W 3:30-5, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Cate Malek
Telephone: 512-850-3299
Email: cate.malek@gmail.com

“We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.”—Anais Nin

“Every big thing is a secret, even when you know it, because you can never know all of it.”—Madame Laoutaro, a character in “The Rebel Angels” by Robertson Davies

Objectives

This course offers a dynamic way of looking at, thinking about, and reporting events and ideas, both abroad and at home. It will help you establish a framework for analyzing and understanding the factors that shape our lives in a global society. Our guiding considerations: How does the news coverage we consume shape our views and influence our reporting? To what extent do such views or “templates” jibe with or differ from what really occurs? As journalist-observers, or journalist-detectives, how do we develop tools for obtaining a clearer picture of what lies at the heart of important events and trends?

In answering such questions, we will focus on how to:

- Think critically about what purpose the news media serve – and how we can use various news and non-news media to see the world more clearly.
- Determine the extent to which the news media succeed or fail in conveying the reality of events on the ground and why.
- Drill down to fundamental layers of understanding about events (and their political, economic, cultural and psychological complexities), and develop deep context on issues affecting our interests and those of others.
- Develop and hone our research, reporting and writing techniques.
- Distinguish the Do’s and Don’ts of professional journalism, and consider the ethical compass points of fairness, accuracy and truth seeking as they relate to explaining the world around us.

Classes

The class meets for 75 minutes twice a week and employs a series of case studies and exercises to teach you to think critically about how the news is “made” and factors that have contributed to the shaping of American journalism; the degree to which ideologies, ownership and political power clarify or obscure journalism’s task of going after the illuminating or significant story and getting it right; the journalist’s obligations to history, objectivity and fairness; the means by which to establish a productive stance in regard to conflicting value systems; and the demands posed by technological, political and social change in a globalizing world. In short, we will discuss and practice techniques for becoming better reporters, writers and thinkers.

Each class will start with “News of the Day” – an editorial discussion of what’s in the news and how it relates to our study. Your familiarity with the ebb and flow of current events will be an important factor in your grade for class participation. In an early class session we’ll discuss how “News” will work and how we’ll use it to keep our fingers on the pulse of what’s happening in the world. You’ll be required to subscribe to a digital copy of The New York Times (See “Course Materials” below), and will be expected to keep up with it throughout the semester. While the Times will help anchor News of the Day, you’ll also be asked to compare and contrast coverage with other online news sites—for example, other leading newspapers (e.g., The Guardian of the UK, The Wall Street Journal or The Washington Post), other leading news websites (e.g., Al Jazeera English, the BBC World News, VICE News and BuzzFeed) and the mainstay wire services (e.g., The Associated Press and Reuters).

Following News of the Day, Tracy will lead seminar-style discussions of the ideas, issues and events under our journalistic microscope. (See “Course Schedule” below.) You will be encouraged to volunteer your ideas and from time to time will also be called on to participate to ensure that everyone gets involved and we all benefit from hearing a full range of views.

Course Materials

Required Texts

“Informing the News: The Need for Knowledge-based Journalism” by Thomas E. Patterson

“Orientalism” by Edward W. Said

“Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies” by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit

“Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China” by Evan Osnos

Required Online Subscription

The New York Times is one of the world’s most influential newspapers and will serve as a common point of reference for News of the Day and class discussions about current events. You can subscribe to the digital edition at the educational rate of \$0.99 for the

first four weeks and \$1.88 a week thereafter by visiting www.nytimes.com/collegerate or calling 1-800-698-4637. A subscription to the print edition is more costly and not required.

Required equipment: Use of personal digital devices, including laptops and smart phones, is not permitted in this class (see “Attendance & Rules of the Road” below), so please bring in an old-fashioned notebook and a pen to take notes. Please keep reading and discussion notes you take outside of class in your notebook or print them out before class starts. Notes on digital devices will be off limits during class.

