

## JRM7340: Graduate Newsroom Fall 2010

*Class: 9:05 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. Monday*

Room 242 Journalism Building

*Multimedia lab: 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Mon or Wed*

Room 130 Journalism Building

**Reporting and writing instructor:** Patricia Thomas

Phone (office): 706-542-1210

E-mail: [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu)

Office hours: Monday 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.; Thursday 1:30 – 4:00, Room 254

**Multimedia instructor:** Geoffrey Graybeal

Phone (office): TBD

E-mail: [graybs@uga.edu](mailto:graybs@uga.edu)

Office Hours: 2-3 p.m. Monday and Wednesday

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### Purpose of the course

Graduate Newsroom offers a practical introduction to the purpose and practice of journalism. You will learn the foundations of journalism as a public service; analyze and compare print, broadcast and online media; learn basic multimedia skills; and report and write publishable news stories in a simulated newsroom environment.

There is one three-hour class meeting on Monday morning, and a one-hour multimedia lab offered on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. This lab was created in response to popular demand from students and offers a chance to practice multimedia skills. You are required to participate in one lab each week.

### Readings

*For class:*

- Cheryl Gibbs and Tom Warhover, “Getting the Whole Story: Reporting and Writing the News”
- Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, “The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect”
- Associated Press Stylebook (2010 edition; expected in bookstore week of Aug 16)

*For multimedia lab:*

- Mark Briggs, “Journalism Next”
- “SPJ Digital Media Handbook” (online PDF)

- Mindy McAdams, “Reporter’s Guide to Multimedia Proficiency” (online PDF)

Students should read the Athens Banner-Herald and The Red & Black daily, visit a major news organization’s Web site (such as washingtonpost.com, nytimes.com, or npr.com) at least once a day, and follow at least one daily television or radio news broadcast. You can simplify this by using a news aggregator, such as Google Reader.

### Academic honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in UGA’s “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

### Requirements

*This course is your job.* You are expected to arrive on time, every time, and to participate actively in all discussions, writing workshops, and multimedia lab sessions. Collegiality and a sense of humor are helpful as well.

- Graduate Newsroom meets 9:05 a.m.-12:05 p.m. on Monday. You are expected to participate in every class meeting.
- Multimedia Lab meets 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday; you are expected to participate in *one* of these sessions and to complete all assignments on deadline. You are not required to attend both.

*Deadlines* are not negotiable. Late work will not be accepted or graded.

**Reading responses:** On six occasions, you will e-mail Professor Thomas a 150-250-word response to the aspect(s) of the assigned reading that intrigued, confused or disturbed you the most. The responses are due by **noon on Sunday** and should be informal, first-person responses that capture your own thinking. They should not be summaries of the material.

**General assignment stories.** You will report and write **four** general assignment stories. Two will be completed during a single class meeting, one will be reported and written in one day, the other will have a longer deadline.

- first story (3 hr deadline)
- reporter’s notebook into news story (3 hr deadline)
- person on street (report and write in one day)
- enterprise story, any beat

**Beat stories:** You will spend the newsroom portion of the course covering a local public affairs beat in a targeted community within commuting distance of UGA. For example, you might choose to cover election news in Athens-Clarke County, energy and

environment in Jackson County, education in Madison County, water issues in Oconee County, etc. Coherent proposals for regional beats also will be considered.

When the newsroom portion of the class begins, you will submit a two-page **beat report** describing the beat's location, subject area, demographic information, key sources, hot issues, and at least three story ideas.

***Plan ahead when you pick a beat:*** Look at deadlines for speech and meeting stories. Check calendars for agencies and organizations and **make sure** you will have multiple opportunities to cover such events.

