

Lesson Plan for JOU2100 News Reporting

Course:

JOU 2100 News Reporting.

This is the basic, required course for Journalism majors and Magazine Journalism minors. It's an elective open to anyone who has met the department's grammar proficiency requirement. The course usually consists of two-thirds journalism majors/magazine journalism minors and about one-third of students from other majors from across the university who take it as an elective. This is a mixed-mode course that meets for 2.5 hours once per week. The rest of the content is taught online through Canvas.

Enrollment:

17-20 students

Lesson title:

Going "Mojo"

Description:

This is a hands-on exercise designed to give students some experience reporting from the field using their mobile device. Students act as digital reporters, or in industry parlance – "mojos" – a short term for "mobile journalists." Students use their Web-enabled smartphone to gather information in the field about a timely newsworthy topic – called a "mobile feed" -- and then email it back to the newsroom where a designated editor or producer collects the feeds and assembles them into a text-and-photo Web-based news story for posting at our Knightly News site.

Execution:

The lesson plan is executed as follows:

- A. Students are first shown a 10-minute video produced by the instructor, "Breaking News in the Digital Age," that follows an Orlando Sentinel reporter afield as he produces a news story with his smartphone. This establishes the relevance and credibility of the assignment: Students are about to be introduced to a necessary skill that real news reporters use every day in their jobs.
- B. Next, students are introduced in class to some native apps on their phone they can use to gather news: their voice-to-text app (Siri, Dragon Dictation or Evernote) for conducting on-

the-street interviews; their camera app for capturing photos; and their notepad app for writing their story. Students practice using the apps in the classroom by interviewing each other.

- C. Next, students and the instructor pick a news topic and develop questions to be asked of subjects in the field that will elicit the best information.
- D. Finally, students are sent afield and given a strict deadline for filing their mobile feeds. They must meet deadline and file from the field using only their smartphones.

Production:

The feeds are aggregated by the instructor and turned over to a student editor/producer who writes the final story, includes photos, and posts to the Knightly News site, with supervision and coaching from the instructor.

Learning outcomes:

1. Identify, gather and assemble news into a readable form.
2. Write clearly, accurately, concisely, quickly and objectively for the purpose of informing a mass audience about matters of public importance.
3. Respect deadlines and meet them.
4. Use an existing, everyday technology for a higher and smarter purpose: reporting news.

Results:

Students see the tangible results of their labor in the form of a published news story that is read by the campus community. See the link here: <http://knightlynews.cos.ucf.edu/?p=13622>

Recognition for innovation:

This lesson plan won a national innovation award, "Teaching News Terrifically in the 21st Century," from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in 2012.