Model Curriculum for a Master's Degree in Investigative Journalism for the Western Balkans and Turkey

Sheila S. Coronel & Crina Boros
The curriculum was developed in the framework of the Strengthening Quality News and Independent Journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey project, which is implemented by BIRN Hub in partnership with Thomson Media gGmbH (TM), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Central European University (Center for Media, Data and Society at CEU), the Media Association of South-East Europe (MASEE), the Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CINC), the Independent Trade Union of Journalists and Media Workers in Macedonia (SSNM), BIRN Albania, and BIRN Serbia. The project is funded by EuropeAid/European Commission through its Regional Training and Support Program to Improve Quality and Professionalism in Journalism.

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Crina Boros is a London-based, award-winning, freelance data-driven investigative reporter, and an international journalism trainer. She has reported for Reuters, the BBC, ICIJ, Greenpeace, Euobserver, openDemocracy, Computer Weekly, and The Black Sea+. She prefers accountability-driven projects, with a focus on public authorities’ corruption. Boros engages in assignments through data analysis and transparency laws for exclusive angles, but she’s also skilled in field reporting. She is a new wave journalist who combines traditional investigative methods with digital skills. With a knack for cross-border reporting, she also trains data journalism across Europe and in the U.S. She is the organizer of the CAR track at European Investigative Journalism Conference & Data Harvest, Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck University, London, and an offspring of the London-based Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ).
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Introduction
1

Introduction

Why a Master’s Degree in Investigative Journalism?

Journalism in the Western Balkans and Turkey — and indeed, in many other parts of the world — is under siege on multiple fronts. On the financial front, the advertising and subscription-based revenue models that have supported independent journalism are collapsing, and the long-term sustainability of many news organizations is now in doubt. On the political front, journalists are under attack by populist or autocratic regimes as well as by ultranationalist and xenophobic movements. Moreover, digital technologies and social media platforms are empowering bad actors who flood the public sphere with disinformation and propaganda, drowning fact-based journalism in a deluge of lies. In many countries in the region, the space for independent reporting and commentary is shrinking as state and oligarchic interests use ownership, regulation, and funding to control the media.(1)

All over the world, the legitimacy of the media as a watchdog of society and as an institution of accountability is being challenged. In the Western Balkans, in particular, where journalism institutions are weak and under attack, there is an urgent need to fend off these challenges and to strengthen the media’s capacity to hold power to account. Training in evidence-based investigative reporting techniques is one way to build such capacity and to strengthen the Balkan media’s defenses and credibility.

Investigative reporting is relatively new in the region, having been possible in most of the Western Balkan countries only after the fall of communism and the rise of a free press. In the 1990s, a community of investigative journalists began to emerge. Despite the paucity of a watchdog reporting tradition and the lack of government transparency, these reporters took advantage of their new freedoms to hold power to account.

They exposed corruption, especially in the privatization of state assets; the growing influence of organized crime; environmental destruction; and the many social ills that came with rising criminality, declining living standards, and the collapse of the social safety net that followed communism’s fall.

Accountability reporting requires an investment in time and resources. Even in the best of times, however, the region’s small and fragmented media markets make the news business challenging. Few, if any, news organizations have the resources for sustained investigative reporting. Unable to find a home in commercial media, Balkan journalists have set up independent, nonprofit investigative reporting centers with support from aid and philanthropic organizations. These centers became the incubators for accountability journalism in the region. Today all Western Balkan countries have nonprofit investigative reporting centers. In addition, there are regional networks that train reporters in investigative techniques and collaborate on high-profile, cross-border investigations. The work of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Network is particularly noteworthy. Because these networks operate regionally and often also globally, they have been able to circumvent some of the pressures faced by journalists bound to nation-states or to compromised media owners.

The Balkan experience has shown that collaborative, cross-border, and nonprofit investigative projects can help overcome some of the obstacles to independent reporting posed by media capture and regulatory harassment. By building regional and global linkages among journalists and with civil society, these investigative networks have helped create a supportive community for journalists under siege. They are enabling the survival of accountability reporting even in the most adverse circumstances.

Thus, despite the myriad problems faced by the Balkan media, the seeds for a culture of accountability reporting have been planted, and there is room for continued growth. The task ahead is to nurture this growth and to train the next generation of Balkan investigative journalists who would build on the work of the 1990s generation and expand the shrinking spaces for independent reporting.
Journalism Education in the Western Balkan Region

The fall of communism saw a media boom in the Western Balkans, which meant a surge in the demand for journalists. Many of those who joined the profession during this transition had little formal journalism training as journalism faculties in universities sought to keep up with the pace of change. (2) Since then, the region’s institutions of higher learning formed or expanded their journalism faculties. Many are also now offering journalism master’s degrees. Today 21 faculties in the region have postgraduate degree offerings.

Table 1. Faculties in the Western Balkans that offer master’s degrees in journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALBANIA</th>
<th>BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA</th>
<th>KOSOVO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Elbasan Aleksander Moisiu University</td>
<td>• University of Banja Luka</td>
<td>• University of Prishtina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Beder University</td>
<td>• University of East Sarajevo</td>
<td>• University of Business &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• University of Mostar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• University of Sarajevo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• University of Tuzla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• International Burch University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Banja Luka College of Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• International University Travnik</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTENEGRO</th>
<th>NORTH MACEDONIA</th>
<th>SERBIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• University of Montenegro</td>
<td>• SS Cyril and Methodius University</td>
<td>• University of Belgrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• University of Donja Gorica</td>
<td>• Southeast European University</td>
<td>• University of Novi Sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher School of Journalism &amp; Public Relations</td>
<td>• University of Nis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Megatrend University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Most of these master’s degrees focus on what are deemed as the more marketable skills in an era of technological disruption, such as multimedia, digital, and broadcast journalism as well as marketing and social media. A master’s degree with a focus on investigative journalism does not exist in the region.

Until relatively recently, investigative reporting was not even taught in journalism schools in the Western Balkans. That has changed as watchdog reporting took root in the region. Today 13 faculties teach investigative journalism as a standalone class, usually an elective, in undergraduate journalism programs. However, there are only six graduate programs that offer an investigative reporting course.

Table 2. Faculties in the Western Balkans that teach investigative journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>GRADUATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALBANIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beder University</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Banja Luka</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of East Sarajevo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Sarajevo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Burch University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Business Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banja Luka College of Communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International University Travnik</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOSOVO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Prishtina</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTENEGRO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Montenegro</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH MACEDONIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS Cyril and Methodius University</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher School of Journalism &amp; Public Relations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERBIA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Belgrade</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Novi Sad</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megatrend University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singidunum University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Gaps in Journalism Education in the Western Balkan Region

The legacy of communist-era journalism education is still evident in the region. Many journalism faculties fall under political science or law departments, as they did during the communist era when journalism was largely seen as propaganda or as cheerleader for the state. As various assessments of journalism education in the Balkans have pointed out, journalism training in the region is very theoretical and students lack exposure to practical skills and new technologies. Moreover, journalism faculties seldom have instructors with real-world reporting experience. (3)

A more recent report by the Center for Media, Data and Society confirmed the findings of these earlier studies. Using desktop research and interviews with journalism professors to assess the current state of journalism education in the region, the report recommended more practical training oriented to real-world journalism experience in the region as well as stronger emphasis on current digital and data journalism practices. It also noted the paucity of instructors who can teach up-to-date newsroom skills and the bureaucratic constraints, including requirements that instructors have PhDs, that prevent institutions of higher learning from teaching practical skills. (4)

The report recommended a journalism program that would be open to students from all the Western Balkan countries and leverage existing regional networks that have had years of experience in cross-border investigative reporting. By combining teaching and other resources, a regional program can overcome some of the challenges the study pointed out, including the lack of teaching talent and small national markets for specialized master’s degrees.

These recommendations provided the guidance for this model curriculum for an M.A. in Investigative Journalism for the Western Balkans and Turkey. This model curriculum also draws on a survey of investigative journalism master’s degrees in the world (see next section). It was drawn up with international and European journalism education standards in mind (See Part 3). In addition, an advisory committee composed of journalism professors from all the Western Balkan countries provided input on the curriculum design and specific courses.

A summary of the guidance used in drafting this model curriculum is below.

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Table 3. Characteristics of the model curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Based on best practice around the world.</th>
<th>In compliance with international and European standards for journalism education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-border and collaborative.</td>
<td>Fact- and evidence-based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooted in the digital world.</td>
<td>Practical and hands-on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes particular challenges of the region, including democratic backsliding, media capture, harassment, and intimidation of journalists, and the difficulty of getting access to public records and data.</td>
<td>Focused on journalistic production rather than theory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taught with a mix of in-person and online classes in order to allow for maximum participation from students throughout the region. Instructors and students will be from different countries in the region and the world.
Global & Regional Survey
2

Global & Regional Survey

Master’s Programs in Investigative Journalism

Specialized Master’s Programs in Investigative Journalism are relatively new, many of them offered only since the early 2000s. But many more journalism faculties, especially in Europe and North America, are now offering this specialized degree in response to both student interest as well as a perceived growing need by industry and society to train journalists in investigative techniques and methods. In the Global South, there are no master’s programs focused on investigative journalism although in many countries, investigative reporting courses are being taught as part of both undergraduate and graduate journalism programs.

This study conducted a survey of the structure and course offerings of investigative master’s programs in the top universities in the U.S. and Europe. There are other programs, but these are considered to be among the best and cutting-edge. Tables 4 and 5 on the next page summarize the findings of the survey.