Assignments & Grades

There are four main assignment types (five for grad students):

1. **Commentary and news analysis:** Designed to reflect your thinking about issues covered in class, regular written assignments will develop your ability to process information and opinion (from assigned reading, other media, and class discussion) and make meaning out of it for a general audience. Completing the assigned reading and reporting on your own initiative will be critical to demonstrating your grasp of the issues in written form. Range: 300 to 700 words.
2. **Reporting exercises/quizzes:** These may include reflection papers on your reading and/or viewing for class, timelines to keep track of developing news stories, or quizzes on course materials or news events.
3. **Leading class discussion:** Each student will be asked to help lead a class discussion based on our readings and related materials at least once during the course of the semester.
4. **Graduate students:** One additional essay will be required of grad students. In consultation with Tracy, individuals will choose a book (or books) about which to write an analysis of 700 words. **Please do not pick a book you have already read or written about.**
5. **Semester project (grads and undergrads):** You will choose a topic of your liking that deals with issues or events covered in class and write an essay—1,000 “finished” words for undergraduates and 1,200 “finished” words for graduate students, or the multimedia equivalent. **Students wanting to do a multimedia project should discuss plans with Tracy well in advance of the deadline.**

Assignment schedule

1. **Commentary and news analysis pieces:** You will write approximately five short essays, ranging in length from 300 to 700 “finished” words. Spaced at intervals of approximately 10 days to two weeks (depending on our pace and progress as a class), these assignments will test your grasp of course materials and discussion. The goal: To hone our ability to say meaningful things on questions of importance inside a tight word budget. (Thus the emphasis on “finished” pieces.)
2. **Book analysis:** Grad students will file an essay of 700 words at the time of their choosing up to a final deadline of **Friday, Nov. 13 at 6 p.m. Assignments filed after the final deadline will not be accepted.**

3. **Semester project:** Your rough draft is due on **Monday, Nov. 23, at 6 p.m.** The final version is due on **Mon., Dec. 7, at 12 noon.**

Grades

Key points for success:

1. **Meet your deadlines.**
2. **Always be prepared for News of the Day.**
3. **Prepare well for your turn to lead class discussion.**
4. **Do your homework and participate in class discussion.**

Deadlines: They're sacrosanct in journalism. Meet them and qualify your assignments for full credit; miss them and your highest potential grade will drop sharply—one grade level each at 30 minutes, 12 hours, 24 hours late, and so on. You may always file your assignments *before* deadline to the applause of your grateful editors.

Assessment: Writing assignments will be graded on the skill with which you use language, organization and solidly reported content to illustrate and satisfy your topic – and the degree to which you improve your skills over the course of the semester. **See Appendix I below for a detailed assessment grid for commentaries and analyses.**

The Matrix: Final course grades will be calculated on the plus/minus grading system for both undergraduate and graduate students. They will be tallied according to the following percentage guidelines:

- Commentary, analysis and reporting exercises 50
- Semester project 15
- Class participation and in-class exercises 35

Class participation: Each class period will carry specific weight in your grade for class participation. Taking part in “News of the Day” counts for 10 percent of your overall grade, your turn as class discussion leader counts for 5 percent, and your participation in discussion counts for 20 percent. (There are 28 class days in our semester—many but not all sessions will feature class discussion. As a rule of thumb, therefore, it may be helpful to think of each discussion period counting for roughly 1 percent of your overall grade.)

Grading Scale

A = 94 to 100 points

A- 90 to 93

B+ 87 to 89

B = 84 to 86

B- 80 to 83

C+ 77 to 79

C = 74 to 76

- C- 70 to 73
- D+ 67 to 69
- D = 64 to 66
- D- 60 to 62

Filing Your Work

Key points:

- 1. Post your work to Canvas; email a backup copy to your instructors.**
- 2. Label BOTH your email and your Word document with the proper slug.**
- 3. Place a working headline on ALL your assignments.**

We will submit assignments in two ways—first, by posting on a discussion thread on Canvas and, second, because of the importance of making deadlines in this class, by emailing a backup copy of your assignment to your editors, Tracy and Cate. Sending the backup copy ensures your work is received even if technical glitches prevent your post from showing up on Canvas on time.

Generally speaking, all written communication between you and your editors will be electronic. For routine memos (messages), use standard email. Send commentary/story proposals and files as email attachments in Word. **When filing an attachment always be sure to put the same slug on BOTH your email AND the attachment.**

Important: Work won't be accepted for deadline purposes without proper slugs (on both email and attached Word document) or a working headline (see below). Please don't expect your editors to remind you about slugs and headlines. That is your responsibility.

