



School of English, Journalism
& European Languages

Unit Outline

HEJ219/319

Online Journalism

Semester 1, 2008

<http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/>

Convenor:	Libby Lester Room: Hum 546 Phone: 6226 7542 Email: Libby.Lester@utas.edu.au
Consultation Hours:	Tuesdays 11am-12pm, Thursdays 11am-1pm
Teaching staff:	Damian McIver, Email: dmciver@postoffice.utas.edu.au
Consultation Hour:	Tuesdays 1.10-2pm, SocSci539
Unit Description:	Students will explore how new communications technology presents different ways of practising journalism. The unit features two main themes: research and analysis using the World Wide Web; and provision of online journalistic content, and some basic webpage design, for a real website. Students will use the first range of skills to bolster activities in the second. While some technical skills, such as digital photography and use of Dreamweaver software, are taught at a basic level, the main emphasis is on a conceptual framework for journalists operating in the online environment.
Unit Aims and Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An understanding of how writing for the Internet differs from writing for traditional media.• An ability to use the Internet to research stories and to discriminate between credible and non-credible sources.• Practical experience in reporting, editing and sub-editing for a real webpage, using relevant software.• An understanding of the issues journalists face when reporting in an online environment.• An appreciation of the ethical issues presented by reporting on the Web.• An enhanced understanding of good grammar and journalistic style, applicable to any media environment.

<p>Learning Outcomes:</p>	<p>Students taking this unit will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. build knowledge in the areas described in the Unit Aims and Objectives (above); 2. enhance skills in (a) written communication, with special emphasis on real journalistic writing and sub-editing, and (b) oral communication, through interviewing sources and participating in newsroom meetings and associated activities; 3. enhance skills in problem solving through research and other assessment tasks and co-operative newsroom activities; and 4. develop their global perspective through accessing and productively using a wide variety of online sources.
<p>Required Texts:</p>	<p>Unit reader</p>
<p>Recommended Texts</p>	<p><i>Editing Made Easy</i>, Bruce Kaplan. Melbourne: Penguin.</p>
<p>When Taught:</p>	<p>Lecture Tues, 12.00pm-12.50pm, SB.UniCentre103.Flex</p> <p>Tutorial/practical Fri 10-11.50am, SB.Arts201.Lab Fri 12-1.50pm, SB.Arts201.Lab 2.10pm-4.00pm, SB.Arts201.Lab</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>1200-word analytical essay (20%), 500-word pitch research assignment (10%), 1300-word contribution to web content plus editing tasks (30%), take-home exam (40%)</p> <p>Assignments are due end Week 5 (pitch), Week 7 (essay), Week 10 (text of web stories) and Week 12 (final web contribution). The take-home exam is held during the exam period, dates tbc.</p>

LECTURE/SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Date	Lecture	Workshop
Week 1	Introduction to Online Journalism: Mclver	No Workshop
Week 2	Future of News 1: Bruce Montgomery, former Tasmanian correspondent, <i>The Australian</i>	News meeting 1 (Workshopping site and story ideas): Mclver and Richard Barker, Faculty of Arts
Week 3	Future of News 2: Montgomery	Dreamweaver: Mclver and Barker
Week 4	Content 1 (Writing for the Web): Mclver	News meeting 2 (Content pitches): Mclver
Easter Break – 20-26 March		
Week 5	Content 2 (Images and the Web): Chris Crerar, former deputy photographic editor, <i>The Australian</i>	Digital Photography and Web Images: Crerar
Week 6	Content 3 (Research and the Web): Mclver	News meeting 3 (Workshopping content): Mclver
Week 7	Content 4 (Web Subbing): Phil Young, Web Editor, <i>The Mercury</i>	Web Subbing: Young and Mclver
Week 8		No Workshop (Anzac Day)
Week 9		News meeting 4 (Workshopping content): Mclver
Week 10		News meeting 5 (Finalising content): Mclver
Week 11		Finalising site: Mclver and Barker
Week 12		Finalising site: Mclver and Barker
Week 13		Exam preparation: Mclver AND Site Launch 11am
	Study Period: 2-6 June	
	Examination Period: 7-24 June	

Attendance requirements: You should attend all workshops. They are a core component of this unit. If you fail to attend at least two-thirds, you may be deemed ineligible to sit the exam or be required to submit additional work.