Additional notes from the global survey:

- Nearly all programs offer some instruction in audio, video, and multimedia journalism, usually integrated in other classes. Only a few programs, like those at City and Northwestern, have mandatory standalone courses in video or multimedia for those in the investigative reporting program.
- Most programs teach about investigative journalism in a particular country.
- Only the University of Gothenburg and Columbia University teach cross-border investigative journalism.
- Only Arizona State University has classes taught by instructors in other disciplines apart from journalism.
Table 4. Courses offered in investigative master’s programs (U.S. and Europe)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANDATORY CLASS</th>
<th>NOT OFFERED OR REQUIRED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (U.S.)</td>
<td>NORTH-WESTERN UNIVERSITY (U.S.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. JOURNALISM BASICS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. MEDIA ETHICS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MEDIA LAW</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CROSS-BORDER JOURNALISM</td>
<td>ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. DATA JOURNALISM</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. VIDEO / MULTIMEDIA</td>
<td>ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. NON-JOURNALISM ELECTIVE</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FINAL PROJECT / THESIS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Common characteristics of investigative master’s programs (U.S. and Europe)

| Length | Most journalism master’s degrees in the U.S. and Europe are 2-semester programs, although there are some that are 3 or 4 semesters long. |
| Teaching method | Nearly all are in-person programs. Some universities have online journalism master’s degrees, but none that specialize in investigative journalism. |
| Teaching the basics | All programs, except for the University of Gothenburg’s, teach the fundamentals of reporting. |
| Teaching law and ethics | All programs except for the University of Gothenburg’s have separate classes in media law and media ethics. Gothenburg incorporates teaching on law and ethics in its cross-border investigative reporting class. |
| Data journalism | In all programs, data journalism is a major component, although some programs like City University’s made data journalism optional starting last year. |
| Investigative journalism | All programs teach introductory and advanced techniques of investigative journalism. |
| Final project or thesis | All programs require a final project or master’s thesis that demonstrates mastery in investigative reporting techniques and methods. |
Model Curriculum for a Master of Arts in Investigative Journalism for the Western Balkans and Turkey
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Model Curriculum for a Master of Arts in Investigative Journalism for the Western Balkans and Turkey

Course Structure and Qualifications for Admission

This model curriculum for an investigative journalism master’s degree is designed to be implemented by two or more universities, with one university serving as a "hub" where most of the courses will be taught. It can be structured as a joint degree, similar to the Joint Master’s Program in South-Eastern European Studies offered by the University of Graz in Austria with a consortium of universities across the Balkans. This study will not look into how and where such a joint degree may be accredited and offered. It will instead focus on the structure and content of the M.A. curriculum.

To qualify for an M.A. in Investigative Journalism, students must have a bachelor’s degree or at least 180 ECTS credits. Students who have either a three-year or four-year undergraduate degree qualify. No prior journalism experience is required.

Instructors will be drawn from the region and elsewhere. English will be the medium of instruction. Those who teach the core investigative reporting and data journalism courses will be required to have prior experience in these disciplines. If full-time instructors with such experience are not available, those with field experience may be paired with other journalism instructors to do team teaching. Given that the bulk of these courses will be conducted online, it would be possible to get instructors from outside the region. It would also be easier to get guest lecturers from around the world who are leading practitioners in the field.
This master’s degree will be taught over four semesters. While most master’s programs in investigative journalism are two semesters long, the advisory board for this project recommended an additional semester in practical training in a news organization as well as a semester devoted mostly to working on a master’s thesis. This would lighten the academic load for each semester and make it possible for students who are already employed to enroll in the program. Moreover, students will have more opportunities to conduct real-world reporting both in their media placements as well as for their theses.

The first two semesters of the program will be taught mostly in hybrid or blended learning mode to make it easier and more cost-effective for students in the Balkan region to attend. Although most of the classes in the first year will be online, students will be expected to conduct field research and reporting for many of their courses.

In the third and fourth semesters, students take their classes in a partner university. In the third semester, they will be placed in a newsroom for practical training or practicum. They will also take an elective in the partner university. This elective can be taught in online, hybrid, or in-person mode, depending on the requirements of the partner university.

In the fourth semester, students will work on their theses with the help of their advisers. They will also take a class on media and society.

Students in the program will meet as a cohort in person three times during the program’s two-year duration. Each of these in-person sessions will be for one week. These in-person meetings are intended to facilitate solidarity and collaboration among students who will be attending classes remotely in the first year and in different universities in their second year. The first meeting will take place at the start of the course, mostly for orientation and introduction. It is important that students get to know each other and learn to work together, so this week will feature team-building and group exercises.

Students will meet again in person at the start of the second year, before they are assigned placements in news organizations. This second round of meetings will consist of a debriefing on what they have learned in the first year, and it will also prepare them for both their placements and their master’s theses. During this week, they may meet with journalists, visit newsrooms, and take part in workshops where they discuss thesis ideas with instructors and editors. Students will meet a third time at the end of the program, after they have completed their master’s theses. This final round of meetings will include thesis presentations, talks about career options, and discussions with investigative journalists and editors.
A key feature of this curriculum is learning by doing. Instructors will act as editors, directing students to produce works of journalism in a majority of the classes. There will also be lectures, presentations, and discussions, but for many of the classes, students will be expected to do field reporting and to implement what they are learning in the classroom. There will be purely academic classes that do not require journalistic production, such as media ethics and media law, but these, too, will have a practical aspect in the sense that they will be discussing real-world challenges faced by Balkan journalists.

Compliance with European Union Standards

This curriculum is in compliance with the guidance for master’s degrees in the European Union as set out in the Bologna Process, which mandates:
- A minimum of 60 ECTS credits per academic year; and
- Master’s degrees with 60 to 120 ECTS credits.

In addition, this curriculum complies with the spirit of the 2018 Paris Communiqué adopted by the European Higher Education Area covering 48 countries. The communiqué points to the importance of informed public debate, and it also affirms the role of education in building support for democratic and inclusive societies. This excerpt is of particular salience to journalism education:

At a moment when Europe is facing important societal challenges – ranging from unemployment and social inequality to migration-related issues and a rise in political polarisation, radicalisation and violent extremism – higher education can and must play a decisive role in providing solutions to these issues. It must also play a key role in establishing the facts on the basis of which public debates are conducted and decisions made...

We therefore commit to developing policies that encourage and support higher education institutions to fulfill their social responsibility and contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society through enhancing intercultural understanding, civic engagement, and ethical awareness, as well as ensuring equitable access to higher education.

By using digital and blended teaching by instructors from across the region and the world, this proposed curriculum fulfills the following goals set out in the Paris Communiqué:
- an inclusive and innovative approach to learning and teaching, including the use of digital and blended learning and teaching methods;
- integrated transnational cooperation in higher education, research and innovation;
- the development of joint programs and degrees, including uniform qualification and adoption of ECTS requirements.

6 A copy can be accessed at this link: http://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/BFUG_Meeting/48/8/BFUG_BG_SR_61_A_FinalDraftCommunique_947488.pdf
Learning Competencies

This model curriculum takes into account learning competencies, which are the ideas, knowledge, and skills students are expected to master in the course of a four-semester master’s degree in investigative journalism. It subscribes to the ideals of “deeper” learning competencies, illustrated below, as these allow students to be creative and innovative, to collaborate with each other, and to advocate for themselves while also acquiring knowledge and transferable skills. Note that these deeper learning competencies also correspond with the goals articulated in the 2018 Paris Communiqué.

Leveraging students’ deeper learning competencies

In addition, this model curriculum fulfills the learning competencies for journalism education set by the most reputable regional and global educational institutions. Below is a shortened and simplified list of the learning competencies proposed by these institutions and the courses in this model curriculum that satisfy those competencies. A detailed description of the model curriculum and the courses in that curriculum follows this section.

A master’s degree in journalism promises a significantly higher standard of achievement in students’ knowledge and practice of journalism, as well as in their specialized knowledge of another subject. Students’ evidence-gathering capacity should show an advanced understanding of research methods, and they should write with more depth and style. In all journalism courses, they are expected to reflect deeply and rigorously on the practice of journalism, including the way stories are produced and the relevance of journalistic content for different target groups in society. Master’s students should emerge with the authority, in knowledge and methods, to work at the most challenging levels of journalism practice.
### Table 6. UNESCO learning competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Courses that teach this competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Knowledge of journalism’s role in society, including journalism’s history, the organization of the news media, and laws circumscribing journalism practice. | • Media & Society  
• Media & Law |
| Professional understandings, including ethics. | • Journalism Ethics |
| The ability to use the tools of journalism and to adapt to new technologies and innovative practices; knowledge of best practices in journalism. | • Statistics & Data Journalism  
• Techniques of Investigative Journalism  
• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting |
| An ability to think critically, incorporating skill in comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of unfamiliar material, and a basic understanding of evidence and research methods. | • In-Depth Journalism  
• Statistics & Data Journalism  
• Techniques of Investigative Journalism |
| An ability to write clearly and coherently using narrative, descriptive, and analytical methods; professional techniques of research, writing (and other forms of presentation), editing, design, and production. | • In-Depth Journalism  
• Statistics & Data Journalism  
• Master’s Thesis |
| A knowledge of national and international political, economic, cultural, religious, and social institutions. | • Media & Society  
• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting  
• Master’s Thesis |

### EUROPEAN JOURNALISM TRAINING ASSOCIATION  
*(TARTU DECLARATION, 2006, REVISED IN 2013 and 2020)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Courses that teach this competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The competence to reflect on journalism’s role in society. | • Media & Society  
• In-Depth Journalism  
• Journalism Ethics  
• Master’s Thesis  
• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting |
| The competence to find relevant issues and angles. | • In-Depth Journalism  
• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting  
• Master’s Thesis |
| The competence to organize journalistic work. | • In-Depth Journalism  
• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting  
• Master’s Thesis |
| The competence to gather information swiftly. | • In-Depth Journalism |
| The competence to select the essential information. | • In-Depth Journalism  
• Techniques of Investigative Journalism |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Courses that teach this competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The competence to present information in an effective journalistic form.</td>
<td>• In-Depth Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence to account for journalistic work.</td>
<td>• Media &amp; the Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statistics and Advanced Data Journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Techniques of Investigative Journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence to cooperate.</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence to act as an entrepreneurial journalist.</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The competence to contribute to the development of the profession.</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media &amp; Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Carnegie Corporation and Knight Foundation**

*(Journalism School Curriculum Enrichment Report, 2008)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Courses that teach this competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General competence to assess the salience of events and issues and to</td>
<td>• In-Depth Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place information in context; analytical thinking that challenges the</td>
<td>• Techniques of Investigative Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veracity of sources and the behaviors and motivations of those whom</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalists report on.</td>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical techniques to work across different media platforms.</td>
<td>• In-Depth Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process competence to understand the influences that affect the news</td>
<td>• In-Depth Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>product and the consequences that can result; understanding of how</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audiences react to presentation.</td>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media &amp; Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Journalism Ethics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional ethics, including stimulating the moral imagination;</td>
<td>• Journalism Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognizing moral issues; developing analytical skills; eliciting a</td>
<td>• Media &amp; Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sense of moral obligation; and tolerating disagreement and ambiguity.</td>
<td>• Techniques of Investigative Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statistics &amp; Data Journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject competence: specialized knowledge to make sound judgments on</td>
<td>• Cross-Border Investigative Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the newsworthiness of events, to ask the right questions, and to</td>
<td>• Statistics &amp; Data Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercise independent judgment about an event or situation.</td>
<td>• Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Master’s Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Model Curriculum: M.A. in Investigative Journalism

This model curriculum is based on a 15-week semester, but adjustments can be made for faculties that have semesters that are 12 to 14 weeks long. The courses are designed to be taken sequentially as the lessons from the first semester are crucial to advance into the second semester and beyond.