Here's how to create a proper slug:

Start by using the correct tag for the item you're sending: for commentaries/stories, it's "file"; for project proposals, it's "prop"; for all other messages, it's "memo." Next, add a space after the slug and then insert your last name. Add another space and enter the assignment number (or for memos only, a brief topic identifier). If your last name is Smith, for example, and you're filing your first assignment, the slug reads:

file smith assign1

If you're sending a routine memo, it reads:

memo smith missed deadline

For the class questionnaire, the slug is:

file smith questionnaire

If you're filing a project proposal, the slug is:

prop smith project

Please send all story files and proposals to both of your editors—one copy to Tracy, one to Cate. Memos can of course be sent to either Cate or Tracy or both, depending on to whom you want to talk about what.

Important: Start all written assignments with a working headline. Putting a headline or title on your work helps focus both writer and reader, and is therefore a good habit to acquire. Thus it's also a requirement of this course and your grade will be reduced for failing to include a title.

Editorial Consultations

You will meet with Tracy at least once during the semester to discuss individual progress, reporting methods, research ideas and career goals. You are also encouraged to make use of office hours to discuss any of the foregoing.

Attendance & Rules of the Road

Being there: Showing up when you need to be there is a first requirement of the reporter's craft. Come to class on time. Do your own work. **If you can't be on time, tell Tracy why – in advance. ("In advance" means at least an hour before class time and preferably the day before.)**

Unexcused absences: If you accumulate three unexcused absences you should consider dropping the course. (Please don't interpret this to mean you have three "free passes"—you don't. Each class period carries specific weight in your grade for class participation.) Being five minutes late equals half an absence, 15 minutes late is a full one. Leaving class early will be treated the same way.

Unexcused absences can be converted to excused absences when you present acceptable documentation – e.g., a note from a healthcare provider.

Important note on professional courtesy: Attention is the key to good intellectual work. To help us maintain our focus, sharp and clear, use of electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets, e-readers or laptops) is not permitted during class unless required for in-class assignments as specifically approved by the instructor. If you require personal digital connectivity during class time, this is not the class for you.

Likewise, please don't consume food in class. Beverages are okay provided they don't prove a distraction.

See Tracy if you wish to request an exemption from the computer policy based on documented special needs.

Tips for Success

Executive summary:

1. **Read/view/listen to all course materials and be prepared to discuss them in class.**
2. **Take notes to help you “frontload” facts and ideas for discussion.**
3. **In discussing, clearly reference sources and ideas—i.e., who said what. (This is where you say: “In the article from Foreign Affairs magazine, Mary Smithers, an expert on the Chinese economy, argues,” and then give the author’s main points of argument. After (but only after) you’ve established what the author argues, it’s time to say what you think, agree or disagree.)**
4. **Honor the learning space.**

Reading: Reading, both panoramic and sharply focused, is essential to your success and growth as a journalist. Formal reading assignments come from two main sources – required texts and materials provided for you on Canvas. **Please do all the reading assigned for class discussion so that we can make the best use of our time together.**

Taking Notes: Producing a good set of notes is one of the professional journalist’s great assets. Even in a world of digital recorders you’ll want your own separate, written record of events to help you decide what *you* think about things and how they connect to *other things* you know. So, each time you encounter a source, whether human or media (e.g., a city official, an expert on climate change, or a book, an article or a video) take notes. This is important in your development as a critical thinker. To talk or write authoritatively about a subject you need not only to read, view and listen but also to master the relevant materials, which means retaining key ideas and supporting detail. Don’t leave your data in the Cloud; making information your own requires that you work it as a baker kneads bread or a potter molds clay. Taking good notes is the best way to ensure you emerge from your encounters with sources and ideas with something of lasting value and utility.

Activating Your Knowledge: In order to talk intelligently about the issues of the day, and to get the most out of our course materials, we want to command the materials and the ideas contained in them. To that end: 1) Always take reading or viewing notes; 2) Take them in a diary or a notebook or print them out before class; 3) Make sure the notes contain the author’s name and the title of the work from which you’re quoting; 4) Make sure your notes track the development of the argument as well contain key phrases the author uses to support the argument; 5) When citing a work in class discussion, state the author’s name, the title of the work, and explain the author’s POV with quotes or concrete examples; 6) Keep your notes in a running intellectual diary—you’ll be surprised how much more you take away from the class; 7) In class discussion, once you’ve established what the author says you can then critique the argument and say what

you think and feel about it; 8) Skipping these steps leads to wasted time—you won't retain much. Follow them and you'll be surprised how well you know your subject!