You will report, write and revise **four stories** from your chosen beat:

- coverage of one meeting
- coverage of one speech or lecture
- an enterprise or trend story (with multimedia component)
- a profile (with multimedia component)

Stories must be from 500 to 600 words and include at least three fully identified sources, interviewed by phone or in person. *Story ideas must be approved in advance by the instructor.*

Newsroom sessions include group brainstorming, time for reporting and writing, peer editing and opportunities for coaching and consultation with the instructor. We'll also view and discuss multimedia assignments

***Multimedia lab assignments:***

- Weekly tutorial videos: Students are expected to watch the online tutorial videos **prior** to coming to lab. The weekly lab assignment will correspond to the tutorial video.
- Blog responses: Responses to the *Journalism Next* readings and assigned activities shall be posted to our journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com blog.
- Final projects: Multimedia components are required for your profile and enterprise/trend stories.

**Publish your work:** You are encouraged to pitch your stories for publication by any professional daily, weekly or monthly news outlet in Georgia – including but not limited to Athens-area periodicals such as The Red & Black, Flagpole or the Athens Banner-Herald; other daily or weekly newspapers; alternative publications; state or regional online publications such as [www.LiketheDew.com](http://www.LiketheDew.com); or Georgia-based foreign-language or ethnic press. Students whose stories are published or accepted for publication in an approved periodical by the final day of class will receive a one-third letter grade bonus for that assignment.

**The Grady Journal:** The student-edited news website [www.gradyjournal.com](http://www.gradyjournal.com) is a great place to build a portfolio you can share with prospective clients or employers. Be advised that a strong visual image is needed to earn prominent place on the site.

### Grading

75 % Course participation, reading responses, news stories  
25% Multimedia lab participation, assignments

**Written assignments** will be evaluated for content, news judgment, organization, clarity and completeness of the story.

A (90-100): Story publishable as-is  
B (80-89): Good lead and organization, but minor revisions or additions required  
C (70-79): Lead unclear or unfocused; organization lacks flow; moderate revising required  
D (60-69): Lead misses the news or is indecipherable; major revising required  
F (< 60): Story misses the mark altogether

Abbreviation, capitalization, spelling, numerals, usage and other matters of style should be consistent with The Associated Press Stylebook. Points will be deducted for errors of fact, style, spelling, grammar or punctuation.

**Multimedia assignments** will be evaluated for news value, presentation editing decisions, architecture of information presentation, aesthetic design choices, storytelling ability, creativity and innovation.

All of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards to be considered for a grade of "B" or better. The project must be:

- completed according to the assignment specifications
- completed on time.
- free of typographical, grammatical and mechanical errors.
- executed in a way that demonstrates a clear grasp of multimedia production standards and design concepts.

Remember that you can earn a one-third letter grade bonus (from a B+ to an A-, etc.) for having a general assignment or beat story published in an approved publication.

## Course Schedule

The syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the

instructor may be necessary.

## **PART I: Foundations of Journalism**

### **Class #1 – Aug. 16: *Your first reporting assignment***

#### *In class:*

Introductions and housekeeping details  
Reporting and writing on deadline  
Expectations about reading responses

Reporting, writing exercise

#### *Homework for next class:*

- Read “Elements,” Introduction, Chapters 1 (purpose) and 2 (truth)
- Read “Getting the Whole Story,” Chapters 1 (role in society) and 2 (what journalists do)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday
- Bring Monday’s Banner-Herald, Monday’s Red & Black, and the Aug. 18 issue of The Flagpole to class on Monday

#### *Homework for first lab:*

- Read “Journalism Next,” Foreword, Preface and Introduction

### **Class #2 – Aug. 23: *The fundamentals of journalism***

#### *In class:*

Analyze local news publications  
Discuss where *you* turn for news and information  
Discuss how reporters and journalism function  
Review last week’s writing exercise

#### *Homework for next class:*

- Read “Elements,” Chapters 3 (accountability), 4 (verification) and 5 (independence)
- Read “Getting the Whole Story,” Chapters and 3 (news writing) and 4 (community as context)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday
- Go online over the weekend and review [www.ajc.com](http://www.ajc.com) and [www.atlantadailyworld.com](http://www.atlantadailyworld.com) and [www.khabar.com](http://www.khabar.com)

### **Lab #1 – Aug. 23/25**

Computing: welcome to Macintosh, welcome to the lab, digital asset management,

archiving

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read "Journalism Next," Chapter 9
- Read SPJ Digital Handbook, "Documents and PDFs" chapter (p. 9)