The first semester is an immersion in the fundamentals of in-depth and investigative journalism as well as journalism ethics. The second semester’s focus is on cross-border and data journalism as well as media law. In the third semester, the only coursework is an elective. In that semester, students will also be placed in a news organization where they can put into practice what they have learned. The fourth and final semester will be for the master’s thesis as well as a class on media and society.

The following pages provide tables that list the courses for each semester as well as detailed descriptions of each course in the model curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER ONE: 30 ECTS CREDITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Course title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Depth Journalism:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques and Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentals of Investigative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism Ethics in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional and Global Context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In-Depth Journalism: Techniques and Methods**

The emphasis of this class will be on original or enterprise reporting. The goal is for students to go beyond "he said, she said" journalism and the passive coverage of news events like press conferences or street protests. It will explain to students the difference between journalists as stenographers and journalists as diggers. Students will write stories using in-depth reporting methods, including immersive field reporting, probing interviews, and desktop research. In this course, they will develop news judgement and learn how to gather, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple sources; how to verify information and evaluate its significance and relevance; how to assess the reliability and newsworthiness of sources; how to diversify sources and methods; and how to report safely and securely, especially in the Balkan context.
Journalists will produce three stories: a deep profile, an explainer, and at the end of the course, a long-form narrative report. Mobile audio, photo, and video will be taught, but as reporting, rather than presentation, tools.

This class assumes many students will come with journalism experience or an undergraduate journalism degree. But the syllabus can be adjusted to include one to two extra classes of breaking news reporting and writing if needed.

[15 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS; FIELD REPORTING REQUIRED; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]

**Fundamentals of Investigative Journalism**

This is a crash course in investigative research methods, including the use of public records, databases, and social media and other open-source techniques. It will also discuss the history of investigative reporting in the Balkans and the world, and the challenges that face investigative reporters in the region. Students will learn how to use public records laws in various jurisdictions and how they can leverage information from one jurisdiction to investigate individuals or entities in other jurisdictions. This class will also focus on investigative interviewing techniques. It will examine other investigative methods, including the use of images, sensors, and satellite data for accountability reporting. Students will discuss stories that have been written about the Balkan region and "reverse engineer" those stories to see how they were reported. Investigative reporters from the Balkan region and others will be invited to share their experiences and techniques, especially in overcoming the challenges of reporting in the region.

This will be a hands-on class, with students applying the techniques and methods they are learning to work on an investigative project or memo. Completion of a project may not be feasible during the span of this course, but an investigative memo that outlines findings using different methods and techniques will be the minimum output for each student. The focus of this class will be on reporting using a range of investigative techniques, rather than writing or production.

[10 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET ONCE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON SEMESTER LENGTH; STUDENTS MAY OR MAY NOT BE REQUIRED TO DO FIELD REPORTING, DEPENDING ON THEIR PROJECTS OR MEMOS.]
Journalism Ethics in a Regional and Global Context

This is an interactive class about journalism ethics, taught in the context of journalistic practice and standards in the Balkans and other parts of the world. It will start with the framework for ethical decision-making and the foundational principles of ethical journalism. With the instructors’ guidance, students will discuss the journalist’s bargain with, and duty to, their audience and examine the problems that may arise between journalists and their sources. They will examine problems like censorship and intimidation that are prevalent in the region and many other parts of the world and discuss how these challenges may be overcome. Students will be asked to examine their own biases and to critically examine how they choose what stories to tell, how and when; who tells the story and whose point of view is amplified; and how groups and individuals, especially those without power or on the margins of society, are represented. Students will be encouraged not just to discuss the real-world problems of journalists in the Balkans but also to brainstorm possible solutions.

This class will strive to have honest conversations about corruption and self-censorship in the media and challenge students to think about ways to get around state or other forms of censorship, pressure from media owners and advertisers, and other obstacles to journalistic independence. They will also reflect on how social media has changed journalistic practice and standards and what diversity, fairness, and accuracy mean in the digital age. As much as possible these discussions will be based on concrete cases rather than abstractions.

[5 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR LECTURES AND SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS ONCE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON SEMESTER LENGTH.]

SEMESTER TWO: 30 ECTS CREDITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>ECTS credits</th>
<th>Class hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative and Cross-Border Investigative Journalism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 hours, twice weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics and Data Journalism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 hours, once weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and the Law</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 hours, once weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collaborative and Cross-Border Investigative Journalism

This class will introduce students to the philosophy and practices of collaborative and cross-border reporting. Students will discuss case studies of successful projects and reverse engineer how they were researched and reported. They will be divided into teams that will undertake a cross-border project incorporating investigative techniques and methods learned in the first semester and in the class. This course will also cover digital and physical safety and techniques for self-care and self-protection and the protection of sources.

Students will compare and contrast working conditions and reporting practices in different countries in the Balkan region and elsewhere and discuss how cross-border reporting can overcome problems like lack of public records, censorship or self-censorship, media capture, etc. By the end of the semester, student teams are expected to produce a cross-border investigative project that is worthy of publication.

[15 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK; FIELD REPORTING MAY BE REQUIRED; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]

Statistics and Data Journalism

This class will begin with the concepts of numbers and data and how these are used in news stories. Students will then be introduced to descriptive statistics (e.g. mean, median, mode, standard deviation) and how they have been used and misused in reporting. They will learn how to use spreadsheets; how to collect their own data and create their own database; and discuss what conclusions can be made from data. The class will also cover essential and practical skills such as cleaning dirty data; joining databases; scraping websites; and data visualization as a tool for story and data analysis.

Students will also familiarize themselves with databases and sources of data for the Balkan region. They will learn how to request data from public institutions and find data in non-government sources. By the end of this class, students will be able to produce a piece of data journalism and learn how to use data in the service of journalism.

[10 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON SEMESTER LENGTH; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]
Media and the Law

This is a class on the law as it applies to the media and journalism practice. While it is not possible to have one class that covers in depth all the Balkan countries, this class will include classes on the legal guarantees of media freedom and the right to information; the laws that apply to newsgathering (recording, source protection, judicial records, private records); libel and defamation; privacy and the right to be forgotten; and copyright and intellectual property. The class will also cover European as well as international laws and standards that apply to the media.

Versions of this class are already being taught in the Western Balkans. This syllabus provides suggestions on topics that instructors may want to add to pre-existing courses. [5 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR LECTURES AND SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS ONCE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON SEMESTER LENGTH]

SEMESTER THREE: 30 ECTS CREDITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>ECTS credits</th>
<th>Class hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement in a News Organization</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective - Journalism, Social Science or other relevant course to be taken in a partner university</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 hours, once weekly or as appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Placement in a News Organization

Students will be placed in a news organization where they will be able to sharpen their investigative skills while working on reporting projects alongside the staff of these news organizations. These placements may be in mainstream newspapers and broadcast stations in the region. They may also be in nonprofit investigative reporting centers or in regional or global organizations like the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, or the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. [20 ECTS CREDITS]
Journalism or Social Science Elective

This class will be taken in a partner university. Students have the option to take a class in the journalism, social science, philosophy, humanities or any other appropriate faculty or school in the partner university. For example, a student interested in environmental investigations can choose to take a class in environmental policy in a different academic department. A student who wants to learn video skills can take a broadcast journalism class in the journalism faculty.

[10 ECTS CREDITS; CLASS MEETINGS AT DISCRETION OF PARTNER UNIVERSITY.]

SEMESTER FOUR: 30 ECTS CREDITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>ECTS credits</th>
<th>Class hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Thesis</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 hours, once weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Master's Thesis

This capstone project, an ambitious work of investigative journalism, is produced in 12 to 14 weeks under the supervision of an adviser. The projects can be on any platform of the student’s choosing and should reflect what the student has learned after completion of the first three semesters. The project should demonstrate an ability to gather information from multiple and diverse sources using a variety of investigative techniques. As an investigative project, it should be groundbreaking and revelatory, providing original information presented in a compelling and engaging way. All projects must have an empirical component.

[20 ECTS CREDITS; FIELD REPORTING AND JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED; ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTORS REQUIRED]
Various versions of this class are already being taught in the region. Many of these courses, however, revolve around legacy media (print and broadcast) and do not put enough emphasis on digital media and the Internet. They also do not always focus on the role of the media, particularly of journalism, in building democracy. This syllabus suggests ways to incorporate elements of pre-existing courses to teach a course that stresses the link between media and democracy and puts the spotlight on technology and the Internet’s impact on global media and society.

This class is a critical examination of the role of the media in democratic societies. It will begin with a discussion of press and media systems around the world and proceed to how technology has upended media systems. It will look into the economics of media and journalistic production, discuss how the business models that have traditionally supported journalism and information production have been disrupted, and explore what this means for society. This class will also reflect on journalism and media history in the Balkans and Turkey. It will examine how the rise of the Internet has affected the production, distribution, and consumption of information. It will tackle global and regional press freedom trends, including the rise of disinformation, and discuss how the media as an institution can inform public debate, bring about positive social change, and help defend democracy and press freedom, drawing from the lessons of history and from other countries.

[10 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR LECTURES AND SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS ONCE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS, DEPENDING ON SEMESTER LENGTH.]
Sample Syllabi
4
Sample Syllabi

Semester One

In-Depth Journalism: Techniques and Methods

The emphasis of this class will be on original or enterprise reporting. The goal is for students to go beyond “he said, she said” journalism and the passive coverage of news events like press conferences or street protests. It will explain to students the difference between journalists as stenographers and journalists as diggers. Students will write stories using in-depth reporting methods, including immersive field reporting, probing interviews, and desktop research. In this course, they will develop news judgement and learn how to gather, analyze, and synthesize information from multiple sources; how to verify information and evaluate its significance and relevance; how to assess the reliability and newsworthiness of sources; how to diversify sources and methods; and how to report safely and securely, especially in the Balkan context. Journalists will produce three stories: a deep profile, an explainer, and at the end of the course, a long-form narrative report. Mobile audio, photo, and video will be taught, but as reporting, rather than presentation, tools.

This class assumes many students will come with journalism experience or an undergraduate journalism degree. But the syllabus can be adjusted to include one to two extra classes of breaking news reporting and writing if needed. [15 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS; FIELD REPORTING REQUIRED; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]

Pedagogical approach

This class will be taught through a combination of lectures, seminars, drills, hands-on classroom learning, and workshops where students critique each other’s work. A lot of the learning will be through field reporting outside the classroom. Students in this class will be expected to develop expertise in, and do reporting on, a particular beat (e.g. a state agency or a town or city) or topic (e.g. crime, health care, migration, climate change). They will also be expected to produce the following: an 800-1,000 word explainer; an 800-1,000 word deep profile; and a 1,500 to 2,000-word narrative story, all related to their beats or topics. Through story workshops, editing by instructors, and rewrites and revisions of their own work, students will learn the craft of reporting, writing, and story presentation.