Honor the Learning Space: One of the purposes of universities since they were established in medieval times is to create a quiet space for scholars and students to absorb ideas and reflect on their learning. As educator Mark Edmundson writes: “To live well, we must sometimes stop and think and then try to remake the work in progress that we currently are. There’s no better place for that than a college classroom where, together, we can slow it down and live deliberately.” Sure, straight-up skills classes are vital and in them we often need to be wired in, as students are in other classes I teach. In this class, though, we’re learning a different skill: how to think deeply and develop the context required to really understand what’s going on in the world. To do that, we need a space in which to focus and think—an oasis, if you will. In that spirit, our classroom is off limits to personal digital connectivity.

Office hours: Take advantage of them – to discuss the class, your progress, ideas, career plans, or your professional interests. You are always welcome.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change: Journalism can be fluid as quicksilver and fickle as the weather, so we need to stay flexible. We’ll update topics and assignments as needed and announce them in class as we go. The only materials NOT on Canvas will be assignments from your required textbooks and your independent reading of the news.

Ultimately, it’s up to you to monitor Canvas for the full range of assigned materials for any given session, including late-breaking items.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Aug. 26 Untangling the Mystery of Things

Some basic questions: What is the key to successfully observing the world for fun and profit? How do we know what we know about the world based on what we consume in the media? How does that picture jibe with or differ from what is really going on?

Reading Course syllabus

In class Poynter Institute: “10 Ways Young Journalists Can Make Themselves More Marketable”
New York Times: “On Your Own Content Farm”

Our Journey Begins: Who Are We and What Do We Want?

News has value for us both as an extrinsic and intrinsic phenomenon: We look at what's going on in our world and, in trying to understand events, we are changed. Thus, gathering the news is a very human pursuit because it's not only manufactured by systems – people create it and are influenced by it, too. What sets journalists apart from other intellectual adventurers? What does it mean to be a “critical thinker turned loose in the world”?

In class PowerPoint: “The Animating Spirit of Journalism”

Read Tracy Dahlby: Regarding Katherine Graham in “Firemen, Florists and Free Speech”
E.F. Schumacher: “A Guide for the Perplexed” (Excerpt)

Sept. 2

Getting Oriented: A Sense of Where You Are

GPS can locate us in the world but does it really tell us where we are? Today we'll start “News of the Day” to get a handle on what's going on in the world. To what extent do the news media adequately “map” or ignore important stories?

In class Alissa Miller: “How the News Distorts Our Worldview”

Read Anjan Sundaram: “We're Missing the Story: The Media's Retreat from Foreign Reporting”
David Brooks: “The Real Africa” and “Stairway to Wisdom”
Tracy Dahlby: “Parachuting In: Tips for the Long-distance Reporter”

9-14

Staging a Big Story: A Summer of Greek Drama

It was all Greece's fault! No, it was Germany's fault! No wait ... What? The Greek economy tanked, news stories and commentaries alternately pointed the finger at the various players, as the world teetered on the brink of “Grexit,” Athens' exit from the Eurozone. Meanwhile not a few news consumers found the story's complications as numbing as novocaine. Let's apply a few basic techniques to understand what happened, why the story is interesting and important, and how it provides a steppingstone for understanding and reporting the news.

In class PowerPoint: “Nut-graf-ology + the Pyramid of Knowing”

Read Study Memo: Staging a Big Story

SECTION 2: SOME LIMITATIONS ON PERCEPTION AND OBSERVATION

16 **Locating Our Blind Spots: Three Factors That Perennially Ensorcell and Bamboozle**

To be good reporters we first have to be aware of how much we don't know or, to say another way, *how much we are capable of knowing*. Let's consider a few of the things that cloud our thinking and cognition—socioeconomic status, the tricks stored in the wetware of our brains, and the impact of technology on our thinking.

Read Michael Inzlicht and Sukhvinder Obhi: “Powerful and Cold-Hearted”
New York Times op-ed: “Your Brain Lies to You”
James Gorman: “Scientists Trace Memories of Things That Never Happened”
MSNBC: “Mechanism Behind the Gorilla”
MSNBC: “Inattentional Blindness”
Jaron Lanier: “You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto” (Excerpt)
David Brooks: “Building Attention Span”

21 **Case Study: The Media's Iraq Surprise**

In Spring 2014 media reports that a radical insurgent group, ISIS, was sweeping through Iraq, taking large swaths of territory, sent shockwaves through the capitals in the Middle East, Europe and Washington. The ISIS “surprise” also raised public questions about the utility of America's long engagement in Iraq. Why did the story seem to take the news media and policymakers by surprise? Why is it important to get the story right?