**Class #3 – Aug. 30: Defining communities and news, practicing skills**

*In class:*

Discuss accountability, community and news judgment, drawing on your observations of editorial content and advertising in [www.ajc.com](http://www.ajc.com) and [www.atlantadailyworld.com](http://www.atlantadailyworld.com) and [www.khabar.com](http://www.khabar.com)

Reporting exercise (10:30 – 12:15)

*Homework for next class:*

- Read "Elements," Chapters 6 (monitoring power) and 7 (public forum)
- Read "Getting the Whole Story," Chapters 5 (reporting basic news) and 6 (writing basic news)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday, Nov. 12
- What are potential markets for your Graduate Newsroom stories? Make a short (and realistic) list of print and online publications you plan to pitch. This may include mainstream, alternative, foreign-language, ethnic or niche news organizations. Bring your list to class.
- Buy and read Sunday, Sept. 12 New York Times; bring to class on Sept. 13

**Lab #2 – Aug. 30/Sept. 1**

Computing: RSS/ social media

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read "Journalism Next" chapters 4 and 10
- Read "SPJ Digital Handbook" chapters on "social networks as reporting tools" (P. 12), "Pound signs on Twitter" (P. 22), "Beginner's Guide to Twitter" (P. 30) and "Facebook Pages 101" (p. 40)
- Create a Twitter account. Follow some of the media organizations listed in the back of the "Journalism Next" book. Send a message to @graybs13.

**Sept. 6 – NOCLASS (Labor Day)**

**Lab #3: Sept. 8/Sept. 13 – \*Will\* meet on Wednesday (September 8<sup>th</sup>).**

HTML/ web structure/ basic tags

**Class #4 – Sept. 13: *Theory into practice****In class:*

Analyze today's New York Times  
 Discuss news judgment and community  
 Discuss basic story types, types of leads  
 Brainstorm ideas for the enterprise story due Oct. 11

Discuss last week's reporting exercise

*Homework for next class:*

- Read "Elements" Chapter 8 (engagement)
- Read "Getting the Whole Story," Chapter 8 (interviewing) and 9 (basic reporting skills)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday

**Lab #3: Sept. 8/Sept. 13 – HTML/web structure/basic tags (same as Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>) NOLAB ON WEDNESDAY (9/15)***Homework for next lab:*

- Read "Journalism Next," Chapter 1

**Class #5 – Sept. 20: *Deadline story****In class:*

Discuss interviewing skills, verification

Report and write a story on deadline (due at 6:00 p.m. today)

*Homework for next class:*

- Read "Elements," Chapters 8 (engagement) and 9 (balance)
- Read "Getting the Whole Story," Chapter and 7 (framing stories) and 11 (general assignment reporting)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday
- Prepare to pitch your enterprise story in class.

**Lab #4: Sept. 20/22**

HTML/CMS/Wordpress/digital portfolios

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read "Journalism Next," Chapter 2
- Do blogging evaluation activity on P. 67 of "Journalism Next" and post to class blog

(journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com)

### **Class #6 – Sept. 27: News writing**

#### *In class:*

Feedback on deadline story

Brief pitches for enterprise stories, feedback from class

Writing exercise: transforming raw information into news story

#### *Homework for next class:*

- Read “Elements,” Chapter 10 (conscience)
- Read “Getting the Whole Story,” Chapter 14 (rights and responsibilities)
- Email reading response to [pthomas@uga.edu](mailto:pthomas@uga.edu) by noon on Sunday
- Record or bookmark link to radio or TV news story. Come prepared to discuss why this clip does or does not live up to the journalistic standards described by Kovach and Rosenstiel.

### **Lab #5 – Sept. 27/29**

Audio/ recording/ interviewing

### **Class #7 – Oct. 4: News, opinion and entertainment**

#### *In class:*

Present the broadcast news segments you selected to the class. Lead a discussion.