ASSESSMENT

Please note: For journalistic assignments, you must not use material gathered for a story, including interviews, for assessment in more than one unit. If in doubt, please discuss with your unit coordinator or tutor.

Assignment One: Analytical Essay (20 percent)

Description

“From today’s perspective, the ways in which ordinary members of the public – ‘accidental journalists’ in the view of some – engaged in impromptu news-gathering can be interpreted as signifying a tipping point for online news, not least by opening up for redefinition what counts as news and who can be a journalist in ways which continue to reverberate today.”

- Stuart Allan (2007) *Online News*, Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, pp. 9-10.

Drawing on ideas contained in this statement, consider the roles of the professional and the amateur in the production of online news and explain how they may impact on the future of journalism.

Length

1200 words

Assessment criteria / guidelines

For this essay, you are expected to draw on wide range of sources, beyond those provided in the Unit Reader and lectures. Please use the Harvard style of referencing.

The essay will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Research skills
- Clarity and strength of argument
- Understanding of the subject
- Structure and writing style
- Presentation and observation of scholarly conventions

This assignment will assess learning outcomes 1-3.

Date due

End Week Seven, Friday 18 April, 4pm

Assignment Two: Content Pitch (worth 10 per cent)

Description

Briefly pitch a story or stories that are suitable for publication on a Tasmanian-based online journalism website. You should treat the pitch as an opportunity not only to 'sell' your ideas, but for feedback from your workshopping group. Treat the group as the website's editorial team. Following the oral pitch and feedback, you will need to submit your pitch in written form for assessment. This should describe your ideas, plus suitable treatments. All students must pitch in Week Four, i.e. Friday 28 March.

Length

300-500 words. The workshop pitch should last only a couple of minutes.

Assessment criteria / guidelines

Assessment will be based on the originality and suitability of your pitch and your demonstrated understanding of the online news environment.

In pitching a story, you should:

- Succinctly say what your story is about
- Describe a possible treatment (i.e. style, length, tone)
- Suggest possible intro, headline and images to accompany the story
- Justify why the story will work online
- Be prepared to defend your thinking.

This assignment will assess learning outcomes 1-4.

Date due

Pitch in workshop in Week Four

Written pitch, end Week Five, i.e. Friday 4 April, 5pm

Assignment three: Contribution to web content (worth 30 per cent)

Description

You must produce at least two stories totalling 1300 words suitable for publication on a Tasmanian online journalism website. While there is no set number of stories, at least one story must be a minimum of 500 words in length. Each interviewee will be required to sign an interview consent form, which is available on the JMC website.

You will be allocated a time for workshopping drafts of your stories in weeks six and nine. You should bring 20 copies of your drafts to the workshops.

Assessment is also based on final presentation of your stories on a web page. This includes a demonstrated understanding of the skills you have been exposed to in class, including in design, subbing and images.

Length

1300 words

Assessment criteria/guidelines

Assessment will be based on the following:

- Structure
- Grammar and punctuation
- Intro and ending
- Use of speech, description, anecdotes where relevant
- Style and tone
- Research, including interviews
- Presence of news ingredients
- Workshopping and redrafting
- Adherence to JMC Style Guide
- Web subbing and presentation

You should submit for assessment the text of your stories (double-spaced and across A4), printouts of the final webpage/s to which you have contributed, and a brief statement outlining your contribution. You must also attach completed Interview Consent Forms, one for each interviewee.

This assignment will assess learning outcomes 1-4.

Due date

Workshopped in Weeks six and nine.

Text of stories, end Week 10, Friday 9 May, 5pm

Webpages and contribution statement, end Week 12, Friday 23 May, 5pm

READINGS

The Unit Reader contains each week's reading. You must complete the reading before your workshop. Please also bring along two examples of online journalism to every workshop and be prepared to discuss.

Week 2: Allan, Stuart 2006, 'The rise of online news', *Online News*, Open University Press, Maidenhead UK, pp. 13-30.

Week 3: Simons, Margaret 2007, 'The people previously known as the audience', *The Content Makers*, Penguin, Camberwell, pp. 25-39.

Week 4: Bryan, Wright 2005, 'Writing for the Web', in S. Quinn and V.F. Filak (eds), *Convergent Journalism: An Introduction*, Focal Press, Burlington MA, pp. 69-80.

Week 5: Price, Thomas A. 2005, 'Digital Still Photography', in S. Quinn and V.F. Filak (eds), *Convergent Journalism: An Introduction*, Focal Press, Burlington MA, pp. 99-114.