Hours per week

Classes meet twice a week for two hours each time. Field reporting and writing time will be required outside of class hours.

Recommended texts

# Week-by-Week Schedule

## Week 1. Course Introduction.

**Beyond breaking news: What do we mean by journalism in depth?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop 1</th>
<th>Workshop 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of students and instructors. Review of syllabus, assignments, and course expectations. Review of the meaning and purpose of journalism. Review of what is news and news judgment.</td>
<td>Students read and discuss examples of in-depth journalism. Students analyze reporting techniques and methods used in these examples, making the distinction between breaking news reporting and in-depth journalism. The class can focus on a particular story and break it down into its component elements. Class arrives at a working definition of in-depth journalism.</td>
<td>Students discuss story ideas and make a list of what makes for a good in-depth story that has novelty, interest, and relevance. They will also discuss what makes stories new, interesting, relevant, and useful for audiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students do desktop research on topics they are interested in. They make a list of story ideas, describing each one briefly, and how these relate to their topics or beats of interest. | • Gorney, Cynthia. "From Story Idea to Published Story." Kramer and Call, Telling True Stories.  
• Wihbey, John. "Beyond 'he said, she said' journalism: Using research to inform the debate over 12 controversial issues." The Journalist's Resource, 13 August 2014, https://journalistsresource.org/home/beyond-he-said-she-said-using-research-12-controversial-issues/, accessed 27 July 2021. | If needed, the instructor can conduct workshops on breaking news reporting and writing for those without journalism experience. Students can be asked to write a news report based on a news conference or a live event. Through this exercise, students can learn the five W's and how to write a summary lede followed by supporting paragraphs and quotes. Drills can include writing a report based on a recorded speech by a public figure or expert and critiquing the front page of a newspaper or news site (as an exercise in news judgment). |
Week 2. Reporting in depth on a topic or a beat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Hands-on learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to build expertise on a topic or a beat</td>
<td>Students discuss their choices of beats or topics to focus on during the semester and brainstorm story ideas related to those beats or topics. Students present and critique each other’s beat/topic and story ideas.</td>
<td>How to build a Twitter list</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment

Build a source list as well as a list of books, articles and other material to prepare you for reporting on a topic or a beat. To build the list, call at least three people familiar with your topic or beat and ask them to recommend human sources, reading material, and possible stories. Include in the source list a list of Twitter accounts of people and organizations relevant to your beat or topic.

Learning videos*


*to be watched in advance of the class

Reading


Week 3. Finding sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary and primary sources</td>
<td>Write a beat or topic memo based on a range of secondary and primary sources. The memo should cover an overview and explanation of the topic or beat; the reporting that has been done on that topic or beat; some observations on the gaps in reporting; a list and description of possible stories that fulfill the criteria of currency, novelty, interest, relevance, and usefulness to an audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Workshop and hands-on tutorial

**The basics of desktop research**


### Week 4. Safe and inclusive reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop 1</th>
<th>Workshop 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive reporting and digital and physical safety</td>
<td>The class examines how unconscious biases may affect their choice of stories, sources, and beats. Students brainstorm how they can expand their source lists to be more inclusive, especially of voices not usually reflected in the news.</td>
<td>Reporting safely and securely. Class discussion to help students anticipate risks they may face in the course of their reporting and how they can mitigate such risks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment

Revise your source list to make for more inclusive reporting. Interview one or two sources not on your original source list, making sure to include a source whose perspectives or experiences are different from those on your original list. Ask these interviewees questions about your beat or topic of interest and ask them to propose ideas for stories and for other people you should be talking to and other materials you should be reading or researching. Write a summary of your interviews, including questions you asked and any new insights or information you got from the interviews.
Readings

- Coddington, Mark and Lewis, Seth. "Are journalists on autopilot when they’re determining which sources (or what information) to trust?" Nieman Lab, 4 May 2020, https://www.niemanlab.org/2020/05/are-journalists-on-autopilot-when-theyre-determining-which-sources-or-what-information-to-trust/, accessed 27 June 2021.

Week 5. Interviewing advocates and experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Drill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to interview advocates, experts, and other secondary sources</td>
<td>Using audio recorders for interviews</td>
<td>Students record interviews with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to write an explainer</td>
<td>Discuss last week’s interview assignment. Discuss what makes for a good interview and a good quote. How to write a story pitch.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment

Write a story pitch for an 800- 1,000-word explainer that explains an issue, topic, controversy or problem related to a beat or topic of interest. Students are encouraged to do interviews as well as desktop research to write the pitch.

Week 6. Numbers and statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Drill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using numbers and statistics in stories</td>
<td>Examine stories that use numbers.</td>
<td>In class, students write a 300-word story based on a data set or a statistical study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Week 7. Writing the explanatory story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elements of the explanatory story</td>
<td>Deconstruct an explanatory story in class. Students discuss the thesis statement and possible ledes or openings for their explanatory story. They then look at story themes and story structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using your cellphone camera as a reporting tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Selections from any of the following:  
- Online Journalism Awards, [explanatory journalism category](https://www.poynter.org/awards/online-journalism-awards/explanatory-journalism-category).  
- Explainers published by Vox, *FiveThirtyEight* and *The Upshot*. |
**Week 8. The art of the interview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Drill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing techniques</td>
<td>Preparing for the interview; building rapport; asking questions; active listening.</td>
<td>Students conduct mock interviews based on hypothetical scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of explainers submitted by the class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assignment**

Students record and transcribe an interview that they can use for the next assignment, a deep profile. They will also take cellphone photographs related to their story. They will write a 300 to 500-word evaluation of their interviewing techniques and style, explaining what they did well and what they can do better. They will grade themselves on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest. If needed, students will rewrite their explainers and submit a second draft.

**Readings**


**Week 9. Difficult interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing victims of trauma and violence; interviewing reluctant sources</td>
<td>Discussion of approaches to difficult interviews, based on students’ stories and experiences; interviewing trauma victims; dos and don’ts in interviewing; understanding trauma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of explainer second drafts. Focus on readability, ledes, and story structures.
Submit third and final draft of explainer, including both audio and photo elements.


Week 10. The deep profile

Seminar | Workshops
---|---
The art of the profile | In class, students deconstruct an award-winning profile.

Researching and reporting a deep profile.

Assignment | Readings
---|---
### Week 11. Verifying information and evaluating sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Drill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verifying what people say in interviews and information from desktop research</td>
<td>Discuss characters and sources in students’ stories and brainstorm ways to verify information from interviewees and desktop research.</td>
<td>In class, do the interactive exercise by First Draft, <a href="https://www.firstdraft.org/">Verifying content: online challenge</a>. Discuss drafts of student work on profiles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment

Rewrite profiles if needed. Submit ideas for final assignment, a piece of narrative reporting. Write 250 words for each story idea. Submit at least two ideas.


### Week 12. The narrative story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
<th>Hands-on tutorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What makes for compelling narratives?</td>
<td>Brainstorm and discuss how to report story ideas for the final assignment, a 1,500-word narrative story.</td>
<td>Using cellphone video to record a scene or an interview.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment

Submit a reporting plan for a narrative story and start reporting.

Week 13. Reporting the narrative story

**Workshops**

Discuss reporting done by students for their narrative story. Discuss ethical issues such as consent, attribution, etc.

*Beginnings and Characters:* Discuss opening of narrative story and key characters. Deconstruct an award-winning narrative story.

**Assignment**  
Submit first draft of narrative story

**Readings**


Week 14. Writing the narrative story

**Workshops**

Discuss student drafts

Students break into groups, identify gaps and issues in their reporting and writing, and brainstorm ways to fill these gaps.

Week 15. Closing and presentations of final assignments

Students present their final assignments.
Fundamentals of Investigative Journalism

This is a crash course in investigative research methods, including the use of public records, databases, and social media and other open-source techniques. It will also discuss the history of investigative reporting in the Balkans and the world and the challenges that face investigative reporters in the region. Students will learn how to use public records laws in various jurisdictions and how they can leverage information from one jurisdiction to investigate individuals or entities in other jurisdictions. This class will also focus on investigative interviewing techniques. It will examine other investigative methods, including the use of images and satellite data for accountability reporting. Students will discuss stories that have been written about the Balkan region and "reverse engineer" those stories to see how they were reported. Investigative reporters from the Balkan region and others will be invited to share their experiences and techniques, especially in overcoming the challenges of reporting in the region.

This will be a hands-on class, with students applying the techniques and methods they are learning to an investigative project. Completion of a project may not be feasible during the span of this course, but an investigative memo or detailed research proposal that outlines findings using different methods and techniques will be the minimum output for each student. The focus of this class will be on reporting using a range of investigative techniques, rather than writing or production.

[10 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET ONCE A WEEK FOR TWO HOURS FOR 12-15 WEEKS; FIELD REPORTING MAY BE REQUIRED, DEPENDING ON STUDENT PROJECTS.]

Mode of teaching

This class will be taught through lectures, class discussions, guest lectures from investigative journalists, and hands-on exercises on reporting tools.

Pedagogical approach

This class is aimed at instilling in students an appreciation of why investigative reporting is a distinct journalistic genre, and the techniques and methods that distinguish it from other forms of reporting. Students will learn these techniques and methods through hands-on exercises and by applying them to an investigative project or research memo, if the project cannot be completed by the end of the course. Each week beginning on Week 3, students will be assigned to read or view an investigative report and discuss methods and techniques and other issues for 15 minutes. Guest speakers, including leading investigative journalists, will be invited to present their methods and techniques.

Hours per week

Students will meet once a week for three hours or twice a week for one-and-a-half to two hours each time, but will be expected to complete weekly assignments and exercises on reporting tools and techniques. Students are also expected to do research and reporting on their investigative projects.

