



JOUR 302: INFOMANIA: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.
Room 206, Stauffer-Flint Hall**

William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications
University of Kansas
Fall 2017

INSTRUCTOR'S INFORMATION

Instructor: Ms. Roseann Pluretti
Office: Room 113, Stauffer-Flint Hall
Office Hours: **Tuesdays: 2:30 p.m.- 3:30 p.m,**
Wednesdays: 11 a.m.-12 p.m. or by appointment.

E-mail: r606p223@ku.edu
**** I will not answer emails past 7 p.m.** I will reply to emails within 24 hours. **

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This is a course about finding, evaluating, and concisely presenting information. These three elements will serve as the bedrock of anything you do as a journalist or a strategic communication professional.

Credibility is the organizing principle in this course. **Your credibility is essential to your success in this major and in your future career. But you are only as credible as your sources.** This is why you will spend the semester evaluating the sources you find. **The goal is to instill in you a healthy skepticism about the credibility of the information you come across,** so that you only choose the most credible sources for the articles, blog posts, reports, or campaigns you produce.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the forms and purposes of information.
- Ask questions that help you find and interpret information, and explain it clearly.
- Find information using libraries, research reports, organizations, databases, regulations, public records, experts and non-experts.
- Critically evaluate information sources, research data and your own work for credibility, accuracy, completeness and diversity.
- Develop focused plans for research projects.
- Use a variety of digital and non-digital tools to research and present information.

This class satisfies Goal 1 Outcome 1 of the KU Core: “Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to analyze and evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence, arguments, and forms of expression; select and apply appropriate interpretive tools.”

PREMISE

Think of yourself as a consultant to a news or strategic communications organization (news station, marketing agency, etc.). Your final assignment in this course will be to present your expertise about a topic to this organization, recommending information and sources the organization should pursue when researching your topic, and identifying information and sources it should avoid. Assignments during the semester are designed to teach you to find information about your topic, evaluate its credibility, and effectively present it.

Your first task is to decide the topic on which you will become an expert. **You need to pick a topic in the first two weeks of class and stick with it for the**

remainder of the semester. I will provide broad topic areas and you will select a specific topic within that broad topic. Groups will be made based on the broad topics selected. The topic needs to be one about which you are curious, and one that will hold your attention for almost four months. The first 10 pages of the textbook may help you identify an appropriate topic.

REQUIRED BOOK

Don MacLeod, *How to find out anything: From extreme Google searches to scouring government documents, a guide to uncovering anything about everyone and everything* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2012).

***Additional readings will be on Blackboard**

BLACKBOARD

All assignments and readings will be listed on Blackboard. We will also use Blackboard for grades, instructional videos and quizzes. **You must keep track of assignments on Blackboard and check it every week.**

GRADING

Expert Posts and Presentations:	400 points (50 points each, Interview Post =100 pts.)
Assignments & Quizzes,	130 points (10 points each, quizzes 5 pts)
Participation:	20 points
Pre-test/Post-test:	10 points
News Posts:	100 points (5 x 20 points each)
Draft of Final Paper:	50 points
Final Paper and Presentation:	150 points (100 paper, 50 presentation)
Research participation or Course summary:	25 points <i>bonus</i>
Total points available:	860 points

Grade Range:

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

Important Note

Journalism majors must receive a grade of C or better in this class to advance to other courses in the school. A grade of C- or lower means the student must retake the course.

ATTENDANCE

You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. You will have only **two unexcused absence**. A third unexcused absence will result in your grade dropping a half-point, from A to A-, for instance, or B to B-. It will drop another half-point if you have three unexcused absences and another half-point if you miss four, and so on. This deduction is independent of your coursework. That means that even if you complete all the work successfully, the top grade you can achieve will decline with each absence after the first.

If you are sick and cannot attend class, or if you are going to be late, contact me before class. If you do so, you may be excused from that day's assignment. If you do not contact me, **you will receive an unexcused absence.**

Excused Absences: Instructors may use their discretion to excuse missed classes in rare cases, including:

- documented illness,
- official representation of the college,
- death of a close relative,
- religious holidays
- highly unusual circumstances beyond the control of the student.

ASSIGNMENTS AND QUIZZES

All assignments and quizzes are listed on Blackboard. Some of these will ask you to post something to the journal. Some of these will consist of short in-class presentations. Some of them will be Blackboard quizzes.