Wrap-up discussion of foundations

Preview open newsroom requirements

#### *Homework for next class:*

- Finish enterprise story; bring final draft to class on Monday
- Come prepared to pitch enterprise story

### **Lab #6 – Oct. 4/6**

Audio: capturing, converting, editing, outputting

#### *Homework for next lab:*

- Read “Journalism Next,” Chapter 7
- Listen to 5 podcasts from iTunes- Describe qualities that make one better than another (see “Journalism Next,” p. 205). Post to class blog (journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com)

**Class #8 – Oct. 11: Enterprise stories due***In class:*

Students practice pitching their stories  
Polish story with help from fellow reporters, editor

*Homework for next class:*

- Getting the Whole Story,” Chapters 12 (beat reporting) and 13 (in-depth stories)
- Research and prepare beat reports

**Lab #7 – Oct. 11/13**

Photography: shooting/ aperture/ shutter speed/ ISO/ focal length/ angle/ variety

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read “ Reporter’s Guide to Multimedia Proficiency,” Chapter 5
- Listen to Ira Glass interview files from “ RGMP”

**Part II: Beat reporting/newsroom****Class #9 – Oct. 18: Open newsroom – Beat report due***In class:*

Feedback on enterprise stories  
Describe your beats, brainstorm about story ideas

*Homework for next class:*

- Read “ Elements,” Chapter 11 (citizens’ role)
- Report, write and pitch stories

**Lab #8 – Oct. 18/20**

Photography: capturing/ process/ edit

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read “ Journalism Next,” Chapter 6

**Class #10 – Oct. 25: Open newsroom – Meeting or speech story due***In class:*

Polish story with help from fellow reporters, editor  
Brainstorm next story

*Homework for next class:*

- Read "Getting the Whole Story," Chapter 15
- Report, write and pitch stories

### **Lab #9 – Oct. 25/27**

Combining audio and photography: slideshow/output

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read SPJ Digital Handbook "digital slideshows" chapter (P. 38)

### **Class #11 – Nov 1: Open newsroom – Meeting or speech story due**

*In class:*

Polish story with help from fellow reporters, editor  
Brainstorm ideas, work plans for enterprise story with multimedia component  
View and discuss outstanding multimedia packages

*Homework:*

- Report, write and produce enterprise/trend story as multimedia package.

### **Lab #10 – Nov. 1/3**

Video: shooting/interviewing

*Homework for next lab:*

- Read SPJ digital handbook "Better video" chapter (P. 47)
- Read "Journalism Next," Chapter 8
- Visit different sections of a news Web site and identify one story that would have made a great video story (P. 242). Post to class blog ([journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com](http://journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com))

### **Class #12 – Nov. 8: No class meeting**

**Spend week working on enterprise/trend story with multimedia component**

### **Lab # 11 – Nov.8/10**

Video: capturing/ converting/ editing

### **Class #13 – Nov. 15: Open Newsroom – Enterprise/trend story due with multimedia component**

*In class:*

Screen multimedia productions, discuss  
Polish story with help from fellow reporters, editor

*Homework for next class:*

--Read sample profiles (distributed in class)  
 --Begin reporting, writing profile

**Lab #12 – Nov. 15/17**

Video: editing/transitions/b-roll

**Nov. 22 – Thanksgiving holiday**

**Class #14 – Nov. 29:** Open Newsroom

*In class:*

Feedback on enterprise/trend story

View video profile: “Donald L. Hollowell: Foot Soldier for Equal Justice”

*Homework for next class:*

--Report and write profile

**Lab #13 – Nov. 29/Dec. 1**

Video: Graphics/lower third/outputting

*Homework for next lab:*

--Read “Journalism Next,” Chapter 11

--Choose one of the three activities described on P. 334 in the Briggs book. Post to class blog ([journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com](http://journalismnextconversations.blogspot.com)).

**Class #15 – Nov. 29:** Open Newsroom – **Profile due (with multimedia component)**

*In class:*

Polish story with help from other reporters, editor

*Homework for next class:*

Sign up for Knight Case Study and prepare for class.

**Class #16 – Dec. 6:** Open Newsroom

*In class:*

Feedback on profiles

Evaluation and debriefing

Knight Case study: “Into the Breach: Should Student Reporters Save Local Political Reporting”