



LNDN COMM 3327 - Dateline London: Reporting and News Writing in a European Context CAPA London

Course Description

The course is a practical and conceptual study of journalism within a U.K. and European context. Students will learn techniques for gathering and writing news, feature articles, blogs and tweets geared toward publication in print and online media. Classes covering themes such as culture, business and finance, government and politics, and changing professional media environment will be accompanied with regular news-gathering assignments.

Students will work toward a final project that assembles their portfolio of work built up during the semester. The portfolio will include writing assignments including 140 character tweets, 500-word news stories and a 1,200-word feature article. Students will also be expected to read London's freely-distributed newspapers on a daily basis, as well as a different Sunday newspaper each week, with retention geared toward weekly in-class quizzes.

Course Aims/Objectives

At the end of the semester, students will have professional working knowledge of the fundamentals of news reporting, including accuracy, news judgement, timeliness, ethical boundaries and adherence to deadlines. They will be able to demonstrate proficiency in standard reporting techniques, including interviews and sourcing, that complement the ability to write sharp news stories on tight deadlines, as well as longer, feature-length pieces.

The course also aims to present students will concepts that will enable them to produce a high standard of work that reflects their position working abroad in the U.K. and Europe.

Requirements and Prerequisites

The course is suitable for students without previous journalism course credits. Weekly writing assignments, a feature-writing assignment and optional travel-writing opportunities will provide students that have some journalistic coursework, or college newspaper experience, with clippings that include international datelines.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students should be able to:

- A. Write accurate, professional-grade news articles on a variety of themes within tight deadlines.
- B. Conceptualize, research, report, and write broader stories that appeal to a widespread audience.
- C. Utilize and apply a variety of ledes and writing styles to suit differing circumstances.

Developmental Outcomes

Students should demonstrate:

- D. An understanding of core news values, including timelines, proximity, impact, negativity, human interest, conflict, prominence and novelty.
- E. The ability to explain complicated material in a straight-forward manner.
- F. A working knowledge of the U.K. news and media environment.

Class methodology

Classes will employ lectures, discussions, and workshops on practical journalism techniques and conceptual themes required to cover weekly writing assignments.

Most classroom periods will start with a quiz based on significant U.K. news items or broader world themes from the previous week. It is important students stay abreast of local news, as well as monitor how large international news events are covered by the U.K. press.

Following the quiz will be a lecture, discussion, or workshop on the week's topic.

Some weeks will feature a news-writing simulation, work session and/or writing assignment after the lecture and discussion period. The exercises will emulate deadlines faced in newsrooms. Students will generally have 30 minutes to complete simulation exercises.

On weeks when there is no in-class simulation, the class will workshop previous or future assignments. There will be one or two workshops for students to discuss the processes of their final 1,200 word feature story.

Aside from regular assignments, students seeking to maximize the size and reach of their final portfolio will be presented with additional opportunities. For example, students might elect to write a 600-word travel piece based on a trip, from a point of interest in London, to an experience in other cities or locales in the U.K. and Europe. These graded assignments will supplement Regular Writing Assignments, and are to be done in the students' own time.

Students will also be encouraged to attend general-knowledge quizzes, a popular British pastime, to supplement their Weekly Quizzes.

Field Components

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City in which you are currently living. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

Field Study (to be confirmed): live reporting trip within London.
 Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in **co-curricular** program activities
 Students will also have multiple opportunities to cover press conferences, events, and travel.

Assessment/Grading Policy

Participation	10%	
Weekly News Quizzes (10 questions)	20%	
Five Writing Assignments (250-500 words)		50%
Final Writing Assignment (1,200 words)	20%	

Students must complete all required components for each course by the established deadlines. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of the course grade and may result in a grade of F for the course in question.

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcomes

Assessment Task	Grade %	Learning Outcomes	Due Date
Participation	10%	a, c, e	Weekly
Weekly quizzes	20%	d, e, f	Weekly
Regular writing assignments	50%	all	As scheduled
Final writing assignment	20%	all	Week 14

Details of the Assessment:

Plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the assignment, with a grade of zero (0%). Two offences, or a single offence deemed serious enough, could result in the removal from the class.

In the aim of achieving a semblance of professional journalism, deadlines and accuracy will be heavily stressed. Factual inaccuracy in stories, or missing a deadline, will see the assignment grade automatically reduced to 76%. This means take-home assignments must be handed in before each class starts. There will be no exceptions.

