

Comm 321

Digital Journalism

Summer Term One, May 2016

Ralph Merkel

ralph.merkel@louisville.edu

STR 206F

502-852-6976, cell 502-262-5068 (call before 10 p.m., text afterwards)

Office Hours: Daily 8-9:00 a.m. or by appointment

PREREQUISITES: Comm 335, Comm 320 or permission of the instructor

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: This course serves as an elective for Communication students.

OBJECTIVE: Digital Journalism will prepare you to transform traditional reporting skills to those that live on the Internet. You will learn the principles of convergent journalism and apply them as you cover a beat that interests you.

We will emphasize reported stories: whether text, image, video or multimedia.

You will prepare and upload video stories regularly.

You will create a personal, news-driven blog. And post **every** day.

You will collect, assess then prepare content for a larger audience. Then you will put it online.

STRUCTURE: We will discuss principles of convergent journalism daily then put them in practice in the field. You will be covering five different video stories this semester. You will shoot your video stories with professional video cameras.

Our newsroom has 12 iMacs with Final Cut Express where you will edit your stories. If you have a personal computer that can edit video, you may be able to use that machine with my permission.

READING:

Textbook: Journalism Next: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and Publishing, CQ, 2012

We meet in Strickler Media Lab, STR LL14

- May 9 What is news, convergence, Web 2.0? Video strategies. Starting your blog. (Ch1 & Ch 8)
- May 10 Reporting for an online audience. Editing your first video story.
- May 11 Web Tools. Photo stories. **Project One Due May 11 at noon**
- May 12 Field Interviews, data collection
- May 13 Field interviews
- May 16 Editing Video **Project Two May 16 at noon**
- May 17 Photos & Creating a slideshow (Ch 7)
- May 18 Elements of Video Stories
- May 18 Complex reporting skills **Project Three Due May 18 at noon**
- May 19 Engaging the Audience: the importance of feedback to increase page views
- May 20 Adding your opinion to stories
- May 23 Enhancing your online reputation **Project Four Due May 20 at noon**
- May 24 Entrepreneurism in modern journalism
- May 25 Class time devoted to collection of capstone information
- May 26 Finding Your Voice
- May 27 **Capstone Project Due May 27 at the END of Class**

GRADING:

You will report four stories and a capstone project. The emphasis here will be on immediacy and impact. The capstone will be reported in multiple formats. You will learn the difference between a mere text story, a photo slideshow, an audio-only interview and a video news package.

Attendance at every class is **absolutely mandatory**. This is a newsroom. I have no patience for slackers. You will do some reporting, interviewing and editing nearly every day during class time.

Each story will be worth 30 points. I must receive the link to your videos or blog posts by **noon**. I will be in the newsroom waiting for your emails to ralph.merkel@louisville.edu.

The capstone is worth 60.

Class participation/personal blogging is *absolutely mandatory* and worth 120 points.

The class has 300 points in total.

270-300 A

240-269 B

210-239 C

180-209 D

below 180 F

THE DEADLINES:

May 11 **First story**

May 16 **Second Story**

May 18 **Third Story**

May 20 **Fourth Story**

May 27 **Capstone**

PROFESSIONALISM:

We operate like a newsroom. There are no allowances for missed or late assignments. If you miss a deadline, you get a zero. Failure to blog every day will substantially lower your grade. Email me **well in advance** of any extenuating circumstances.

All work must be yours or attributed to its original source. Plagiarism is particularly heinous in news and could result in your expulsion from school.

I will show you how to upload your work into Wordpress, and use tags and SEO to get those web hits coming.

I must approve all content before it actually is “published” onto the larger class blog, “Cards Eye View.” It’s an honor to have your personal blog post appear on the larger class page—like having a front-page story.

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus as needed to refine learning objectives and accommodate schedules changes, cancelled classes, etc.

Students with disabilities who need accommodation (seating placement, arrangements for examinations, etc.) should inform me at the beginning of the course. You may also contact the Disability Resource Center on campus for additional accommodation. You can reach them at 852-6938.

This class will provide you with critical real-world skills in the collection and dissemination of digital information. These will serve you well in your careers, no matter what you choose.