

# Journalism 201: Introduction to Mass Communication

Fall 2017 | Section 312

Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:15, Humanities 2115

Course Website: <http://201.journalism.wisc.edu>

Class List: [journ201-312-f17@lists.wisc.edu](mailto:journ201-312-f17@lists.wisc.edu)

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**TA's Mailbox:** In the main office, located right by the main lobby area on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Vilas Hall.

**Discussion Section Description:** J201 is not only a course that introduces topics in the field of mass communication; it is also a Communication-B course, which aims to instruct students in four modes of literacy (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, and listening), with emphasis on speaking and writing.

The discussion section is where this training takes place the most extensively (i.e., where most of the graded materials take place). Through various section activities and assignments, the goal of this section is to help students develop advanced skills in

- critical, logical thinking and the use of evidence in argument development for writing and speaking
- the use of appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in academic writing and public speaking
- the productive use of core resources (e.g., authoritative sources – peer-reviewed, published articles/readings, library resources) specific to the discipline

Throughout the semester, each student is expected to give one prepared speech, one response speech, and lead one discussion, do extensive reading and writing, and take written exams and quizzes.

This means, discussion section is not the TA's review or rehash session of the main lecture\*, but where students proactively interact with each other (and the TA), through speeches, discussions, and writing, based on the contents from lectures and readings.

Students are expected to have read, done, and prepared for all weekly assigned readings and assignments by the beginning of each discussion section. Remember that all required readings are required, and they can and will appear in quizzes, discussions, and exams.

**Attendance:** Attendance in J201 main lecture is highly recommended. Discussion section attendance is mandatory. Any absence should be approved by the TA prior to the section meeting, to be excused and for you to be allowed for make-up opportunity for any missed work, except in cases of emergency. For cases of emergency, TAs can request appropriate documentation for the absence (e.g., a doctor's note). But in any case of absence (whether approved or not), *it is your responsibility to contact the TA to keep track of anything that you may have missed.*

**Communication:** "J201 has a lot of moving parts," meaning that it has a multiplicity of assignments, in-section activities, and deadlines taking place within a short frame of time. On top of this, there are several ways of communicating these to you: 1) J201 main lecture; 2) the course website (<https://201.journalism.wisc.edu>); 3) discussion section; and 4) email from both the professor and the TA. Remember that *you are responsible for keeping track of all information and announcements provided via different communication platforms.* It means, *the TA may or may NOT reiterate them, once they have been announced by the professor during lecture, via email, or posted on the course website, and will assume everyone is fully on track.* If you are not clear about anything, miss a lecture, or discussion section, contact the TA for clarification and/or check the course website.

**Email:** At any time during the semester, do not hesitate to email the TA if you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification on any aspect of the course. TAs are committed to responding to weekday emails within 24-business hours. Weekend emails will generally be replied to by Monday evening. *This means that you should not count on getting a response the night before a deadline* – so plan ahead.

Check your UW email and course website frequently (at least couple of times a week), for a lot of major announcements will be made via these platforms from the professor and TA throughout the semester. I will be happy to respond to quick questions over email, *but for questions that cannot be answered in 2-3 sentences, come see me during office hours or set up an appointment with me.*

**Deadlines:** Are real. Meet them. Late work will be accepted, but will receive a 20% grade deduction for each day after the deadline, unless you have a legitimate, evidence-backed reason and/or have notified me at least 24 hours in advance.

**Media:** Laptops, ipads, phones and other screens are *not permitted* in lecture *except in the first two rows of the lecture hall*. Lecture outlines will be made available on the course website. These outlines will contain the structure of the lecture, but they will *not* contain the details of the content. Students need to attend lecture and take notes, and talk to a peer about missed lectures. Laptops are also *not permitted for non-academic purposes in discussion sections*.

**Readings:** The readings in the course are varied and diverse. They include news articles, chapters of books, academic articles, blog posts, transcripts of lectures, examples of journalism, critiques of journalism, ethics handbooks, and advertising videos. In short, they constitute a selection of the information environment we deal with every day.

Lists of required and suggested readings for the course can be found in the schedule below. Those listed under the "Readings" heading are *required*, and may appear on an exam, in an assignment, or on a quiz the week for which they appear, or a following week. *Required readings are available in a course pack* at Student Print (333 East Campus Mall); they are also available in an online archive at <https://uwmadison.box.com/s/tdmbg7q0qo3wos63tg8b9sulygbswt8g> (UW login required).

**Guest lectures:** Most Fridays throughout the semester, we will have a guest lecture. Given by professors in the J School and other experts, the lectures are scheduled to be directly relevant to course content, and their *material will appear on quizzes and exams*. The lectures are outstanding opportunities to learn what the foremost experts in mass communications are learning in their research. Students are expected to attend, be attentive, take notes, and ask good questions. (Sometimes lecturers will supply their slides; sometimes they will not.)