Descriptor	Alpha	UK	US	GPA	Requirement
Excellent	A	75+	93+	4.0	The story stands up to professional standards and is publication ready.
	A-	70-74	90-92	3.7	
Good	B+	66-69	87-89	3.3	The story requires some editing for professional publication.
	B	63-65	83-86	3.0	
	B-	60-62	80-82	2.7	
Average	C+	56-59	77-79	2.3	The story requires substantial editing for professional publication.
	C	53-55	73-76	2.0	
Below Average / Poor	C-	50-52	70-72	1.7	The story is poorly written, under reported and requires a complete re-write.
	D+	46-49	67-69	1.3	
	D	40-45	60-66	0.7 - 1.0	
Fail	F	<40	<60	0	The story fails on all levels of professional standards.

Dress Code – When on assignment outside the classroom, students will dress accordingly.

Textbook(s) and Recommended Readings

One mandatory textbook and extra recommended reading list, library readings, or weblinks to support the class

The freesheets, available at all tube stations in the city:

The Evening Standard
The Metro
City A.M.

Recommended Saturday newspapers:

The Guardian
FT Weekend
The Times

Recommended Sunday newspapers:

The Observer
The Sunday Telegraph
The Sunday Times

Broadcast news:

BBC London news
Channel 4 news

Course Materials and Lab Fee

Reading materials will focus on free London newspapers and the internet. However, students will be encouraged to regularly read and consume other U.K. or European media, especially on weekends. On at least one occasion this will be a requirement for the weekly quiz.

There will also be one field trip, no further than suburban London, requiring the purchase of a round-trip train ticket.

Week by week breakdown of academic calendar

Week 1	Introduction
Lesson	An introduction to the semester, including a brief overview of upcoming course work and general expectations. The rest of the first session will be the first in-class simulation.

In-class news simulation: Gone Baby Gone.	Somebody has kidnapped Prince George, according to a breaking news report. Twitter is going mental. The BBC is flashing headlines. Students will write and update the story, due by end of class, based on changing and variable information provided in a real-time context.
Assignment for next week	None. Although you'll need to prepare for your first weekly news quiz.

Week 2	News Reporting and Writing
Lesson	Using last week's simulation as an example, we'll talk about what news is, the basics of good reporting, the mechanics of a good story. We'll also discuss your first out-of-class assignment, what will be required for success in these stories, and how to file to your instructor.
In-class quiz	News Quiz #1
Assignment for next week	Out-of-class assignment #1. Write 400 words on a current press release you will receive from the instructor. One additional source required; more recommended.

Week 3	Ledes and Nuts
Lesson	Let's get to the heart of a good journalism story: the top. We'll go over examples of ledes and nut grafs from major news outlets, and compare them to your first writing assignments. We'll also learn different styles of ledes, useful for forming strategies when writing on deadline.
Deadline at beginning of class	Out-of-class writing assignment #1
In-class quiz	News Quiz #2
In-class news scenario	Just 100-150 words - the first part of an article - due by end of class.

Week 4	Interview Techniques and Profiles
Lesson	Profile writing involves a good interview, but better yet, takes a longer look at anybody who has a good story to tell. These stories can be fun ways to get at particular subject matter, or highlight a trend, that can otherwise seem a bit dense and dull.

In-class quiz	News Quiz #3
In-class work session	Profile a classmate in 250 words. The key will be to find something to tell a story about that goes beyond the person being interviewed.
Assignment for next week	Out-of-class assignment #2: Write a 500-word profile of a non-student in London that tells a story and shines a light on a particularly interest piece of their life. Three sources required.

Week 5	Reporting in the U.K.
Lesson	With around a month here under your belt, we'll discuss similarities and differences between the U.S. and U.K. from a media perspective. This will cover major differences in law, politics, and business. We'll also talk about topical subjects (hint: Brexit). We'll also workshop ledes and nuts in groups, as well as discuss the next out-of-class assignment.
Deadline at beginning of class	Out-of-class writing assignment #2
In-class quiz	News Quiz #4
Assignment for next week	Out-of-class assignment #3. Attend a press conference, lecture, or speech by a notable person and write 500 words. In London, these abound, and options will be presented by the instructor. Three sources required.

