

**JRN 2701**  
**Approaches to Research in Journalism Studies**  
**Fall 2018**

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**Course Info:** Mondays 5:30pm-8:00pm, Annenberg 310

**Office Hours:** Mondays 1pm-3pm, Wednesdays 12pm-1pm, and by appointment (Annenberg 1B)

### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course offers an overview of theories and methods that are used to undertake research in journalism studies. Theoretical inquiries related to audience, news content, and news production including news effects, agenda setting, and gatekeeping, are the focus of class discussion and student activities. Students are also introduced to quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, content analysis, textual/discourse analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, and learn to use them appropriately.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Examine major theories in journalism studies
- Learn to use quantitative and qualitative research methods appropriately
- Understand pragmatic concerns that arise in utilizing research methods
- Be able to critically analyze current trends of journalism

### **COURSE MATERIALS**

Wahl-Jorgensen, Karin & Hanitzsch, Thomas (eds.). **Handbook of journalism studies**. Routledge, 2009. ISBN10: 0-8058-6343-5

Bertrand, Ina. **Media research methods: Audiences, institutions, texts**. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. ISBN: 0333960955.

Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

### **GRADE ASSIGNMENTS**

- |                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Research proposal          | 20% |
| • Methods exercise (X4)      | 20% |
| • Mid-term exam              | 20% |
| • Final exam                 | 20% |
| • Student-led activity       | 10% |
| • Attendance & participation | 10% |

## **Research Proposal**

Imagine that you are conducting research. Choose a topic related to key issues in journalism studies in the area of audience, news content, or news production. Develop a research proposal using one of the methods covered in the class.

Your proposal should include: 1) research question; 2) significance of your research; 3) literature review; 4) research methods; and 5) limitations of study. That is, explain what your research is about, why it is an important topic to research, what previous research has found, how you are going to conduct this research, and finally, what your limitations may be.

Your literature review section utilizes the course textbooks as well as outside sources, as needed. A minimum of 5 sources is required. A bibliography (in APA style) is mandatory.

Your research method section includes your target subject (who), sample size (how many), research location (where), and a minimum of 10 questions or coding protocols (what). For each choice you make, justify your actions (why).

Your proposal should be between 7 and 10 pages.

## **Methods Exercises**

You will be introduced to quantitative and qualitative methods and learn how to use them appropriately. Throughout the semester, either in groups or on your own, you will develop a set of protocols for the following four methods: Survey, focus group discussion, textual/discourse analysis, and in-depth interview.

## **Mid-term and Final Exams**

The exams include multiple choice, T/F, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions.

## **Student-led Activity**

In the first week, sign up for one presentation between Week 4 and Week 16.

*Discussion Topic:* Choose any ideas from the chapter in the textbook assigned for each week. A definition, sentence or paragraph from the chapter might be enough to inspire you. Also, consider referring to relevant outside sources to research the topic that you have chosen.

*Methods:* You can use a variety of different approaches: hold a debate; lead an in-class discussion; perform a skit; host a make-believe quiz show; make and show a short video or slide presentation; or do a conventional presentation.

*Duration:* Aim for up to 15 minutes.

## Late Assignments

Unless you have a certifiable medical or family emergency, **late work will not receive credit**. All assignments must be uploaded to Canvas or emailed to me **AND handed in as a hard copy** in class. If you have a scheduling conflict or illness that may impede your ability to complete an assignment let me know as soon as possible. All assignment due dates are listed in the syllabus.

## Grading Scale

A	93-100%	B-	80-82%	D+	67-69%
A-	90-92%	C+	77-79%	D	63-66%
B+	87-89%	C	73-76%	D-	60-62%
B	83-86%	C-	70-72%	F	59% and below

An “A” means that your work is exceptional. A “B” means that your work is above average. A “C” means that your work is average. A “D” means that your work is below average. An “F” usually means that you have failed to provide assignments.

## Grade Appeals

Individual grades are not discussed in class. Students must support grade appeals with detailed written evidence to back up the appeal. Saying “I worked very hard on this story” or “I spent five hours writing this” do not constitute substantive supporting evidence. Grades appeals must be submitted in writing within five business days of receiving the grade. Please stop by during office hours or make an appointment if you would like to discuss your grade for an assignment.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism on any examination or assignment will result in automatic failure of the course and recommendation to the University Disciplinary Committee for further disciplinary action. Please note that plagiarism includes fictitious quotes and/or sources, work copied from others without proper credit, including websites.

Academic dishonesty means that you have turned in an assignment for this class from another class. Again, the result will be a failing grade in the class. The section in italics below is quoted verbatim from the Temple University Bulletin for 2009-2010.

*Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.*

*Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person’s labor, another person’s ideas, another person’s words, and another person’s assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, and oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the*

*instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.*

***Academic cheating** is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course that was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person.*

### **Statement on Academic Freedom**

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link:  
[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02)

The policy encourages students to first discuss their concerns with their instructor. If a student is uncomfortable doing so, or if discussions with the instructor do not resolve the student's concerns, an informal complaint can be made to the Student Ombudsperson for the student's school or college. Unresolved complaints may be referred to the dean for handling in accordance with the school or college's established grievance procedure. Final appeals will be determined by the provost.

### **Special Accommodations**

It is Temple University's policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities under the American Disabilities Act (ADA). At the beginning of each semester, any student with a disability should inform me, in private, if instructional accommodations or academic adjustments will be needed. For more information about the ADA and academic accommodations or adjustments, contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services (<http://www.temple.edu/disability>; 215-204-1280; [hellodrs@temple.edu](mailto:hellodrs@temple.edu)).

### **Controversial Subject Matter**

In this class we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the readings and/or comments in class very challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but of course are free to disagree, respectfully, with views expressed in class or in readings.