**Assignments and Grading:** Detailed guidelines for assignments are posted on the course website. Remember that it is very important that you make sure you understand what the assignment is about. If you are unsure of what the required elements are, please do not hesitate to ask. And make sure you understand these BEFORE the submission or presentation, NOT AFTER grading.

TAs will provide written feedback for major written assignments (media analysis essays). However, for in-section activities and other minor written assignments (speeches, response speeches, discussion leadership, short writing, and peer reviews), there will be no detailed

written feedback, and only the grades will be posted on Learn@UW. For detailed, verbal feedback on these assignments, students must come see the TA.

**\*I DO NOT READ a rough draft before they are submitted, for fairness reasons.** However, you are more than welcome to come talk to me about your ideas, with prepared outlines, questions, or brainstorm-notes, in your process of writing.

**Grade grievances:** Begin by emailing me a clear and dispassionate explanation of why you think the grade was mistaken. Then, I will follow up with you on next course of action. Clear mistakes or errors in grading as a result of computation of scores (i.e. mathematical errors) will be quickly amended. However, be aware that any grade grievance based on substantive answers will entail a re-grade of the assignment—*meaning that there is a risk that points will actually be lost through the re-grade.*

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center (<http://writing.wisc.edu/>) is an important resource provided by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Students can visit the Center for help with writing at all levels, for all kinds of assignments and get feedback and advice about their work.

Essays for J201 must be turned in with proper grammar, punctuation and citation (see course website for full assignment details): **TAs will not correct grammar and punctuation, but will lower grades on essays with significant problems.** To polish your paper for submission, or to simply improve your writing, the Writing Center is the place to go.

**Participation:** Participation points count as part of your final grade. These are points that you earn, not that are given to you. In order to receive full credit for participation, more than attendance is required. Each week, you should contribute to discussions in informed and substantive ways, by preparing insightful questions or comments on the readings, even when you are not assigned as the speaker or discussion leader. You also should have always completed the assignments with effort and on time. Participation also requires sufficient effort on essay drafts and peer reviews (see the course website for assignment details).

**Rules for Productive Discussion:** In order to achieve a comfortable discussion environment for all, please abide by the following rules:

- Treat everyone in the section with respect. Name-calling, excessive interrupting, and dominating the discussion will be addressed by the TA.
- At the same time, everyone in the section should feel free to express their own opinions and ask questions without the fear of censure from others. Remember you can always disagree with an opinion without having to insult anyone. Different perspectives,

opinions, and questions will more often than not make the discussions productive, lively, interesting, and informative.

### **General Guidelines for Written Assignment Submission and Format:**

Submission: Unless instructed otherwise, all written assignments must be submitted to Turnitin.com. Instructions on how to enroll for our section on Turnitin.com will be provided.

Format: All written assignments should adhere to the following format. Use one-inch margin on all sides, 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced body text for Short Writing Assignments, and double-spaced body text for media analysis essays. You should indent all paragraphs except the first one. There should be no extra blank lines between paragraphs. Include assignment name, your name, section number, and word count in the header, and page number in the footer. Points CAN be taken off for not adhering to the given format. For more details, refer to the "Written Assignment Format" document, which will be distributed by the TA.

Citing outside sources: In most written assignments, you are expected to use authoritative sources to support your arguments. This means, for any idea, quote, or fact that are not of your own needs to be properly acknowledged and cited. When you cite them, **use the APA (American Psychological Association) style**, which will be instructed by the TA in upcoming weeks. However, you should also learn to make use of the documents on APA citation, located in the course website's side menu, "Writing Resources."\*

**\*Writing Resources:** There are other resources uploaded on the side menu of the course website that will help you with writing. While only some of these resources will be discussed in section due to time constraint, it is strongly recommend that you visit and make good use of them.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty requires that the course work a student presents to an instructor represents the student's own academic efforts. If you are unsure about what qualifies as academic dishonesty, consult the Academic Misconduct Guide for Students. While we encourage J201 students to study for exams together, remember that the essays and posts you write for class must be your own. If, for example, a student were to turn in an assignment or write an exam essay that was verbatim or near-verbatim from the social networking web site Study Blue, that would be a clear case of academic misconduct. **Copying or paraphrasing text, including from fellow students, without proper quotation and citation is plagiarism. This includes "patchwriting," the piecing together of different sources into a paper, often with minimal editing. Plagiarism may be sufficient grounds for failing a student in the entire course.**

**Special Needs:** We take very seriously the importance of providing appropriate accommodations to students who need them. To request academic accommodations please register with the McBurney Disability Resource Center and contact your TA

## **Grading**

There are 100 points possible in the class.