Week 6: Weaver, Belinda 2002, 'The computer as an essential tool', in S. Tanner (ed), *Journalism: Investigation and Research*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest NSW, pp. 56-72.

Week 7: Grundy, Bruce 2007, 'Subbing', *So You Want to be a Journalist?* Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, pp. 171-196.

Week 8: Sissons, Helen 2006, 'Online Journalism', *Practical Journalism: How to Write News*, Sage, London, pp. 135-154.

Week 9: Tanner, Stephen, Phillips, Gail, Smyth, Chris and Tapsall, Suellen 2005, 'Technology', *Journalism Ethics at Work*, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest NSW, pp. 218-234.

Week 10: McNair, Brian 2005, 'The emerging chaos of global news culture', in S. Allan (ed), *Journalism: Critical Issues*, Open University Press, Maidenhead UK, pp. 151-166.

Week 11: Pavlik, John V. 2005, 'Running the technological gauntlet: journalism and new media', in H. de Burgh (ed.), *Making Journalists*, Routledge, London, pp. 245-263.

Week 12: Quinn, Stephen 2001, 'Journalism in the new millennium', *Newsgathering on the Net*, 2nd edition, Macmillan, South Yarra VIC, pp. 133-151.

Week 13: Exam preparation

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Submission of Assignments

Students are required to submit a signed cover sheet with every assignment. This includes a declaration that all material submitted is their own work except where there is clear acknowledgement or reference to the work of others and that they have read the University statement on Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism) on the University website at www.utas.edu.au/plagiarism or in the Student Information Handbook.

Assignment cover sheets are available from the School office or the School website. **Assignments submitted without a signed cover sheet will not be marked.** Students who submit assignments without a signed cover sheet will be contacted once via their UTAS email address; in such instances the cover sheet must be completed within two weeks of the due date.

All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy (not by email) and placed in the essay box at the School office on or before 5pm on the due date. Students are required to keep copies of all submitted assignments. Assignments submitted on time will be returned within three weeks of the due date; once on time assignments have been returned no further late assignments will be accepted. All marked assignments will be returned in tutorials unless otherwise advised.

Late Assignments

Late submissions will be penalized as follows: 5% of the available marks for the first day, and then 2% per working day thereafter. Late work will be accepted without penalty if accompanied by a medical certificate for the relevant period or a letter from a counsellor in the case of a serious non-medical reason.

Difficulties with your Studies

If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect your course of study, you should raise these with your lecturer and/or one of the following Student Services staff as soon as possible:

- Learning Skills Adviser
- Disability Adviser
- Careers Adviser
- Student Counsellor

University Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

"Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own; for example, using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source, using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation, copying another student's work.

If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline – Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/>.

The University and any persons authorised by the University may submit your assessable works to a plagiarism checking service, to obtain a report on possible instances of plagiarism. Assessable works may also be included in a reference database. It is a condition of this arrangement that the original author's permission is required before a work within the database can be viewed.

Assignment Presentation

The Journalism, Media and Communications discipline uses the Harvard style of referencing. Please see <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/> for a brief introduction. For journalistic writing, refer to the JMC Style Guide, also available at <http://www.utas.edu.au/journalism/>.

For journalistic assignments, you must not use material gathered for a story, including interviews, for assessment in more than one unit. If in doubt, please discuss with your unit coordinator.

Equipment

Please note that this unit may require access to sound and/or video recording equipment and that while the school will provide access to equipment during tutorials, access to equipment outside of tutorials is not guaranteed. Where the loan of equipment is possible students will be required to sign and agree to the terms and conditions of the loan, including the penalties for late return, as presented at the time of the loan. We encourage students, where possible, to purchase their own recording devices. Teaching staff will advise on suitable equipment.

Marking Scale

The following distribution of marks and grades is applied in assessing your work:

- High Distinction (HD)—80-100%
- Distinction (DN)—70-79%
- Credit (CR)—60-69%
- Pass (PP)—50-59%
- Fail (NN)—0-49%

All marks are subject to moderation.

IT Support

Learning online—for online learning and Vista support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/>
Information Technology Services—for general IT Support (includes link to UTAS download website)
<http://www.utas.edu.au/servicedesk/student/index.html>

Library Services—for information literacy support – <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>
Help Desk (email HelpDesk@utas.edu.au or 6226 1818, within University 1818)