### **Attendance**

Participation in class increases levels of comprehension and makes class more interesting. Therefore, your success in this class, and the success of the course as a whole, will depend on your being here. Your class participation grade is based on two factors: contributing meaningfully to class discussion and regular attendance. **If you miss more than one class without a valid excuse, you will get zero points for the participation portion of your**

**final grade (10%).** Two late arrivals (more than 10 minutes after class starts) or early departures will count as 1 absence. Missed classes also mean missed discussions and assignments, which cannot be made up. If a student misses a class, s/he is responsible for any information missed. An excused absence may be granted in cases of: emergencies, bereavement, medical contingency, or authorized athletic participation. Appropriate documentary proof – an original document – must be provided within five working days of the absence, for said absence to be considered “excused.”

### **Lecture Etiquette**

Students are expected to prepare for each class by reading the assigned material. Students must arrive in class on time and are not allowed to use any electronic devices in class unless allowed for the purpose of class activities. Students are expected to observe the Temple University student code of conduct and participate in the learning process in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner. In other words, sending or receiving text messages, using a mobile phone, or surfing the Web by checking personal email or engaging in discussion on social networking sites during a lecture is disrespectful and disruptive to the learning environment. Written consent from the instructor is required for electronic recording of lectures.

### **Class Preparation and Participation**

This class meets 3 hours per week. Students should expect to spend at least 2 to 4 hours preparing before attending class. This means that students must read, reflect on, and be prepared to discuss all assigned material before class. This preparation includes reading, listening to, or watching local, national, and international news content. Preparation facilitates participation and enhances discussion in class. Attendance and punctuality are expected. You are expected to consistently provide informed and insightful contribution in class discussions. Your contributions should demonstrate that you have a grasp of the material covered.

### **Communication**

Should you need to email me with any questions or concerns, I will reply to emails as quickly as possible; however, you should allow for a minimum of a 24-hour turnaround time. Please use your Temple email address, not your personal one. Please compose emails with a salutation, a signature, and spelling and capitalization reflective of Standard Written English. I will use email to communicate with you outside of class; check your Temple email and Canvas frequently.

### **Canvas and Other Online Resources**

All additional reading material and announcements will be posted on Canvas. All students are expected to check their Canvas account regularly.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week	Theme	Readings	Due
<b>Part I: Introduction to Research in Journalism Studies</b>			
<i>Week 1</i> <b>Aug 27</b>	Introduction to journalism studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, Ch 1 (Introduction: On Why and How We Should Do Journalism Studies)</li> </ul>	
<i>Week 2</i> <b>Sep 3</b>	Labor Day – No class		
<i>Week 3</i> <b>Sep 10</b>	Introduction to research	Bertrand and Hughes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ch 1 (The Context of Media Research)</li> <li>- Ch 2 (Getting Started)</li> </ul>	
<b>Part II: Audience</b>			
<i>Week 4</i> <b>Sep 17</b>	Mass society and public opinion	Baran: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ch 2 (Mass Society and Propaganda Theories)</li> <li>- Ch 4 (The Media Effects Trend)</li> </ul>	
<i>Week 5</i> <b>Sep 24</b>	Effects/limited-effects of news *Method: Survey and experiment	Bertrand and Hughes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ch 3 (Researching Audiences)</li> <li>- Ch 4 (Gathering Data on Audiences)</li> </ul>	
<i>Week 6</i> <b>Oct 1</b>	Audience reception *Method: Focus group discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, Ch 23 (Audience Receptions and News in Everyday Life)</li> <li>- Morgan (Focus Groups)</li> <li>- Krueger and Morgan (When to Use Focus Groups and Why)</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise #1: Survey</b>

<b>Part III: News Content</b>			
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Oct 8</b>	Agenda setting and agenda building *Method: Content analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 11 (Agenda Setting)</li> <li>- Neuendorf (Defining Content Analysis)</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise #2:</b> <b>Focus Group Discussion</b>
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Oct 15</b>	News and discourse *Method: Textual/discourse analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 14 (News, Discourse, and Ideology)</li> <li>- Bertrand and Hughes Ch 9 (Researching Texts)</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Oct 22</b>	News framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 13 (Nature, Sources and Effects of New Framing)</li> <li>- Bertrand and Hughes Ch 10 (Gathering and Analyzing Textual Data)</li> <li>- Brennen Ch 8 (Textual Analysis)</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise #3:</b> <b>Textual/discourse</b>
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Oct 29</b>	<b>Mid-term exam</b>	<b>In class</b>	
<b>Part IV: News Production</b>			
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Nov 5</b>	News organization and routines *Method: Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 5 (News Organizations and Routines)</li> <li>- Brennen Ch 3 (Interviewing)</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Nov 12</b>	Gatekeeping and social control *Method: Documents and records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 6 (Journalists as Gatekeepers)</li> <li>- Bertrand and Hughes Ch 7 (Gathering Data on Institutions)</li> </ul>	<b>Exercise #4:</b> <b>Interview</b>

<b>Week 13</b> <b>Nov 19</b>	Fall break – no class		
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Nov 26</b>	Cross-platform news production	- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 10 (Convergence and Cross-Platform Content Production)	
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Dec 3</b>	Newsroom and audience analytics * Method: Observation	- Tandoc (Why Web Analytics Click) - Paterson et al (Production Research: Continuity and Transformation) - Brennen Ch 7 (Ethnography and Participant Observation)	<b>Research Proposal Due</b>
<b>Week 16</b> <b>Dec 10</b>	Alternative and citizen journalism	- Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch Ch 19 (Alternative and Citizen Journalism)	
<b>Week 17</b> <b>Dec 17</b>	<b>Final exam</b>	<b>5:45pm-7:45pm (in class)</b>	