

Class: #63880 TTH 11:00 to 12:30, MAI 220c

Instructor: Stephen D. Reese, School of Journalism

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Office Hours: W 1:30 to 3:00, R 9:30 to 11:00; or by appointment (visit required)

Blackboard site: <https://courses.utexas.edu>

Class blogsite: <http://signature911.wordpress.com>

Reese faculty site: <http://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/reese>

This class approaches the understanding of 9-11 on its ten-year anniversary. Americans are often told “9-11 changed everything.” The attacks on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, became a watershed spectacle of modern terrorism. Although now a decade ago, Al-Qaeda’s attack led to ongoing U.S. military action in Afghanistan and Iraq, and continuing controversies over “Ground Zero” memorials in New York revolve around how we view our country and the “enemy.” Transmitted on a global media platform, these issues can be understood in part through a journalistic lens, which helped to frame the ensuing “global war on terrorism.”

Understanding 9-11 requires an interdisciplinary perspective. As a media-constructed spectacle, we must understand the U.S. press as an institution, its historical relationship with foreign policy and military elites, and its location relative to other global media voices. International media studies and media sociology perspectives intersect with political science—along with globalization, military and cultural studies—to help examine media framing of the “war on terror” and its deep ideological elements. Religious studies and international relations insights also help explain why 9-11 was characterized as an attack on our freedoms, by an enemy with a distinctive Islamic character, later conflated with the secular Saddam Hussein to produce what many have argued is perhaps the worst foreign policy blunders in our history. Because the issues are ongoing, as revealed in contemporary news events, we will consider the lessons of 9-11, including the importance of a well-informed and culturally aware press corps and public.

Key Questions to be asked:

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What did we do about it?

What should we have done about it?

Objectives. The course is designed to help you:

Understand the significance of 9/11

Critically examine the claims surrounding 9/11

Identify how different perspectives shape that understanding (political, cultural, religious, etc.)

Assess the performance of the press in helping the public understand 9/11 and the ensuing “War on Terror”

Signature Course Objectives. In addition to the specific objectives related to the course topic above, the course is designed to equip you:

- To learn about a topic from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including how it is playing out in contemporary events
- To develop skills in information literacy and library research
- To develop writing ability
- To communicate effectively in oral presentation
- To become aware of the world-class resources for learning on the campus
- To participate in the larger campus-wide conversation through University Lectures and other related events

As your instructor, I am here to help you. I strongly encourage you visit me in office hours at least once during the first two weeks, so I can get to know you and your interests. We are fortunate to have a small enrollment seminar format for the course, which allows for discussion and personal-level feedback. This also requires that we establish an atmosphere of mutual respect, as we create a learning community. Please be prompt and faithful in your attendance, turn off cell phones, etc. Laptops or Ipads are not permitted unless for some specific class purpose. I have outlined as clearly as possible the procedures for the course below, so please read carefully, especially the deadlines. This is the most important course document. If I change it for any reason, you will be notified and updated clarifications will be posted on Blackboard.

Required readings:

A wealth of material has been published since 9/11, from which the following have been carefully selected. They include the government's official reckoning of what happened (9/11 Commission), a compilation of diverse perspectives from academics and other elites (*After Terror*), and two journalistic accounts—one by a government “insider,” Bob Woodward, and one by an observer on the scene, Peter Bergen.

The 9/11 Commission Report. Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. Authorized Edition, paperback. New York: W. W. Norton.

Ahmed, Akbar & Brian Forst, eds. (2005). *After terror: Promoting dialogue among civilizations*. Malden, MA: Polity.

Bergen, Peter (2011). *The longest war: The enduring conflict between America and Al-Qaeda*. New York: Free Press.

Woodward, Bob (2002). *Bush at war*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Electronic Course Support:

I will communicate with you via email, so make sure the university has your preferred address in your profile. I will post information on Blackboard (above). I will also use some combination of blogsites, including on WordPress (above) and perhaps Blackboard, to help assemble useful course-related material and recent developments in the news, as

well as to allow you to post comments in preparation for or in reaction to classroom discussion. Stay tuned for further instructions.

University Lecture Connection:

Signature Courses integrate a University Lecture event or other similar campus-wide programs. You will be asked to attend and include what you learn in your own projects (See bibliography assignment below). Any number of lecture topics could intersect with these perspectives on 9-11, but a list of these events will be distributed at the first of the semester.

Gems of the University:

Signature Courses also make use of the university “gems.” Of particular interest to our topic is the collection of historical and journalistic papers (including Dan Rather, Walter Cronkite, and Harry Reasoner) in the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, in addition to its Institute for Studies in American Military History. We will arrange a class meeting at the Briscoe Center and hear from one of its information specialists. The LBJ Library also has relevant material concerning the press role in the Vietnam War. These all provide valuable historical perspectives on press coverage of conflict—particularly from World War II, comparing it now to the “war on terror.”