Read Study Memo: Parsing the Mystery of ISIS

View Frontline: “Losing Iraq”

23 **Iraq Surprise, Part II: Is Past Prologue?**

For journalists it's an eternal question: Did information exist that would have allowed the news media to do a better job of informing the American people about the stages of U.S. involvement in Iraq and the Middle East before events took them by surprise? To what extent did press coverage of the run-up to the Iraq war set the stage for future misunderstandings?

View Bill Moyers: “Buying the War”

SECTION 3: HOW DOES THE MEDIA MACHINE ESTABLISH THE NEWS NARRATIVE?

28 Knowledge-based Journalism I: A Case for “The Corruption of Information”

Critics have called it the “hamster wheel.” Others simply call it the “news cycle.” Whichever, the daily round of today’s media operations and the journalists they employ has changed dramatically in a short period of time. How has the impact of technology on the newsroom and the scramble for news sources led to calls for revamping the news business?

Read “Informing the News,” p. 3-59

In class Shorenstein Center: “Journalist’s Resource”

30 Knowledge-based Journalism II: Defining the “Knowledge Deficit”

To what extent has the lack of “slow-speed” context-building and a concomitant rush to journalistic judgment eroded the news media’s efficacy in a time of digital revolution? Let’s now take up the question of coping with the new intellectual demands of a craft with an anti-intellectual past.

Read “Informing the News,” p. 60-106

Oct. 5 Knowledge-based Journalism III: Patterson vs. Chomsky

What is the nature of the relationship between news and power? Between news and democracy? To what extent are major U.S. media influenced by “special interests”? To what extent are news consumers manipulated by the news media? Let’s contrast Thomas Patterson’s argument with Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman’s landmark “Propaganda Model.”

Read “Informing the News,” p. 107-143
“Manufacturing Consent”: Preface and
Ch.1: “A Propaganda Model”

View Chomsky/Anti-Chomsky sampler TBA

SECTION 4: ON THE ROAD TO ‘KNOWLEDGE-BASED’ JOURNALISM— SOME KEY STEPS

7 The Fog of War: Critical Thinking—and Critical Errors

Big historical events like the Iraq War and the Syrian conflict are hard to interpret while they’re still unfolding. Let’s look through a longer lens, at the Vietnam War, and see what “lessons” it offers. Secretary of Defense under presidents Kennedy and Johnson, Robert McNamara is regarded as one of the war’s chief architects. Can a gift for thinking critically lead us into critical mistakes? To what extent do McNamara’s self-professed lessons have relevance to witnessing big events in our world today?

View Errol Morris: “The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara” (2003)

Read “Historians’ Fallacies” excerpt TBA

12 Going Deeper, Thinking About Your Philosophy

How well have journalists traditionally coped with reality? How have they thought of themselves, philosophically? Is it time to change the paradigm? To what extent are “old-time” values relevant in today’s digital age? How do you develop your gestalt as a reporter?

Read “From Milton to McLuhan”
Introduction: “Journalism as Fire and Light”
Ch. 1: “To Keep ‘Us Always Alive with Excitement””
Ch. 2: “Ideology and the Missing Theory of News”
Ch. 3: “Philosophy and Some Fundamental Questions”

In class PowerPoint: “The Reporter’s Paradigm”

SECTION 5: ZEROING IN ON KEY TEMPLATES—DEALING WITH RELIGION, RACE AND CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDING

14-19 Through a Glass Darkly: America’s View of the Muslim World

Framing the issue: What do Americans know about the Islamic sphere and how have the media helped them know it? It’s now been 14 years since 9/11—what role did events play in establishing perceptions? How are attitudes played out in everyday life in America? What lies beneath such attitudes and outlooks?

View PBS Frontline: “The Man Behind the Mosque”

Read "Orientalism": Preface & Introduction

In class Video: "Edward Said on Orientalism"

21-28 Orientalism: Examining the Cultural Lens

What are the historical origins of the West's view of Islam? To what extent do old images condition today's news coverage?