Recommended texts


Investigative reports on the Balkan region that can be used for classroom discussion can be found in the following news sites:

- Balkan Insight/Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
- Center for Investigative Reporting, Bosnia and Herzegovina (CIN)
- Investigative Journalism Center, Croatia (IJC)
- Kosovo Center for Investigative Journalism (KCIJ), Kosovo
- KRIK.RS, Serbia
- Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project
- SCOOP Macedonia, North Macedonia
- Center for Investigative Journalism of Serbia (CINS)
- Uğur Mumcu Investigative Journalism Foundation (Turkey)
- Center for Investigative Journalism, Crime and Corruption Reporting Network – LUPA, Montenegro
- Investigative Reporting Lab, North Macedonia

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**Week-by-Week Schedule**

**Week 1. Defining investigative journalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings and other material</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is investigative journalism? What makes it different from other</td>
<td>• Coronel, Sheila. &quot;Defining Investigative Journalism.&quot; Digging Deeper: A Guide for</td>
<td>• Find and read an investigative report about your country or a topic of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and mindset of investigative journalism; the state of investigative</td>
<td><a href="https://balkaninsight.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/digging-deeper-a-guide-for-">https://balkaninsight.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/digging-deeper-a-guide-for-</a></td>
<td>• Bring three ideas for an investigative report that you can work on for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journalism in the Balkans; the history of investigative reporting in</td>
<td>investigative-journalists-in-the-balkans-chapter-one.pdf.</td>
<td>this class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Balkans.</td>
<td>• Kaplan, David E. &quot;What is investigative reporting?&quot; Global Investigative Journalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Week 2. The investigative process; advanced Internet search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</table>
| Discussion of the investigative process using the Romanian documentary, Collective, as an example. Generating ideas for investigations; assessing the investigative potential of a story idea; drawing up a source list; primary and secondary sources; "from the outside in" method of approaching an investigation; how to do advanced Google searches. | • Do preliminary research of secondary material related to your investigative ideas. Make sure to use advanced search methods.  
• Find the best reporting or research that has been done on your story idea and explain what new or revelatory information you hope to find and how. |

### Readings and other material


### Week 3. The investigative hypothesis; minimum and maximum stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is an investigative hypothesis and why is it necessary? Formulating an investigative hypothesis. Investigative reporting as proving or disproving a hypothesis. Discussion of student story ideas and possible hypotheses. Discussion of a published investigative report as an example of hypothesis making and testing. The concept of minimum and maximum stories. The problem of confirmation bias; reporting against your hypothesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 4. Backgrounding individuals and companies

Readings and other material


Assignments

Formulate an investigative hypothesis and describe maximum and minimum stories for your investigative project.

Write an 800-word profile of an individual and company that is relevant to your project, using online sources and databases. Cite the source of every fact in your profiles.

Readings and other material

### Week 5: Public records in the Balkans; Right to Information and public records laws

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings and other material</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The concept of public records and why they exist; various ways to get public records; public records commonly used in investigative reporting; right to information laws in the Balkans and the EU; how to submit and follow up on an information request. | "Legal Leaks Toolkit" (country guides to information access available), AccessInfo and N-OST. [https://www.legalleaks.info/#thelegalgalleakstoolkit](https://www.legalleaks.info/#thelegalgalleakstoolkit). | - List the public records used in an investigative report that relies heavily on public records and explain how they were obtained. (Instructor can assign the stories or can ask students to make their own selection.)  
- Write a public record or information request relevant to your investigative story. |

### Week 6: Investigative interviewing 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings and other material</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Finding human sources; how investigative interviews are different from other interview types; preparing for the interview; getting sources to talk; asking difficult questions; interview conditionalities (off the record, background, granting anonymity). | - Hanson, Nils and Hunter, Mark Lee. "Using Human Sources." Hunter, Mark Lee, et. al. Story-Based Inquiry: a manual for investigative journalists, Unesco, 2009, [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193078](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000193078).  
- Nalder, Eric. "Loosening Lips: The art of the interview." Thirteen, 2008, [https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/expose/2008/12/loosening-lips-the-art-of-the.html](https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/expose/2008/12/loosening-lips-the-art-of-the.html). | Draw up a list of human sources for your investigative project, describing each one, and why they would be relevant to your reporting. Interview one or two sources and submit interview notes and transcripts for discussion in Week 9. |
Week 7: Using court and company records for investigations; organizing information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where to find court and company records and how to use them for</td>
<td>Find court filings that would be helpful to your investigation and write an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>investigations; how information from court testimonies and</td>
<td>800-word story based entirely on court documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dockets can be useful for writing investigative narratives; discuss</td>
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<tr>
<td>stories that used court and company records; techniques for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>organizing information; creating timelines; creating searchable files</td>
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<td>and folders; archiving links on the Wayback Machine.</td>
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</table>

Readings and other material

- World Legal Information Institute databases available online at: http://www.worldlii.org/.

Week 8: Using social media and other open sources for investigations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding people and other information on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; creating Twitter lists; saving and archiving social media; finding and verifying photos; using satellite images for investigations; searching and using YouTube videos and other user-generated content; discuss use of open-source techniques in investigations. Discuss Bellingcat documentary.</td>
<td>Build a Twitter list and create Tweetdeck columns related to your investigative project. Expand your source list to include sources found on social media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Readings and other material

- Bellingcat tools for social media. Available online at: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18rtqh8EG2q1xB02cLNyhIDuK9jrPGwYr9DI2UncoqJQ/edit?gid=1700243466.

Week 9: Investigative interviewing 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss student experiences with interviewing sources; protecting sensitive sources; interviewing trauma survivors; the confrontational interview.</td>
<td>Prepare for difficult interviews by writing a memo that describes possible interview scenarios and how to overcome interviewing difficulties and challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readings and other material

### Week 10: The investigative narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing the investigative story; beginnings, middles, and endings; keeping reader interest; finding characters; story arcs.</td>
<td>Write the first draft of your investigative report or research memo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Readings and other material**


### Week 11: Investigating corruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Corruption as an enduring topic for investigative reporting in the Balkans; techniques for investigating various forms of corruption in the Balkans; discussion of investigative reports on corruption in Balkan countries. | - Find and read an investigative report about corruption in the Balkans, outline the main findings, and list sources and techniques used in the investigation.  
- Revise first draft of investigative report or research memo. |

**Readings and other material**

- Global Investigative Journalism Network Resource Page on Corruption: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1kHQUH8RvfUNrQuH3NWYMc8BzraEFF4QaG_XbfAcFV9k/edit#gid=0
- Guide to Combating Corruption and Fraud - International Anti-Corruption Resource Center https://iacrc.org/resources/
Week 12: Investigating organized crime

Topics

Analyze reporting techniques used in two investigative projects (listed below); discuss risks inherent in such projects and how journalists dealt with the risks; brainstorm ways to report safely and securely about organized crime.

Assignment

Write or rewrite drafts of your investigative project or research memo.

Readings and other material


Week 13: Security and ethical issues in investigative reporting; fact-checking

Topics

Discuss with students security and ethical issues they encountered while reporting. Provide guidance on how to deal with these issues. Discuss confirmation bias. Pair students to fact check each other’s work.

Assignment

Submit final version of investigative project or research memo, correcting for fact-checking and other errors.

Readings and other material


Week 14: Presentations

Students present and discuss their work.
Journalism Ethics in Regional and Global Context

This is an interactive class about journalism ethics, taught in the context of journalistic practice and standards in the Balkans and other parts of the world. It will start with the framework for ethical decision-making and the foundational principles of ethical journalism. With the instructors’ guidance, students will discuss the journalist’s bargain with, and duty to, their audience and examine the problems that may arise between journalists and their sources. They will examine problems like censorship and intimidation that are prevalent in the region and many other parts of the world and discuss how these challenges may be overcome. Students will be asked to examine their own biases and to critically examine how they choose what stories to tell, how and when; who tells the story and whose point of view is amplified; and how groups and individuals, especially those without power or on the margins of society, are represented. Students will be encouraged not just to discuss the real-world problems of journalists in the Balkans but also to brainstorm possible solutions.

This class will strive to have honest conversations about corruption and self-censorship in the media and challenge students to think about ways to get around state or other forms of censorship, pressure from media owners and advertisers, and other obstacles to journalistic independence. They will also reflect on how social media has changed journalistic practice and standards and what diversity, fairness, and accuracy mean in the digital age. As much as possible these discussions will be based on concrete cases rather than abstractions. [5 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET TWO HOURS ONCE A WEEK.]

Pedagogical approach

This class should be as interactive as possible, allowing students time to reflect and discuss ethical principles and dilemmas. It can be taught through a mix of lectures, discussions in breakout groups, hypotheticals, role-playing, submissions of weekly reflections, and presentations by students. It should also draw as much as possible from actual cases that represent ethical difficulties for Balkan journalists. The goal is not so much to arrive at definitive answers to ethical dilemmas but to guide students through the process of ethical thinking and decision-making.

Instructors may want to assign a final project that students can work on in teams. This can be drawing up a code of ethics or a social media policy for a real or hypothetical news organization.

Recommended texts

Like journalism itself, the field of journalism ethics is continually evolving. There is no single text required in this course. Instead, instructors can use materials from the following:

- Ethical Journalism Network (Europe)
- Journalism Trust Initiative (Reporters sans Frontiers, South Eastern Europe)
- Building Trust EU (European Association for Viewers Interest)
- Center for Journalism Ethics, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin
- Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, University of Santa Clara
- The Journalist’s Resource, Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School (including an open-source syllabus on journalism ethics in the digital age)
- The Poynter Institute
## Week-by-Week Schedule

### Week 1. What does ethics mean? And what purpose does it serve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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### Week 2. The elements of journalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the book, Elements of Journalism, longtime journalism educators Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel list 10 essential principles and practices of journalism, starting with &quot;Journalism’s first obligation is to the truth&quot;. The class will discuss these 10 principles and whether they suffice to form the foundation of ethical journalism practice.</td>
<td>Kovach, Bill and Rosenstiel, Tom. &quot;The Elements of Journalism.&quot; American Press Institute, 24 April 2007, <a href="https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/elements-journalism/">https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/what-is-journalism/elements-journalism/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Week 3. Journalism ethics and ethical codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Students compare and contrast journalism codes of ethics of selected news organizations in the Balkan region and elsewhere. They critique these codes in terms of what principles they are defending and what issues they seek to address, using lessons learned in the first two weeks’ discussions. | • Law, Tom and Ilic, Dasha. "Building Trust: A manifesto for sustainable journalism in South East Europe and Turkey." Ethical Journalism Network, https://dev.ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Building-Trust-in-Media-in-South-East-Europe.pdf  
• Codes of ethics of selected news organizations in the region and elsewhere. |
Week 4. Journalism ethics and the public interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The class will try to arrive at a definition of what constitutes the</td>
<td>• &quot;Is it in the public’s interest?&quot; Ethical Journalism Network, (no date), <a href="https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/the-public-interest">https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/the-public-interest</a>, accessed 27 June 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will think through concrete examples of conflicts between the public</td>
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<td>interest and other values, such as safety, privacy, and truth-telling.</td>
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Week 5. Truth telling in the digital age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this class, students talk about disinformation, propaganda, and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the journalist’s role at a time when the press is no longer the sole</td>
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<tr>
<td>gatekeeper of information.</td>
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</table>

Week 6. Journalists and their sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This class is about the bargain that journalists make with their</td>
<td>• Posetti, Julie. &quot;Protecting journalism sources in the digital age.&quot; Unesco, 2017. <a href="https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248054">https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248054</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>background, on and off the record, not for attribution, etc. They</td>
<td>• &quot;What Journalists Need to Know about Whistleblowers.&quot; National Whistleblowers Center. <a href="https://www.whistleblowers.org/what-journalists-need-to-know-about-whistleblowers/">https://www.whistleblowers.org/what-journalists-need-to-know-about-whistleblowers/</a>, accessed 27 June 2021.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will also talk about dealing with whistleblowers and massive digital</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>leaks like the Panama Papers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Week 7. Journalistic transparency, going undercover, and lying to get at the truth

Topics

Transparency is a journalistic principle. In this class, students will discuss what it means for journalists to be transparent and whether more transparent journalism helps build audience trust. They will also answer the question: Is it ethical to lie, go undercover, or use deceptive methods to report a story?

