

JOUR 201 – Journalism in the Movies

Spring 2019 Syllabus

Course description

This class uses feature films as a basis to discuss the ethics and practice of journalism, to analyze the portrayals of journalists in popular culture, and to examine diversity, or lack thereof, in the media.

Instructor

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Hours: MWF, 9-11 a.m.

Course goals

The goal of this course is for you to gain:

- A deeper understanding of journalism and media.
- An ability to make connections between historical events and how they were reported by the news media, and the impact of the coverage.
- Increased awareness of the standards and practices of quality, ethical journalism.
- A clearer understanding of what journalists have a right to know and a right to publish under the First Amendment.
- An ability to think critically about the role of media in society and how journalism has evolved with technology.
- An ability to look critically at the people leading and working in media, whether this is reflective of society, and the value inclusion and diversity bring to the media.

Texts and tools:

- **Books:** We'll read chapters from two books: "[Heroes and Scoundrels: the image of the journalist in popular culture](#)" (2015) by Matthew C. Ehrlich and Joe Saltzman, and "[Journalism in the Movies](#)" (2004) by Matthew C. Ehrlich. Both are available free as e-books through KU Libraries (follow the links)
- **Blackboard:** Most of the assignments and quizzes will be done through Blackboard, so check regularly for readings, quizzes and assignments, plus due dates.
- **Top Hat:** This is [an online service that you will need to purchase to use in class](#). You can use Top Hat Classroom as a mobile app or on your laptop.
- **Email:** I will often communicate by email sent to your KU-registered address. It's your responsibility to keep track of the information in these messages.

Watching the movies:

We will not be watching the movies during class time. You are expected to watch the movie before class. You have several options:

- 1) All the movies are available on reserve at Watson Library as DVDs; you can watch them there but you may not take them out of the library.
- 2) Many (but not all) of the movies are available through streaming services; some require a rental fee.
- 3) Additionally, **every Monday night at 6:30 p.m.** in Stauffer-Flint 100 (our classroom), that week's movie will be shown.

Note: These movies are largely workplace dramas intended for a mature audience, and as such do not contain shootouts, car chases, elaborately staged fight scenes or fart jokes. They do, however, contain strong language (LOTS of swearing), racism and sexism, violence and sexual situations. You should watch them as carefully as you should read a textbook: Follow the storyline, pay attention to details and think about the situations the characters encounter. You will get the most out of these movies if you give them your full attention, so resist the temptation to do other things while you're watching them.

Course work

It is imperative that you keep up with the material: Watch the movies, do the assignments, pay attention in class. Exercises and exams will reinforce and measure what we've covered. If you are confused about something or have questions, feel free to stop by my office or email. Please read the "How to email your professor" file on Blackboard before you email.

Deadlines are very important in the work world, and so are strictly enforced in this class. Late or missed work will not receive credit. No exceptions. Zeroes kill your grade, so be careful about this. Writing assignments via Blackboard must be in **.doc**, **.rtf** or **.pdf** format – if I can't read it, I can't grade it, and you get a zero.

Standing weekly assignments: Quiz + journal. After watching each movie and reading any assigned texts, take the **online content quiz**, which checks that you paid attention to the movie and understood any other content (such as readings). These are scored per question. For each movie, you also need to do an **online journal entry**, which involves looking at the same areas for each movie and writing briefly about them. You have a list of specific questions to answer. Journals are graded credit/half credit/no credit. Quizzes and journals are **due by class time on the due date**. If you do not do a quiz or file a journal on time, you get no credit. No exceptions.



In-class exercises: We will sometimes do brief exercises in class, and you will be chosen as one of several in-class "discussion leaders" once per semester (see below). If you are not in class, you may not make up work you miss. No exceptions.

Discussion leaders: Because this is a large class, I want to make sure everyone gets a chance to talk. For each movie, I'll post one or more "discussion questions" in advance, and then for Tuesday's class, eight people will be chosen at random to help lead the discussion. Each person will be chosen as a leader only once during the semester, but if you're gone on the day you're chosen, you will get a zero. These are graded credit/half credit/no credit.

Exams: We will have two exams: a midterm and a final. These will cover content from the movies, readings, lectures and discussions. The university has designated **Wednesday, May 15, at 7:30 a.m.** as our final exam time. You know this NOW so plan accordingly.

Essay: One essay will be assigned later in the semester. You will be able to choose a topic from a list of prompts. The prompts will be connected to things you look at for your journal entries, so if you do a thorough job with your journals, your essay will be a lot easier.

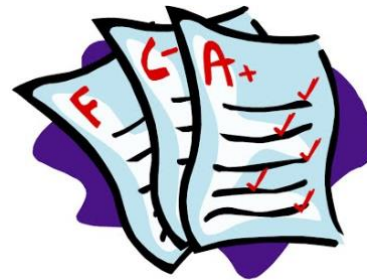
Grading

Grading for JOUR 201 is on a plus/minus system:

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

Your final grade will be determined according to this breakdown:

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Value</i>
Weekly quizzes	20%
Weekly journals	15%
Leading discussion	10%
Midterm exam	15%
Essay	15%
Final exam	15%
<u>Engagement & professionalism</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%



If you need a certain grade to maintain a scholarship, to graduate, to keep your parents from disowning you, or to achieve a desired grade point average, **it is your responsibility to earn that grade** – it is not my responsibility to give it to you.

There is no extra credit. Don't ask. Really, don't. Just show up and do your work.

Assignments will be graded on content, completeness and accuracy. The essay will be graded on content, accuracy, organization, following the prompt, and grammar/mechanics. Quizzes and exams will be graded on correct answers.