Read "Orientalism"
Part 1: I- "Knowing the Oriental"
II- "Imaginative Geography..."
III- "Projects"
IV- "Crisis"

Part 3: I- "Latent and Manifest Orientalism"
II- "Style, Expertise, Vision..."
III- "Modern Anglo-French Orientalism..."
IV- "The Latest Phase"
"Afterword I and II"

Nov. 2 Occidentalism: Turning the Telescope Around

What are the historical origins of political Islam's view of the West? To what extent do such ideas influence the media narrative in Muslim majority countries today? To what extent do they share a viewpoint with other traditional critics and opponents of the West?

Read *Occidentalism* (entire book)

4 Summing up: A New Basis for Understanding?

To what extent does U.S. news coverage reflect a comprehensive view of the Muslim world? By what means can we broaden our perspectives as reporters? How do we establish balance in a time of warring ideas? How important is "fairness" and how do you define it?

Read: Bernard Lewis: "The Question of Orientalism"
Edward Said: "Orientalism: An Exchange"

9-11 The Mystery of Money, Mississippi: When Race and Ethnicity Are Fundamental to the Story

To what extent did the national media "discover" the civil rights story in the American South during the 1950s? What role did the African American press play? How did reporting of the Emmett Till trial influence

the mainstream media and public perceptions about the struggle for civil rights? To what extent do racial and ethnic stereotypes condition news coverage today?

Read “The Race Beat,” Ch. 1: “An American Dilemma: ‘An Astonishing Ignorance...’”
Other Canvas readings TBA

View Alex Gibney and Tracy Dahlby: “The Rage Within” from the documentary series “The Fifties”

16 **The Mystery of Sandra Bland**

A young Chicago woman on her way to start a job at Prairie View A&M is arrested for a minor traffic violation in Waller County, Texas, and three days later is found dead in her jail cell. What happened? What questions remain unanswered? To what extent does this case have resonance with larger frames of history and public perception?

Read Karen Attiah: “How the Western Media Would Cover Baltimore If It Happened Elsewhere”
Other Canvas materials TBA

Listen New Yorker: Ta-Nehisi Coates in Conversation with David Remnick
NPR: “Chicago Students to News Media: ‘You Don’t Know Us.’”

18 **Parsing China on the Rise: Friend or Foe? Peril or Promise?**

Just suppose: An editor from a prominent American news outlet asks you to “parachute” into China to cover a major story. Because of China’s importance in the world, the stakes are high, for the story and your career. How do you prepare yourself to tackle the assignment? What do you need to know? How do you establish your framework for thinking and reporting?

View YouTube: “United States Owes China”

Read Orville Schell: “Can the U.S. and China Get Along?”
Minxin Pei: “How China and America See Each Other: And Why They’re on a Collision Course”
“Age of Ambition,” pages TBA

23 China, Part II

Read Perry Link: “He Exposed Corrupt China Before He Left”
“Age of Ambition,” pages TBA

25 China, Part III

Read “Age of Ambition,” pages TBA
Other Canvas materials TBA

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Nov. 30/

Dec. 2

Course Wrap-up: Developing Your Own Gestalt as a Reporter

What are the key ideas we’ve considered in this course? To what extent has your framework for looking at and understanding the world changed? Let’s talk about our personal philosophies of journalism.

APPENDIX I

Assessment Grid for Commentaries & Analysis

In evaluating your written work for this course, the instructor will use the following framework:

1. The work shows an effective, well-focused presentation of topic.

0 1 2 3 4

2. The ideas represented in the work are well argued throughout and the work is persuasive of its point of view.

0 1 2 3 4

3. The work demonstrates effective research and/or reporting, and is supported by appropriate sources.

0 1 2 3 4

4. The writing is straightforward, lucid and logical.

0 1 2 3 4

5. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct.

0 1 2 3 4

6. The work properly attributes sources.

0 1 2 3 4

7. The work demonstrates critical thinking about issues relevant to a full treatment of the topic at hand.

0 1 2 3 4

APPENDIX II

Undergraduate Course Flags for Reporting the World

Writing

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

Independent Inquiry

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

Global Cultures

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

APPENDIX III

Required University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

Plagiarism and the Consequences of Plagiarizing

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html>
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

Use of Canvas in Class

This course will use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at canvas.utexas.edu or by contacting the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the instructor will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”