Grading

The assignment categories below sum to 100, and are used to compute the final grade. Under the plus/minus grading system of the university these are calculated as follows: 100-95, A; 94-90, A-; 89-87, B+; 86-83, B; 82-80, B-; 79-77, C+; 76-73, C; 72-70, C-; 69-67, D+; 66-63, D; 62-60, D-; 59-0, F. (sorry, there is no A+)

Class contribution/participation:	30%
Oral presentations:	10
Peer writing critique:	10
Written assignments:	50

In the assignments below I will provide you with a rubric, so you will know as clearly as possible what the expectations are, and what will constitute acceptable work. These will be provided as we come to the various assignments.

Late policy

I will not take attendance as such. However, the in-class contributions make up a significant amount of your grade and cannot be made up. There will be enough so that if an emergency arises, you can miss one or two without penalty. The written assignments must be turned in on time. Otherwise, 2 points will be taken off for every day late. So, if an assignment is worth 10% (or 10 points), it will be lowered to a maximum of 8% (or 8 points) if one day late, and so forth.

Description of Assignments

Class contribution/participation (30%)

You will be expected to contribute to class discussions. This will take a number of forms, including posting comments to the class blog and contributing in class itself. You will be expected to have read the material before class and be prepared to comment on it. Be sure to keep up and not get behind. The reading is manageable if you stay on schedule. Warning: you cannot do well in the course without showing evidence in class of reading and engaging with the material! As you keep up with the news and other research for your final project this will include connecting that material to class discussion. (more guidelines to follow)

Oral presentations (10%)

You will present two in-class summaries of selections from *After Terror* reading (see schedule), in which you summarize the argument the author is making, make connections to previous class readings, and connect to the issues to be covered in your own final project. Prepare a one-page handout for the class. (each presentation worth equally, with more guidelines to follow).

Peer Writing Critiques (10%)

You will be assigned to groups of three for the purpose of critiquing each other's writing—in this case, the rough draft of your final project. You will edit the papers of the two other group members, marking errors, making suggestions, and helping to improve the quality in both form and content. You will be graded on the quality of your feedback. Guidelines will be provided. I'll make my own evaluations of the papers you review, and based on the combined feedback you'll rewrite your own paper for the final draft.

Written Assignments (50% total)

1. 9/11 Collective memory and oral history: (3%)

Before we can understand 9/11 we have to know what we already think we understand and remember. Since, most of you were still in grade school in 2001, your first-hand experience of those events is limited. For this assignment, you will choose at least one individual who was 18 or over in 2001 to interview (this can be a family member). Using these recollections, combined with your own experience and what you've read and heard in the last 10 years, write a one-page assignment that addresses the following questions, concerning 9/11: What does your interviewee remember about 9/11? What was it like that day and immediately afterward in 2001? How did it change his/her/their behavior, concerns about safety, and attitudes about the America and the world. What should we have done about it as a country? For you yourself, what has 9/11 meant, and what

question is most on your mind about the events of 9/11 that provokes your curiosity and that you think needs investigation?

Write two pages double-spaced. Your assignment will be graded on clarity and proper use of grammar. There are no “correct” responses. For this one (and only this one) you don’t need facts, but rather thoughtful overview of perceptions, memories, and enduring questions.

2. News analysis and library research (10%)

In understanding 9/11 through a journalistic lens this class aims to help you think critically about the information circulating in the news media--the way it’s framed and the motives behind it. An important step toward this goal is to be able to identify the sources (whether individual or institutional) in news coverage, assess whether they are representing the facts fairly--and determine their perspective and interests.

You will identify a 9/11-related story in a national or metro daily newspaper (e.g., New York Times), within the last five years, and extensive enough to allow you to carry out the assignment. Ideally, the story will relate to some aspect of 9/11 that interests you for your final paper. For your assignment you will write two pages. In addition, you will be provided worksheets to support this assignment, prepared by our assigned PCL library specialist. You will include these completed worksheets with your own two-page analysis.

On the first page you should summarize what the news article is about. Provide a full citation (APA style) for your news article. (and staple a photocopy of the article to the back of your assignment). In the first paragraph you will describe the basic point of the article. In a separate paragraph identify the significant individual sources quoted (either directly in quotes or paraphrased)? Give their names and affiliation, up to at least three.

In addition, to the “individual” sources in the article, you will research two additional background “information” sources using library research and the accompanying guide: a scholarly source and a journal of opinion source (National Review, New Republic, The Nation, etc.). On the library worksheets, you will provide the requested information for each source, concerning how and why you selected it, its credibility, and how well the information is documented. These two source analyses will be attached to the page you turn in.