Readings


Video:


Week 8. Censorship, self-censorship, media capture and other challenges to journalistic independence in the Western Balkans

Topics

Journalists are told that they must guard their independence, but is that possible given the many political and other pressures they face from governments, media owners, advertisers, vested interests and criminal, antidemocratic, ultranationalist or xenophobic groups? In this class, students discuss how to navigate these pressures and how to maintain journalistic independence amidst these challenges.

Readings

• Stojarova, Vera. "Media in the Western Balkans: who controls the past controls the future." Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, December 2019, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14683857.2020.1702620?casa_token=nxopFePzxDOAAAAA%3Almd8_lqEDYgAVGwlhixoxR9aA0j8JpuEWMsQsyUpFYJs2mOdf0zPZGvbB3U4iArGj9QrT8r4uQT

Week 9. Reporting in authoritarian or controlled regimes

Topics

Students discuss how journalists have behaved in authoritarian or controlled regimes and the choices or frameworks of action available to them.

Readings

• Radeljic, Branislav. "In favour of censorship and propaganda: elites, media capture and the journalistic profession in the Western Balkans." Journal of Contemporary Central and Eastern Europe, December 2019, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25739638.2020.1848984?casa_token=e7k3FXjQecYAAAAA%3AaUWhCRSylzvihx5q2gjR_Fv38jhkY74uauqYU769hYUHjQGnk7cVJR4qUFDFQJ9hvrFyqaysw6gpsz_E

Video:

Week 10. Corruption in the media

Topics

The precarious working conditions of journalists in the Western Balkans provide a fertile environment for under-the-table payments and other inducements to journalists. Students discuss the modes of media corruption and how journalists can maintain their integrity in compromised media environments.

Reading

Week 11. Reporting on trauma, violence, disasters, and public health emergencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Reporting on the trauma caused by war, civil conflict, pandemics, natural disasters, and other tragedies requires sensitivity and skill. In this class, students discuss how to report on traumatic events, interview victims of trauma, and also take care of their own psychological well-being while doing trauma reporting. | There are various repositories of articles and tipsheets on trauma reporting. Instructors can choose from materials made available online by the following:  
- Ethical Journalism Network  
- Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma  
- Poynter Institute |

Week 12. The ethics of representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journalists represent individuals and communities to the public. In doing so, they may reinforce biases, stereotypes, and misconceptions, especially of subaltern and marginalized groups. Representation can be both textual and visual. In this class, students will examine their own biases, and how they may consciously or unconsciously amplify those biases in their reporting. Students will be asked to take any of the Implicit Association Tests and reflect on the results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Video:  
Week 13. The question of proportionality

Topics

Journalists have frequently been accused of sensationalism, of blowing events out of proportion to their real importance. In this class, instructors can choose recent events in the news and have the students compare and contrast how different news organizations have reported on them. They can then propose alternative or better modes of coverage. Instructors may want to show selected news videos to the class to prompt discussion.

Week 14. Presentation of final projects

Week 15. Presentation of final projects and summing up

Semester Two

Collaborative and Cross-Border Journalism

This class will introduce students to the philosophy and practices of collaborative and cross-border reporting. Students will discuss case studies of successful projects and reverse engineer how they were researched and reported. They will be divided into teams that will undertake a cross-border project incorporating investigative techniques and methods learned in the first semester and in the class. This course will also cover digital and physical safety, techniques for self-care and self-protection, and the protection of sources. Students will compare and contrast working conditions and reporting practices in different countries in the Balkan region and elsewhere, and discuss how cross-border reporting can overcome problems like lack of public records, censorship or self-censorship, media capture, etc. By the end of the semester, student teams are expected to produce a cross-border investigative project that is worthy of publication.

[15 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK; FIELD REPORTING MAY BE REQUIRED; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]

Mode of teaching

This class will be taught through a combination of lectures, discussions, hands-on training on tools and techniques, team reporting, and workshops of student work. The class will meet twice a week. The first class each week will be a seminar taught through lectures and discussions of readings on the assigned topic as well as talks by journalists who have worked on cross-border investigations. The second class of each week will consist of a workshop on student reporting projects as well as instruction and drills on reporting tools and techniques.

Pedagogical approach

Students will hone and expand the suite of investigative skills they have learned in this program and use those skills on a cross-border reporting project supervised by the instructor(s).
They will critically examine the philosophy, mindset, and methods of collaborative and cross-border reporting and how these apply to their own work. They will also learn through case studies: they will read, watch or listen to cross-border investigative projects on different platforms, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these investigations, and reverse-engineer the techniques and methods used. When possible, students will hear from the reporters who have done these reports. Students will learn by doing. By working together in cross-border teams, they will sharpen their research and reporting skills; they will also learn how to work collaboratively, how to report safely, how to work around constraints, and how to pitch and publish cross-border stories.

Hours per week

This class will meet twice a week in a virtual classroom. Each class will be about two hours. Cross-border reporting teams will meet weekly and work remotely on projects to complete research and reporting tasks that will be assigned each week.

Recommended texts


Week-by-Week Schedule

Week 1. What is cross-border journalism?

Seminar topics

Collaborative reporting as a challenge to "lone wolf" journalism; why cross-border reporting is needed in a globalized world; the key skills and competencies needed for collaborative and cross-border projects; early examples and history of cross-border journalism; the philosophy and mindset behind cross-border reporting.
Readings


Workshop

Students share their individual reporting experiences and strengths in terms of tools and techniques and their knowledge of particular topics or geographical areas. They can discuss what kinds of skills they would need in a team and how teams are best formed. With the instructor, they brainstorm possible ideas for collaborative, cross-border projects. They may divide into groups based on skills and interests. Some team-building exercises may be used in this workshop.

Week 2. Getting started on a cross-border project

Seminar topics

How to generate ideas for cross-border projects; what types of stories are ideal for cross-border collaboration; where to find sources, data, and documents; finding institutional and academic resources for investigations.

Readings

Workshop

Students present story ideas for discussion and debate. Reporting teams will be finalized, with the expectation that teams will return in the following week with more concrete story ideas. During this workshop, the class can brainstorm on how to search through secondary sources of information, including news archives, institutional research by governments, businesses, thank-tanks, international institutions, universities, nonprofits, etc. They can discuss where to find experts and how to research the best reporting that has been done on their topics of interest. They can work in teams to start building a list of primary and secondary sources for their projects using open sources and desktop research tools. Students will continue working in teams after the class to do initial research on story ideas.

Reference


Week 3. Networked journalism: Tools and techniques for collaborative and cross-border journalism

Seminar topics

The tools and techniques used for cross-border collaboration; safety and secrecy; communication through secure platforms; radical transparency; joint publication; global network equals global impact. This class will use the Panama Papers investigation as an example to think about networked journalism at the global level. That project will also be used as a starting point for talking about following the money globally and the world of offshore secrecy.

Readings

- The Panama Papers - the 2018 documentary, by Alex Winters (director). Available through streaming services.
Workshop

Teams discuss the best way to share documents and data; how to communicate safely and securely; how to bridge differences in language, journalistic practices and newsroom cultures; and how to settle differences among different team members. Discussion of story ideas continues; finalize team projects or shortlist story ideas. Class will also do exercises using ICIJ’s Offshore Leaks database and OCCRP’s Aleph data platform.

Week 4. Reporting safely across borders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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Workshop

Students discuss the risks inherent in their investigations and countries they are working in. They break up in teams to write a security assessment of their projects to include all aspects of safety: physical, digital, and emotional or psychological. A good guide is "Pre-Assignment Security Assessment Form from the Committee to Protect Journalists", available online at: https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/assessment_form.pdf. Reporting teams report on their progress. By now, the teams should have finalized an investigative hypothesis and their minimum and maximum stories.

Week 5. Working with data & documents across borders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using information laws in the Balkans and the EU; document and data sources in the EU and the Balkans. The class will use the EU farm subsidy project as an example of mining documents and data in several countries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 6. Following the global money trail companies & assets

Seminar topics

How money flows across borders; tracing real estate and other assets; investigating the proceeds of corruption and organized crime; investigating money-laundering; analyzing and reverse-engineering money-laundering and asset-tracing investigations by journalists.

Readings

Workshop

Students do exercises on asset tracing and searching corporate registries and records. They can search using Open Corporates or online corporate registries for their countries of interest. They can also discuss ways to trace real-estate ownership and uncover beneficial owners of corporate and other assets. Reporting teams provide updates on their progress and brainstorm ways to find information on companies and other institutions related to their projects.

Reference materials

- Open Corporates - https://opencorporates.com/
- Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project catalogue of research databases - https://id.occrp.org/databases/

Week 7. Investigating global trade

Seminar topics

- The flow of goods across borders; the global supply chain; working with NGOs and other investigators.

Readings and other materials

Workshop
Students do exercises tracking ships, planes, imports and exports. Reporting teams provide updates on their projects, discuss obstacles, brainstorm solutions. By this time, each team should have finalized an investigative hypothesis, minimum and maximum story, gathered and analyzed published and online sources, put together a source list, and done some source interviews.

Reference materials

Week 8. Investigating migration and human smuggling

Seminar topics
Following the money on migration; data collection from open sources and collaboration across borders; counting migrant deaths; investigating human trafficking.

Readings and other materials
- "This was Moria. “ We are Solomon, https://wearesolomon.com/mag/category/this-was-moria/.

Workshop
How to build databases from open sources. Students can explore the Missing Migrants Project data and examine data sources, data quality, and methodology. Draw lessons from this project that may be applicable to their own work. Reporting teams discuss reporting dilemmas and obstacles with finding data and human sources; interviewing difficult subjects.