BYOD = BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE DAYS

You will notice on Blackboard that some days are designated “BYOD.” This means that on those days, you will want to bring a laptop or a tablet to class because we will be doing work with digital or online sources. I will also note BYOD days in our weekly email reminders. Please let me know if you need to borrow a laptop from the Resource Center for those days.

Whenever you have a digital device with you in class (this includes phones), please use it for class work only. I promise to do the same.

EXPERT POSTS OR PRESENTATIONS

There are seven of these assignments throughout the semester. **Notice that they will account for more than half of your final grade.** Due dates for these assignments are listed at the end of this syllabus. In-depth instructions for what to write and how to submit these assignments are on Blackboard. **Presentations will occur during class therefore will be due at class time. Written posts will be due at class time on Blackboard**

NEWS POSTS

Five times during the semester you will draw on the news aggregators you set up at the beginning of the semester to summarize and synthesize news relating to your topic. Your summaries will be brief and insightful, linking readers to the original news stories or other pertinent webpages. **These news posts will be posted in journals by class time (9:30 a.m.) The due dates for these are: October 4, 11, 25 and November 6 and 13.**

FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATION

At the end of the semester, you will compile all of the information you collect about your topic into a compelling paper and presentation. The paper will be done individually based on your specific topic. **A draft will be due in**

November to receive feedback before the final draft. The papers will be uploaded to Blackboard via a dropbox. The presentations will be presented by groups, based on broad topics. You will make a short in-class presentation during the final exam timeslot. You have to be here to get credit for the presentation. Please schedule your end-of-semester travel so that it won't conflict with the final presentation. **The final papers will be due and presentations will take place Wednesday, December 13, from 7:30 to 10 a.m.**

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION OR PERSONAL COURSE SUMMARY BONUS

As a bonus, you have the option to complete one of two assignments that will be marked complete/incomplete. You can participate in a research study that your instructor will tell you more about.

Or you can write a summary of what you learned in this course. It will be between 500 and 700 words. You will focus not only on the information you researched but, more importantly, on what you learned about finding and evaluating quality information. **This should also incorporate your learning goals from the Email Assignment in Week 1.**

PARTICIPATION

Participation is a crucial task in this class. It will help you actively apply and analyze the skills are learning in this class. Participation will be based on in-class assignments/activities and attendance.

MAKE-UP WORK, LATE WORK, EXTRA CREDIT, GRADE CONCERNS

All late assignments are penalized 10 percent of the assignment's value (i.e., one letter grade) per class day past deadline. For example, if you submit a paper that is worth 100 points a day late. If the paper were presented to your instructor on time, you would have earned 90 points, an A-. However, because the paper was late, you earn only 80 points, a B-. **Additionally, assignments submitted more than one week past deadline are not accepted.** Consequently, you will receive an incomplete on the assignment. Rare exceptions to this rule are made at the instructor's

discretion and only if you can provide written, official documentation concerning the given circumstances.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

I encourage you to communicate with me about the course face-to-face during office hours, or through e-mail. If you choose the latter, please be mindful of email etiquette, as this will affect your future communication in your careers. Compose a brief yet informative subject line. Use a greeting, such as “Hello, Ms. Pluretti,” at the beginning of your message. Write the body of your message using full sentences, proper capitalization and punctuation. Explain your question or concern as completely as possible. Sign your message using your full (first and last) name.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you will fail the course, and you may be expelled from the School of Journalism.

Here is the School’s official policy statement:

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence.

In this course, the penalty for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification is a failing grade for the semester. Additional penalties can include expulsion from the School of Journalism. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of this course.

The KU University Senate defines plagiarism as “knowingly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.” The University defines fabrication and falsification as “unauthorized alteration or

invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.”

SPECIAL NEEDS:

The Academic Achievement & Access Center coordinates accommodations and services for all KU students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. That office is located in 22 Strong Hall; the phone number is 785-864-4064 (V/TTY).

Information about the center’s services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW).

KEY DATES

This is a list of the major assignments and when they are due (**this does not include the news posts, assignments**). Complete information about each assignment is posted on Blackboard. Additional assignments not listed here (e.g., Discussion Board posts, News Posts, Quizzes) are listed on Blackboard.

Assignment	Due
Expert Post 1: News Evaluation	Sept 13
Expert Post 2: Reference Information	Sept 27
Expert Presentation 3: Nonprofit Evaluation	Oct 2
Expert Presentation 4: Company Evaluation	Oct 18
Expert Presentation 5: Public Data (<i>group</i>)	Oct 30
Expert Post 5: Survey Evaluation	Nov 8
Final Paper Draft	Nov 20
Expert Post 6: Interview	Nov 27
Final Paper and Presentation	May 8

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

Note that it is “tentative” which means it is subject to change. Students will be given ample written and verbal notice if changes are made. All assignments for each week are on Blackboard under “What’s Due.” I will send weekly reminders every Sunday to review what we will cover and when to BYOD. I will make weekly assignments available on Blackboard every Wednesday after our class.