Engagement & professionalism

Absences will lower the engagement component of your grade as well as the in-class work portion. Much of the required material – that is, “what will be on the test” – will be covered during class, so if you miss a lot of classes, don't expect to do well on the exams. If you have extenuating circumstances, such as serious illness or a death in the family, please let me know in advance and be prepared to provide documentation.

“Engagement and professionalism” means:

- You come to class on time, prepared and ready to learn.
- You pay attention: take notes, ask questions, answer the Top Hat prompts, participate in discussions.
- You treat others with respect: contribute to group activities, listen to others' viewpoints, don't speak when others are speaking, don't distract others' learning with your electronic devices.

Showing up to class unprepared, dozing, playing with your phone or laptop, leaving class for extended periods of time, etc., will negatively affect your E&P grade.

The fine print: University and J-School policies

Academic misconduct

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'll fail the course, and you may be dismissed from the J-School.

We strictly follow the code of Academic Misconduct detailed in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

University policies covering academic misconduct are spelled out in the current Student Handbook, which is available free in Room 213 of Strong Hall.

Here's some clarification:

If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes on paper or on electronic devices, and nonverbal communication, such as coughing or kicking. Copying an answer from someone else's work is also cheating.

Plagiarism is stealing. It is taking someone else's ideas, thoughts, or words and presenting them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, broadcast sources, online sources or work done by another student. Copying and pasting material directly from the Internet and presenting that work as if it were your own – that is, without quotation marks and proper attribution – is plagiarism. You will often need to incorporate another person's ideas, reporting or words into the stories you write, to make a point or to provide background. When you do this, **it is essential that you attribute that information**: explain where it came from and give credit where credit is due.

Fabrication means that you made up information, sources or quotes. This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. **Don't do it. Ever.** No matter how pressed you are for time, it's far better to risk the wrath of your boss than to risk your credibility as a journalist.

Content "recycling": The expectation in this class is that you've come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no "recycling" of your previous interviews, assignments, stories or work from other classes. The journalism school regards any efforts to recycle material as academic dishonesty.

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication or Falsification

The School of Journalism **does not** tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence or falsification of evidence.

Penalties for engaging in such behavior can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the school.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult your instructor.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.

Plagiarism

Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Weapons policy

Eligible individuals who choose to carry concealed handguns **must do so in a safe and secure manner in conformity with [state and federal laws](#) and [KU weapons policy](#).**

Inclement weather

The University decides when to cancel or delay classes. KU sends text alerts when classes are canceled. To determine whether weather conditions have altered class times, call the KU snow line: (785) 864-7669 (785-864-SNOW).

Disability accommodation

If you have a special need that may affect your learning and for which you wish to request accommodation, contact KU Student Access Services in the Academic Achievement and Access Center (AAAC), which coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. Information about services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu/>, at the office in Strong Hall Room 22, or by calling 785-864-4064. Please contact me privately regarding your needs in this course. You will likely need documentation from the AAAC before accommodations are made. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

J-School and financial aid policy on classroom attendance

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent."

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid."

Recording of classroom meetings

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all in-class materials presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. **Photography, audio or video recordings, or live-streaming of class meetings without instructor consent is prohibited.** Pursuant to KU's Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures, commercial note-taking is not permitted in JOUR 553. Notes may be taken on in-class and course materials for personal use only. ***Note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is not the same as commercial note-taking and is allowed.*

J-School technology resources

The School of Journalism provides computer and broadcast laboratories for student use. Adequate laboratory resources are available for students who complete their assignments in a timely manner. The hours for the computer labs in 105 and 101 Stauffer-Flint are posted outside the labs. Hours for audio/video editing labs are posted in the Dole Center. Check out cameras or laptops in the Resource Center on the second floor of Stauffer-Flint. JSchool tech offers workshops and online tutorials for a variety of programs. More information is at <http://www.jourtech.dept.ku.edu/>.

JOUR 201 Schedule (Spring 2019)

This schedule is the plan, but is subject to change depending on any number of factors, like weather, guest speakers, etc. Check Blackboard for details on each week's readings and other assignments.

Week 1: Intro and getting started

Tues: Course overview and syllabus
How to watch the movies and what to look for as you watch
Thurs: Review: What is journalism?
Basic journalism ethics and practices

Week 2: "Spotlight" (2016)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Plagiarism and fabrication

Week 3: "Shattered Glass" (2003)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: The role of the reporter; the role of the audience

Week 4: "Ace in the Hole" (1951)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Sensationalism; legal and ethical issues

Week 5: "Nightcrawler" (2014)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: The fine line between news and entertainment

Week 6: "Network" (1976)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Technology and media

Week 7: "His Girl Friday" (1940)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Midterm exam

~ Spring break ~

Week 8: Closer look at media diversity

Tues: Statistics on diversity in media and why media diversity matters
Thurs: More on diversity
The role of journalists vis-a-vis the police

Week 9: "Zodiac" (2007)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: No class

Week 10: "The Paper" (1998)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Conflicts of interest

Week 11: "State of Play" (2009)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Covering wars/conflict

Week 12: "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot" (2016)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: McCarthyism (background)

Week 13: "Good Night, and Good Luck" (2005)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: The Vietnam War (background)

Week 14: "The Post" (2017)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Watergate (background)

Week 15: "All the President's Men" (1976)

Tues: Discussion of movie
Thurs: Wrap-up and review

**** Wednesday, May 15, 7:30 a.m.: Final exam (in our usual classroom)**