Reference materials
Week 9. Collaboration on journalist safety & protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
<th>Readings and other materials</th>
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</table>
| Risks faced by journalists in the Balkans and how to mitigate those risks; how journalists have responded to threats; how to investigate attacks against journalists; how collaborative journalism projects have exposed the threats to journalists and supported those who have been killed, jailed, or threatened. | • Ploquin, Frédéric. "Journalists: The Bete Noire of Organized Crime." Reporters Sans Frontiers, (no date) https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/en_rapport_mafia_web_0.pdf, Chapter 3. "How to Respond to the Threat from Organized Crime."  

**Workshop**

Students discuss risks in their work and brainstorm ways to collaborate to defend and protect each other. They will look at the role played by media and press freedom groups in the Balkans and the world in protecting journalists. Reporting teams provide updates on their projects and discuss progress and obstacles moving forward. They should all be ready to submit first drafts of their reports (even if the reporting is incomplete) by the following week.

Week 11. Writing investigative stories

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
<th>Readings and other materials</th>
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**Workshop**

Students discuss first drafts of their stories; critique each other’s work and provide suggestions for improvement. Students rewrite stories for the following week.
Week 12. Fact-checking

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The art of fact-checking; dos and don’ts of fact-checking; fact-checking for cross-border publication.</td>
<td>Reporting teams fact-check each other’s work; brainstorm ways to verify information; point out gaps in research and reporting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readings and other materials


Week 13. Bullet-proofing: legal and other issues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Seminar topics</th>
<th>Readings and other materials</th>
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Workshop

Lawyer does a legal review of student projects.

Week 14: Story presentations

Week 15: Summary and closing; lessons learned
Statistics and Data Journalism

This class will introduce students to statistical concepts and the practice of finding stories in numbers and in both structured and unstructured data. Students will discuss successful data-driven reporting projects and reverse engineer how these were researched and reported. They will also learn how to employ various tools and techniques for collecting and analyzing data and how to use transparency laws to find and negotiate for data. In addition, they will learn how to use visualization tools for data analysis. The class will incorporate reporting and other skills from the courses taught in the first semester and will focus on the use of data for reporting and storytelling. By the end of the class, students will be able to conduct data reporting for a newsroom, tell the difference between anecdotal evidence and rigorous empirical research, and be initiated into best practices for precise, data-driven reporting. They will be expected to produce a piece of data journalism and learn how to use data and coding in the service of journalism.

[ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET FOR TWO HOURS TWICE A WEEK; FIELD REPORTING MAY BE REQUIRED; JOURNALISM PRODUCTION REQUIRED]

Mode of teaching

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures, discussions, hands-on training on tools and techniques, reporting assignments, and guided self-teaching.

The class will meet twice a week. The first class each week will consist of a lecture and in most weeks will also include hands-on drills and exercises. The second class each week will be taught in the style of a flipped classroom: Each student will be required to go through video instruction asynchronously and to do homework related to that instruction. After the homework is completed, the students will meet as a class where they discuss the homework with the instructor and deepen their knowledge and skills.

Students will be assigned readings to familiarize themselves with the concepts, methods, and skills essential to data-driven journalism. They will dig into case studies of successful projects as well as relevant legislation, databases, and various methodologies used for data-driven journalism. With guidance from the instructor, students will learn how to teach themselves and how to find solutions to problems.

The learning curve for data-driven journalism is steep and students should set aside time for revision and for practicing the skills and techniques taught each week. They should also set aside time to deal with software and hardware issues.

Pedagogical approach

This is an intensive, hands-on course. Students will engage with tools, techniques, and methods live during the class, as well as on their own time, but on a deadline. Each concept, tool, and technique, as well as its legal and ethical considerations, are factored into a range of exercises. The intention is to help students build an arsenal of skills for precise and analytical information gathering, processing, and reporting. The skills taught in this class are intended for storytelling and watchdog reporting. Students will be expected to learn not just from the instructor but also how to teach themselves. They will be given weekly assignments and will receive guidance and support for problem-solving. They will read, watch, or listen to carefully selected reporting projects and will cull from these projects ideas and insights for their own data-driven reporting practice.
When possible, students will hear from the reporters who have done these reports, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these investigations, and reverse-engineer the techniques and methods used. Students will learn by doing and will be closely supervised to help them with learning difficulties. They will also learn how to share data safely, how to open up their methodologies for scrutiny, and how to spot and address red flags in data reporting.

**Hours per week**

This class requires a total of 20 hours a week, including in-class lectures, exercises, and discussions as well as out-of-class readings, self-study, and homework.

**Required and recommended texts and resources**

This course does not have a single required text. Instead, at the end of this syllabus is a list of suggested resources, including manuals, books, podcasts, and web videos that can support classroom teaching. Instructors can pick and choose as they see fit.

**Final project**

At the end of the semester, each student or team of students is expected to submit a 1,500-word data-driven story that is based on, or makes reference to, one or more datasets that they have downloaded online, scraped from a website, obtained through a request from a public agency, or collected themselves. Each story must be accompanied by an appropriate visualization such as a chronology, map, table, or graph, and must also include a methodology note that describes the sources of data and any methods for collecting, cleaning, normalizing, combining, querying, and analyzing the data.

Additionally, each student should submit a journal-like entry, no longer than one page, describing their learning journey, aspects that they have struggled with, as well as best take-aways from the class. At the instructor’s discretion, students can work in teams for their final project.

**Week-by-Week Schedule**

The class will meet online twice a week. The first class each week will be for three hours. The second class will consist of a 30-60-minute pre-recorded lecture viewed asynchronously at least a day in advance of the in-class meeting. Students complete an exercise based on the pre-recorded lecture. They then meet as a class for about an hour. A more substantial homework is also assigned each week, to be completed before the following week’s class.

Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the genre of data-driven investigative reporting. Instructors may want to assign each student to present to the class a critical appraisal of an award-winning data-driven project. These presentations, followed by a class discussion, can take place during the first class each week.
Week 1. What is Data Journalism and what does it do for our reporting?

Class 1: Introduction to data journalism

The concepts and history of data-driven journalism. Examples of various types of data journalism. What data is and how data-driven journalism is different from, and can enhance, traditional reporting. Course expectations as well as any software and hardware issues.

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Presentation of two or three very different award-winning or innovative data-driven stories, touching on the data used, techniques employed, problems faced by the authors and how these were solved, as well as the story angles that they may have missed, the story structure, and the suitability of any accompanying data visualization. This will guide students’ presentations later.

In-Class: After viewing this video, students will work in groups to analyze a data-driven journalism project. They will also discuss story ideas.

Homework: 1. Students watch “Spotlight” (the movie) and write a brief blog-like reflection of the role that data played in the investigation, as well as identify data sources used by the reporters. 2. Students describe one or two ideas for a data-driven project they can complete during this class, look up relevant data, and list skills or knowledge they would need to do the project.

Week 2. Numbers in the newsroom - and how to handle them

Class 1: Introduction to spreadsheets

Meet your calculator on steroids: the spreadsheet! Information structured in columns and rows; data entry; data formatting; descriptive statistics such as mean, median and mode, and their use for news reporting; how to build pie, bar, doughnut charts, and scatter plots and when and how to use them in stories.

Suggested software: We propose that students use freely available Google Spreadsheets, which is optimized for collaboration and data security.

Suggested data: soccer players salaries | MEPs expenses | procurement data | financial aid | crime rates | crime sentence time in jail | women’s representation in parliaments across the world

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Sorting and filtering; how to build your own database; joining simple datasets for in-depth, data-driven reporting.

In-Class: Students review sorting and filtering and simple calculations. How to use numbers in stories and the pitfalls of making conclusions that are not supported by the data. What makes a credible data source, and how to evaluate data accuracy.
Suggested data:
- WHO Life Expectancy
- population flows
- vaccination rates
- GDP per capita
- hunting accidents

Homework: Students answer questions about averages and frequencies using a sample data set. They will build a simple data visualization like a bar graph or a pie chart based on the data set.

Week 3. Summarising data

Class 1

How to count, group, and report data findings. Sifting through larger datasets with Countif - countIf with text, Countif with number, countIf with wildcards. Brainstorm potential stories and relevant data sources to tackle in their reporting project.

Suggested data:
- Airlines complaints (international)
- USAID funded projects

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: SUGGESTED CLASS: Writing clearly about statistics and numbers using data from a familiar source, such as the statistics bureau of a Balkan country, the EU Open Data Portal, or Eurostats. Instructors may want to choose a dataset relevant to a topic that is in the news and use this as an example on how to use descriptive statistics, how to analyze numbers, and how to highlight the numbers that are most relevant.

In-Class: Students write a short report based on a dataset. That report should reflect the numbers accurately and also be able to convey the meaning and significance of those numbers.

Suggested data:
- vaccination rates
- population growth over time
- specific illness-related morbidity and mortality

Homework: Students write a data reporting plan for their project.

Week 4. Transparency laws and data requests

Class 1

FOI and access to data - The EU’s transparency legislation, case studies (such as the MEPs’ expenses), as well as platforms that help with transparency requests submission (e.g. Access EU). Concepts like FOI logs/libraries, networks, pre-filled forms, landmark transparency cases. How to find data about any country using US, UK, EU and other countries’ information resources, such as transparency laws, publicly available databases, data leaks, parliamentary meeting minutes, official documents, reports etc. produced by public bodies.
Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Finding data online and in ignored places: Google boolean searches; advanced Google searches for data; using country and subject-based domains etc. for finding data.

In-Class: How to use boolean queries to search types of data, including in foreign languages, across a variety of sources, based on students’ reporting interests.

Suggested data:
- crime & justice
- immigration data
- immigration and crime relevant to the political tensions in the region
- search for any spreadsheet-formatted data on FOI logs

Homework: Students work on project-related datasets, applying what they have learned about VLookUps, pivots and descriptive statistics, as well as basic data visualization.

Week 5. Digging deeper with pivot tables

Class 1

How to use pivot tables to ask more complex questions from data. Shortcuts, updates, restoring disappearing pivots, as well as data cleaning.

Suggested data:
- airline complaints
- US / UK Weapons exports
- hunting accidents - increased complexity and size in data used will demonstrate the power of this tool.

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Combining pivot tables; common problems and issues with pivot tables.

In-Class: Students resolve pivot table issues and practice on their own or other datasets.

Suggested data: political campaign finance from US / UK.

Homework: Students use pivot tables on datasets they are working on and write a few paragraphs based on what they have found.
Week 6. Finding information in large and joined datasets

Class 1

VLookUp and Fuzzy LookUp for finding and matching data, curating or filling in information gaps in tables, as well as for expanding datasets. How to verify lookup results. Joining datasets and creating your own own database. Examples of datasets compiled by reporters from various sources and how these were used for stories.