Week 6	Parachute Journalism
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Lesson	We'll learn about what it takes to prepare for assignment in another city, country, or one written on the road, and look at examples of missteps and successes.
Deadline at beginning of class	Out-of-class assignment #3
In-class quiz	News Quiz #5
In-class work session	Prepare for a possible story that one could write outside London, including what would need to be taken care of before embarking on the trip.

Week 7: Mid-term break – no class

Week 5	Feature writing
Lesson	Feature writing isn't like writing a school essay. It's a tightly-crafted news story, just longer. A single piece can take reporters weeks or months to report, as they seek out dozens of interviews and solid data sets. We'll discuss what works, and what doesn't, and how why it's crucial to plan ahead. A discussion and brainstorming session will help get ideas going for your final writing assignment.
In-class quiz	News Quiz #6
In-class work session	Write a 300-word pitch for your final assignment.

Week 9	Reporting in Europe
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Lesson	The class will take a look at Europe in 2016. A special focus will be on the sweeping changes taking place on the Continent, which is facing an upheaval in politics, economics and its cultural fabric following the worst financial crisis in generations.
In-class quiz	News Quiz #7
In-class news simulation	Students will write a story about a complicated theme involving a lot of numbers. The focus will be on writing a readable 250-word spot story without a lot of numbers.

Week 10	Business Journalism
Lesson	Whether or not you think business is boring, money makes the world go round, so writing about money is a good starting point for looking at our wider world. We'll look into some great stories about money and business from publications like Sports Illustrated, Vanity Fair, and Rolling Stone.
In-class quiz	News Quiz #8
Assignment for next week	Out-of-class writing assignment #4: Write a 500-words on the business side of any non-business subject of your choosing: sports, education, lifestyle, health, politics. The subject should be serious. The tone should be light.

Week 11	Visuals: Working with graphics, photos, and videos
Lesson	What's the first thing you look when you pick up a paper or hit that homepage? Just a guess: the pretty art stuff. We'll look how integrating graphics into written assignments can enhance and supplement stories, as well as drive online traffic. We'll also hopefully hear from a guest speaker from a global news outlet.
Deadline at beginning of class	Out-of-class writing assignment #4
In-class quiz	News Quiz #9
In-class news simulation 5	While writing a 250-word spot news assignment, students will also have to conceive, and sketch, an idea for visually representing the story that can be pitched to the graphics editor.

Week 12	Online Media and our New-ish Age
Lesson 11	<p>You're on Twitter and Instagram. But are you using it like a journalist? We'll hear from a guest speaker: the WSJ's European social media editor.</p> <p>The second part of the class will be spent discussing and workshopping progress on the final assignment. Students will be able to discuss in groups during one-on-one meetings with the instructor.</p>
In-class quiz	News Quiz #10
Assignment for next week	Out-of-class writing assignment #5: File a 1,000-word draft of your final writing assignment.

Week 13	Field Study (tbc)
Lesson 12	For this class, we'll go somewhere to report live. There will also be the chance to go over questions about the final assignment.
Deadline at beginning of class	Out-of-class writing assignment #5
In-class quiz	No quiz
Assignment for next week	Final assignment

Week 14	The A-hed
Lesson 13	For the last class, after the final is handed in, we're going to dig into the light-hearted, quirky world of the A-hed, a daily page-one Wall Street Journal piece that readers remember and reporters love writing. We'll dig into why.
Deadline at beginning of class:	Final assignment

In-class quiz	No quiz
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Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Attendance: CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and potentially a failure for the course.

Missing classes for medical reasons: If you need to miss a class for medical reasons or for a family emergency, **you must send an e-mail** to let the Associate Director of Academic Affairs (ADAA) know at least one hour in advance of your class or meeting at the following e-mail: excused.absence@capa.org. Note that calling the CAPA Centre (0207 370 7389) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. You will need to provide evidence of the reason for your absence. Unexcused absences will result in a grade reduction. In the event of a missed class or field trip, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor and make up any missed assignments.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time.

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

Academic Integrity: A high level of responsibility and academic honesty is expected. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

Use of electronic equipment in class: All devices such as laptops, i-pods, i-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Associate Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of Term.

Use of Electronic Translators: In Language courses students are NOT allowed to use electronic translators for writing texts in the target language: those submitting compositions and texts of whatever kind translated in such a fashion will receive a final F grade for the course.

Late Submission: Late submission of papers, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

Behavior during Examinations: During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or

collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.