Week 1 (August 21 & 23):

- Introductions. What is critical thinking? How do we learn? How can you improve your ability to summarize, analyze, and synthesize?
- **Wednesday, August 23, by 5 pm: Email Professor Pluretti information. (Assignment 1)**
- **See Blackboard “What’s Due,” Week 1 for instructions for assignments**

Week 2 (August 28 & 30):

- Critical thinking, information, topic identification
- **Read Ch. 1 MacLeod**
- **Monday, August 28: Assignment 2 Ch. 1 Paraphrase due**
- **Wednesday, August 30 Assignment 3 Topic Assumptions due**

Week 3 (September 6):

- Credibility, attribution, news aggregators
- **Monday, September 4: Labor Day, NO CLASS ☺**
- **Wednesday, September 6: Assignment 4: Content Farms**

Week 4 (September 11 & 13):

- Googl-isceous: All about Google, Library resources
- *Google presentations in class*
- **Ch. 2-3, MacLeod**
- **Monday, September 11: Assignment 5: Ch. 3 Key Point**
- **Wednesday, Sept 13, Expert Post 1: News Evaluation due**

Week 5 (September 18 & 20):

- Reference sources, Library resources approaches to research, finding sources
- **Ch. 5, MacLeod**
- **Wednesday, Sept 20: Assignment 6: Source/Library Activity (in-class assignment)**

Week 6 (September 25 & 27):

Associations/nonprofits,

- **Ch. 6, MacLeod**
- **Monday, September 25: Assignment 7 due: Ch. 6 Key Points due**
- **Wednesday, Sept 27: Expert Post 2 due**

Week 7 (October 2 & 4):

- Associations, nonprofits, (cont'd)
- **Monday Oct 2: Expert Nonprofit Presentation 3 due**
- **Wednesday, Oct 4: News Post 1 due**

Week 8 (October 9 & 11):

- Public Company/Business research
- **Ch. 8, MacLeod**
- **Monday, Oct 9: Assignment 8 due: Ch. 8 Key Points**
- **Wednesday, Oct 11: Assignment 9 due: Public Company**
- **Wednesday, Oct 11: News Post 2 due**

Week 9 (October 16 & 18):

- **Monday, October 16: Fall break, NO CLASS ☺**
- **Wednesday, Oct 18: Expert Public Company Presentation 4 Due**

Week 10 (October 23 & 25):

- Public Records, Overflow and Expert Presentations 4
- **Ch. 9, MacLeod**
- **Monday, Oct 23: Assignment 10: Ch. 9 Key Sources due**
- **Wednesday, Oct 25: News Post 3**

Week 11 (October 30 & November 1):

- **Monday Oct 30: Public Records Expert Group Presentations**
- Polling, research methods, social media research
- **Wednesday, Nov 1: Assignment 11 Credibility due**

Week 12 (November 6 & 8):

- Research Methods, Interviews, handout Interview Expert Post
- **Monday, November 6: News Post 4 Due**
- **Wednesday, November 8: Survey Expert Post 6 due**

Week 13 (November 13 & 15):

- Interviews
- **Read Ch 7, MacLeod**
- **Monday, November 13: New Post 5 Due**
- **Wednesday, November 15: NO CLASS quizzes due online.**
- **Quiz: Part 1 & 2: Complete by Wednesday, November 15, end of class time**

Week 14 (November 20 & 22):

- Overflow, group work time
- **Monday, November 20: FINAL PAPER DRAFT DUE**
- **Wednesday, November 22: Break, NO CLASS ☺**

Week 15 (November 27 & 29):

- **Monday Nov 27: Expert Interview presentations due**
- Presentations during Monday & Wednesday

Week 16 (December 4 & 6):

- Presenting information: synthesis, story, design, meaning
- **Read Ch. 10: MacLeod**
- **Monday, Dec 4: Assignment: Ch. 10 & Synthesis**

Week 17: Final Exams Week: Wednesday, December 13

- **Wednesday, Dec 13: 7:30 a.m.- 10 a.m: Final Presentations and Papers due:**
 - **KU sets finals' times so students' finals do not overlap.*