### **Speeches and discussion (15 points possible)**

1 Prepared speech (5)

1 Response speech (5)

1 Discussion leadership (5)

### **Media analysis essays (30 points possible)**

2 essays (15 points each)

### **Exams (40 points possible)**

2 exams (20 points each )

### **Participation (15 points possible)**

5 Quizzes (5)

5 Short writings (5)

Attendance and participation (5)

### **Extra credit (2 points possible)**

Students may also earn up to 2 points of extra credit, accrued in .5-unit increments.

### **Grading scale**

92-100: A

88-91.99: AB

81-87.99: B

76-80.99: BC

70-75.99: C

60-69.99: D

59.99 and lower: F

**Note:** Final grades are not rounded up (or down). A 91.99 is an AB, not an A!

## Assignments

### Prepared Speech

You should devote the first part of your presentation (2 minutes) to identifying the main arguments of the reading, outlining the author's claims, reasons, and evidence. You do not have to go into great detail (your audience will have read the article) but you do provide an accurate summary.

The rest of your presentation (2 minutes) should deal with your reaction to the reading. You need to make your own claim and your reason for that claim, providing evidence to support it. Like a good paper, your talk needs a short introduction and a satisfying conclusion.

**Do not read your presentation!** You may speak from *simple notes* that keep you on track, but allow the words to emerge spontaneously and conversationally. The key to a good speech is practice: it will help you get your timing right and plan what you want to say and how to say it. A good strategy is to practice your presentation in front of a mirror, a voice recorder, or for a friend.

While you are making your presentation, your TA will designate a fellow student to record you using your smartphone (or another student's smartphone).

*You are required to view your performance and perform a **self-critique**: email your TA with one specific way that you could improve your delivery next time. This email is worth 1 point and is due within one week of the speech. After that time, 1 point is deducted from the speech score.*

**Make sure to turn in a **one-page written outline** of your speech.**

## Response Speech

The response speech is a two-minute response to another student's prepared speech. This is both "easier" than the prepared speech in that it is only two minutes, and "harder" because you have to listen really closely to what your peer is saying.

The good news is that you know what reading your response speech will be on. So your best bet is to know that reading very well. Then listen carefully to your peer, and respond.

Your response speech should summarize and acknowledge what the other student said about it (1 minute), then offer your own thoughts. Explain whether you agree or disagree with the student's assessment, and why. Or you may suggest another way of understanding or interpreting the article. You should critique both the article and the other student—but remember, 'critique' does not mean 'criticize.' You should be both complementary of the other student and constructive, whether you agree or disagree. Response speeches are not recorded.

## Discussion Leadership

Once during the semester, you will lead a ten-minute discussion. This means you are responsible for posing some interesting points or questions, getting people talking, calling on your peers, and managing the conversation. For example:

- pose a question about the reading (and give an example of how you might answer it)
- ask students to connect the reading to their own experience (and give an example of how it connects to your own)
- identify one or two key terms from the reading (that might show up on an exam) and ask students to define and give the significance of them
- pose a challenge or critique to the reading and ask students to defend it

**Not later than the night before section, send an email to your section with 3-5 starter questions.** Then, in discussion, you will lead a 10-minute discussion on your reading/s. Encourage students to respond to your starters. Then, ask constructive follow-up questions that help the class make something new of the reading. **This is a challenging assignment. Your goal is to help make the conversation productive and interesting, while not being the person who talks the most.**

## Quizzes

**There will be 5 quizzes during the course of the semester. These will be written by the professor and TAs, and given during sections.** However, no two sections' quizzes will be exactly the same! **The quizzes will be about key concepts from the readings and lecture, and**



**(major) current events in the news.** Grade breakdown will be about 50/50 between these topics. Each quiz is worth 1 point.

### **Short Writing Assignments**

**At 5 times during the semester**, students will be asked to write a brief response to current events and/or concept from lecture. These prompts will come from the professor, and will ask the students to give an opinion, offer a story, or otherwise contribute something to that space. Online assignments will typically be 500 words, due within one week of the prompt, and worth 1 points.

### **Participation**

**Active participation in section-contributing to discussions in informed and substantive ways-will be assessed by** TAs. This component of the grade is worth 5 points.

### **Extra Credit**

**Students may earn** up to 2 points of extra credit, accrued in .5-unit increments. Extra credit opportunities will be announced throughout the semester; usually, they will be invitations to participate in research studies being conducted by graduate students and faculty members in the School of Journalism Mass Communication.

In order to obtain extra credit for participating in studies (.5 point for each study), 1) take part in the study and 2) **keep a log which includes the date you participated in the study and 2-3 sentences describing what the study was about and your thoughts about the experience.** You will need to turn in your extra credit log to your TA **at the end of the semester.**

If you do not wish to take part in these studies, you can still earn extra credit by attending presentation about the studies. If you attend these alternative presentations, you will still need to keep a log that contains the date of your attendance and 2-3 sentences describing what you learned. (You can only earn extra credit for doing the study OR going to the presentation about the study - not both.)