On the basis of your two background sources, write a second page for your news article analysis in which you address the following points with roughly the same attention:

- Briefly summarize the background information that you found.
- Does the background information point to significant holes in the news article’s coverage? Were there any discrepancies in the article’s claims compared to your own research?

- Speculate on the reasons why the article may have been deficient in its reporting, why it didn't include the information you uncovered, or perhaps in what respect you think the article may have done a good job in its reporting. Finally, was there any other information that would have been helpful to include?

So, to summarize, your assignment will contain the following items: 2-page news analysis, 2 worksheets for your two information sources, copy of the news article itself.

3. *Final Research Project (total of 37%)*

You will conduct a final research project on some aspect of 9/11 of your choice, to demonstrate your knowledge of the topic, reasoning with evidence from multiple sources, and communicating effectively in both written and oral form. The project will be carried out in multiple steps, each with its own deadline on the schedule. Note that after having identified a topic, further guidance in library research will be provided during our library visit on October 18th.

- a. **Topic Selection (2%).** Turn in a brief, typed description of your topic, a few sentences in length. I will work with you to narrow or broaden the topic to make a suitable basis for your project. The topic must be approved before you proceed with the additional steps. We will discuss topics in class, but as examples for now you could consider any of the following ideas (from a recent conference on 9/11) as examples of final paper ideas: The architecture of terror: cities "at war"; designing the security society, the concept of the "Just" war and asymmetrical warfare, the politics of the "war on terror," rethinking empire, globalization and sovereignty after "9/11", rethinking ourselves: torture; identity; Islamophobia; immigration, asylum and refugees, Culture after "9/11": art, literature, film and popular culture; the politics of death after "9/11": "Remembrance" and demoralization. There are many other possibilities.
- b. **Abstract (5%).** The abstract, based on your initial research, will be 150 words maximum. The abstract will summarize your paper and the issues you'll explore.
- c. **Bibliography (5%).** Turn in a typed list of the sources you'll use in your final paper (APA style). Every paper must cite some section of the *9/11 Commission Report* (identify which selection you are referencing) and notes from one of the cited University Lectures of your choice. In addition, you should have at least six other sources beyond those already required as course readings (so this will require original library research on your part. At least three of these additional readings will be from scholarly publications (journal articles, academic papers, and books). Others can be more popular (yet still serious) books like the required and suggested readings in the syllabus. So you'll have at least eight references in all.
- d. **Rough Draft (5%).** Turn in a 6-page draft of your paper, covering the main outline you'll follow in the final version. (you will expand these topics later, but this will let readers know where you are going with the paper).

- e. Oral Presentation of project (5%). You will give a 10-minute presentation of your project, summarizing what you've learned, the key issues, and what you've concluded based on your research. Prepare a handout for the class in which you summarize (briefly!) the key points.
- f. Final Draft (15%). Prepare your final paper, 12 pages maximum length, not counting references. Email me an attachment copy by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline day.

Other important notes regarding the course

Assignments and records: Here are some rules for how to handle written assignments. Please follow them carefully. Your assignments are all typewritten and double-spaced, using APA style. (See library site for an APA style guide.) Do not write more than the length requested—if you write long it means you need to edit your work. Use 1-inch margins and 12-pt. type. Put your name and the assignment number at the top of each page. Do not use a title page or folders. Staple the pages. No paper clips or clamps.

Write in complete sentences (except library worksheets); you will be judged on clarity and content, as well as grammar. Use a Spellcheck, but also review your work carefully for errors. Keep copies of all assignments you turn in and keep the graded assignments until the end of the semester. If there are errors in our records, this will help resolve any discrepancies. Papers are due on the class period marked on the schedule. Late papers will be penalized 2 points for every day late. Turn in a hard copy; **NO EMAIL ATTACHMENTS**, unless requested (if you must turn it in late, give it to the journalism office receptionist, 6th floor CMA, who will stamp it).

Keep a file folder to help you with your writing assignments, in which you put relevant articles from your reading pertaining to your topics (of course, there are computer-based folders that you may prefer, but keep it backed up). This will prepare you for when it's time to write, and I may ask you to bring this file with you when I meet with you about your assignments.

Course Evaluation: Student comments and feedback are valued as a way of improving the course. Course instructor surveys at the end of the semester are required by school policy and reviewed by senior faculty administrators as an important component in annual faculty evaluations. I use the electronic option, which means that toward the end of the term you'll receive an email from the university instructing you how to carry out your evaluation online. I will also remind you several times in class. These surveys are strictly confidential, and I have no access to the results until I get a summary after the semester is completed. I also encourage you to take time to write your open-ended feedback in the space provided. These comments are often the most informative.

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.

Students with disabilities: 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).

Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify me 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, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation Policy: Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line: BCAL: 232-5050

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin: The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning. You are particularly encouraged to use the Learning Skills Center on campus for help on writing assignments. Also, the PCL reference librarians can assist you with online news retrieval and other information finding tasks.

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

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

Oral presentation:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/sig/propose/requirements/communication>

Writing:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/sig/faculty/writing>

<http://www46.homepage.villanova.edu/john.immerwahr/UTAustin.htm>

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/>

Safety issues: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/terms/>

Special note on plagiarism:

The student Senate has asked that all syllabi emphasize the importance of academic integrity. In a writing course, a key threat to this integrity is plagiarism. As freshmen you're just starting your college career, having digested countless amount of media mashups, borrowings, photoshoppings, and YouTube memes. Be reminded that use of material not your own without proper attribution is plagiarism. Here is a library module with more information:

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

Suggested readings:

(These may be helpful for your own reading and/or final project, with a particular emphasis here on the wars following 9/11)

- A Just Response (2001). *The Nation on terrorism, democracy and September 11, 2001*. New York: Nation Books.
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv (2006). *Imperial life in the emerald city: Inside Iraq's green zone*. New York: Knopf.
- Clarke, Richard (2004). *Against all enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Fallows, James (2006). *Blind into Baghdad: America's war in Iraq*. New York: Vintage.
- Filkins, Dexter (2008). *The Forever War*. New York: Vintage.
- Isikoff, Michael & David Corn (2006). *Hubris: The inside story of spin, scandal and the selling of the Iraq War*. New York: Three Rivers.
- Lieven, Anatol (2004). *America right or wrong: an anatomy of American nationalism*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Reese, S. & S. Lewis (2009). Framing the war on terror. *Journalism: Theory, Practice, Criticism*, 10:9. (see Reese website)
- Scraton, Phil, ed. (2002). *Beyond September 11: An anthology of dissent*. London: Pluto.
- Suskind, Ron (2006). *The one-percent doctrine: Deep inside America's pursuit of its enemies since 9/11*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Wright, Lawrence (2006). *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Knopf.
- Zelizer, Barbie & Stuart Allan, eds. (2002). *Journalism after September 11*. New York: Routledge.
- Zwick, Edward, dir. (1998). Film: *The Siege*. (with writing from Lawrence Wright, fictional foreshadowing of many aspects of 9/11 three years prior)

Course schedule

Date *Class topic, readings (to be read by class time), and assignments (due at class time)* 9/11=9/11 Commission Report; TLW=The Longest War; BAW=Bush at War.

Aug. 25	Introduction to the course (TLW, Chapter 1, "Holy Tuesday")
30	What happened? 9/11: "We have some planes" 9/11: Foresight-and Hindsight **(assignment 1, oral history, due)
Sept. 1	(tba, instructor absent)
6	Response 9/11: What to do? A global strategy 9/11: How to do it? A different way of organizing the government
8	BAW: Chapters 1-5 (p. 1 to 73)
13	BAW: Chapters 6-9 (p. 74 to 138)
	(lecture event 12/13, to be announced)
15	BAW: Chapters 10-14 (p. 140 to 204)
20	BAW: Chapters 15-19 (p. 205 to 277)
22	BAW: Chapters 20-epilogue (p. 278 to 73) **(Assignment 2, news analysis, due)
27	TLW: Chaps. 2, 3 (background)
29	TLW: Chaps. 4-8 (Afghanistan)
Oct. 4	TLW: Chaps. 9-10 (Iraq)
6	TLW: Chaps. 11-13 (post Afghan Al-Qaeda) **(Assignment 3a, topic, due)
11	TLW: Chaps. 14-16
13	TLW: Chaps. 17-20 (Obama's turn)

- 18 Library session, with Meghan Sitar
(We will meet at PCL 1.339)
- 20 Historical perspective, with Margaret Schlankey, Head of Public Services
(Meet at Briscoe Center for American History)
**(Assignment 3b, abstract, due)
- 25 TBA, instructor away
- 27 TBA, instructor away

Perspectives on 9/11: (in the following weeks we will read selections from *After Terror*, three per class session. See oral presentation assignment above. Pick two chapters that you wish to be responsible for presenting)

- Nov. 1 Perspectives
**(Assignment 3c, bibliography, due)
- 3 Perspectives
- 8 Perspectives
- 10 Perspectives
**(Assignment 3d, rough draft, due)
- 15 Perspectives
- 17 Perspectives
**(Peer writing critique due)
- 22 Perspectives
- 24 no class, Thanksgiving
- 29 Paper presentations
- Dec. 1 Paper presentations

Final paper draft due, Friday, Dec. 2nd, 5:00. To my office and emailed attachment

(No final exam)