Suggested data:
- UN population
- WHO GDP per capita
- WHO deforestation

Students could be advised to start with small lists, such as matching countries with populations, then to move on to more complex datasets, such as procurement items and budgets, or disaggregated campaign finance data.

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: More on VLOOKUP as well as applying pivot tables on the final result. The Paste-As-Values function will be covered here, too.

In-Class: Data dictionaries and record layouts.

Suggested data:
- zoo transfers - four tables that are merged into one. Include the data dictionary or a link to the data dictionary's original link
- made-up data, e.g., polling answers and related scoring
- list of US politically-exposed persons and UN list of world countries

Homework: Students list possible sources and angles for their data-driven story. They identify a foreign public authority that might have information they need and file a FOI request. Students use boolean searches to find other sources that have data on relevant aspects of their project.

Week 7. Revision, timelines, story maps, and other information-organizing tools

Class 1

Revision. Students review the key skills they have been taught and instructors address any outstanding issues.
Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Visualization options for organizing information such as dates, court documents, fines. Students will learn how to make legal or technical information compelling and easy to understand. Using open tools, they will visualize a chronology, as well as illustrate before and after comparisons.

In-Class: Students brainstorm aspects of their final project that can be visualized.

Suggested software: KnightLab Timeline, StoryMap JS and Juxtapose tools all using smart spreadsheets (but any free, open, no coding skills necessary will do).

Suggested data:
- court hearings and parties involved
- fines
- bombing events
- the evolution of a conflict in an area in the Balkans

Homework: Students build a chronology, process graph, or other visualization related to their reporting project.

Week 8. Scraping data from documents and websites

Class 1

Scraping information from documents, including extracting tables from images, pdfs, word documents, or websites. The concept of OCR and its most popular tools.

Suggested tools: CometDocs (partially free), Chrome add-ons (free), Tabula (free), ScrapeStorm (partially free), Nitro (partially free), Abbyy Finereader, Adobe Acrobat (premium)

Suggested data:
- any pdf, image and text containing table
- Wikipedia pages containing tables

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: More on scraping information from the web and social media without using code. Suggested tools: Import.io, WorkBench or scraperly.

In-Class: Hands-on, guided practice of the skill taught in the recorded class.

Suggested data:
- Twitter
- tables on Wikipedia
- EU Commission Grants
- any hub with datasets available

Homework: An exercise on scraping data with Import.io or any other similar tool; optional exercise: scraping data from Twitter with a tool such as WorkBench, and analyzing the results. The students will be encouraged to use this homework to contribute to their final project.
Week 9: Data cleaning and data ethics

Class 1

Data cleaning tools for accurate analysis, such as concatenate, text-to-columns, and trim. Cleaning data with OpenRefine. Ethical and other issues related to data. Examples of bad data practice

Suggested data:
- MEPs campaign finance
- EU financial aid
- import (trade) data

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: OpenRefine in more depth, including how to trim, reconcile, remove duplicates, and change data types.

In-Class: How to reconcile corporate data / merge datasets using openCorporates API to merge datasets.

Suggested data:
- Comtrade (import-export)
- country debts
- procurement
- EU financial aid

Homework: Students will be given a dirty dataset and asked to clean it using a spreadsheet. Alternatively, they may choose to use data related to their final paper. They will also be given a data cleaning exercise to solve with openRefine.

Week 10. Useful visualization tools for analysis

Class 1

Data visualization add-ons in spreadsheets and other apps, such as 'hidden' Excel features like PivotCharts, sparklines, open 3D maps and scatter plots.

Suggested data:
- wildfires
- flooding
- population growth (UN)
- school abandonment (WB)

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Introduction to GitHub and setting up a GitHub account

In-Class: Students will learn how to use some GitHub features. Time-allowing, it will also show students how to find other GitHub accounts of interest.
Suggested data: Any used in the previous class, as well as data discovered on GitHub

Homework: Create a data visualization appropriate to the final project, using relevant data or other data previously used in class. List 10 GitHub users and follow them, explaining why they are useful and relevant.

Week 11. Maps to support storytelling

Class 1

Key concepts of mapping and available tools. Building a map for analysis and illustration, with some embedded interactivity, such as pop-up boxes. Various types of maps such as heat maps, evolution over time maps, spot point maps etc.

Suggested software:
- CartoDB
- Excel
- Google sheets
- Tableau; LatLong address
- postcode converters

Suggested data:
- any data relevant from previous classes, to continue building awareness (US Aid)
- food hygiene inspection rates
- dams or bridges hazard inspection ratings
- recent refugee trends in Europe
- crime rates

Class 2: Flipped class with assignments

Recorded: Mapping and other visualization tools.

In-Class: Q&A on the pre-recorded class. Common visualization errors.

Suggested data:
- EU financial aids
- grants in a sector such as fisheries, agriculture, infrastructure

Homework: Students team up to build and critique each other’s visualization and fact-check and check calculations of each other’s data-driven reporting project.

Week 12. Coding for reporters - SQL Fundamentals

Class 1

Coding I - This class introduces students to Structured Query Language (SQL), a coding language that is relatively easy to learn. A history of this software, software set-up, basic operators, and a parallel with Excel functions.
Suggested software: DB Browser for SQLite (free, non-proprietary, light, easy to install).

Suggested data:
- EU financial aid
- USAID
- (MEPs) campaign finance

**Class 2: Flipped class with assignments**

**Recorded:** Review of DB Browser’s set-up; common install errors and how to solve these.

**In-Class:** How to build a database, how to edit data types, and SQL query skills. Students will also be required to learn to upload and share their code on GitHub.

Suggested data:
- airlines complaints (or any other complaints)
- ambulance response times
- hunting accidents (US-IRE didactic material - provides a great example of a self-made dbo using papercuts!)

**Homework:** Students submit a revised draft of data reporting project.

**Week 13. Coding for reporters - Building on SQL skills**

**Class 1**

Advanced SQL functions, including joining and updating databases, saving as new tables and building queries from there. This class may also address handing dates, times and macros, as well as most common SQL errors.

Suggested data:
- vaccination rates
- mortality and morbidity (EU/WHO/WB/ state-level public bodies)
- life expectancy (WHO)
- Balkan governments’ public budgets

**Class 2: Flipped class with assignments**

Recorded: More SQL examples.

In-Class: Instructor can demonstrate various SQL languages and software available for MAC and Windows users, such as PostGreSQL, MS SQL Server Management Studio, MySql + Navicat, and Access with SQL interface, starting with free versions, and provide links for software installation guidance.

Suggested data: any used previously in SQL classes.

**Homework:** Use SQL on a reporting project if relevant. Fact check each other’s project, including reviewing data and calculations.
Week 14. Presentation

Students present their final projects and submit written reflections on what they have learned as well as a self-evaluation of their work.

Suggested reading list - in Appendix II.

Media & The Law

This is a class on the law as it applies to the media and journalism practice. While it is not possible to have one class that covers in depth all the Balkan countries, this class will include classes on the legal guarantees of media freedom and the right to information; the laws that apply to newsgathering (recording, source protection, judicial records, private records); libel and defamation; privacy and the right to be forgotten; and copyright and intellectual property. The class will also cover European as well as international laws and standards that apply to the media.

Versions of this class are already being taught in the Western Balkans. This syllabus provides suggestions on topics that instructors may want to add to pre-existing courses.

[5 ECTS CREDITS; CLASSES MEET TWO HOURS ONCE A WEEK]

Pedagogical approach

This class will be taught through lectures and seminars. Students will be required to read legal texts as well as examine court cases involving the media and journalists. Instructors should feel free to teach laws relevant to their countries or region but should ensure that international laws and standards are taught as well.

Recommended resources


Model syllabus

This syllabus will not be as detailed as the others in this study in order to allow individual faculties and instructors to choose the topics, cases, examples, and readings most relevant and appropriate to their students.
Week 1. Press freedom protections in national and international laws

Week 2. Licensing and media regulation; Regulating social media platforms

Week 3. Newsgathering and the right to privacy

Week 4. Data privacy and data information

Week 5. The right to information and to public records

Week 6. Libel and defamation

Week 7. Hate speech

Week 8. Copyright, fair use, and intellectual property

Week 9. Cybercrimes and the media

Week 10. Fake news, propaganda, and disinformation

Week 11. Source protection

Week 12. The right to be forgotten

Week 13. National security and the media

Week 14. Digital leaks, encryption, surveillance, and anonymity on the Internet

Week 15. Summing up
Media and Society

Various versions of this class are already being taught in the region. Many of these courses, however, revolve around legacy media (print and broadcast) and do not put enough emphasis on digital media and the internet. They also do not always focus on the role of the media, particularly of journalism, in building democracy. This syllabus suggests ways to incorporate elements of pre-existing courses to teach a course that stresses the link between media and democracy and puts the spotlight on technology and the internet’s impact on global media and society.

This class is a critical examination of the role of the media in democratic societies. It will begin with a discussion of press and media systems around the world and proceed to how technology has upended media systems. It will look into the economics of media and journalistic production, discuss how the business models that have traditionally supported journalism and information production have been disrupted, and explore what this means for society. This class will also reflect on journalism and media history in the Balkans and Turkey. It will examine how the rise of the internet has affected the production, distribution, and consumption of information. It will tackle global and regional press freedom trends, including the rise of disinformation, and discuss how the media as an institution can inform public debate, bring about positive social change, and help defend democracy and press freedom, drawing from the lessons of history and from other countries.

[10 ECTS CREDITS. THIS CLASS WILL MEET THREE HOURS A WEEK FOR 12-15 WEEKS.]

Mode of teaching

This class will be taught through a mix of lectures and seminars. Students will be expected to read and discuss assigned texts and to produce two essays and a final research paper on any of the topics in the syllabus.

Recommended readings and resources

Instructors can also use research and reports produced by the following:
- Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University
- Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia University
- Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University Data and Society.

**Suggested Week-by-Week Schedule**

**Week 1. Introduction and course expectations**

**Week 2. Press and media systems around the world**

**Week 3. The role of the media in democratic societies**

**Week 4. History of the media in the Western Balkans**

**Week 5. The media and technological change: the disruption brought about by the internet**

**Week 6. Media control, regulation, and governance: Who controls the internet?**

**Week 7. Technological disruption and economics of the media**

**Week 8. Public service, community, and nonprofit media**

**Week 9. Media and audience, including media effects**

**Week 10. Propaganda, disinformation, and fake news**

**Week 11. Amplification, visibility and power**

**Week 12. The media and the public: Civic engagement, political participation, activism, social justice**

**Week 13. Globalization and media culture**

**Week 14. Imagining the media of the future**

**Week 15. Summing up; presentations of final projects**