News Narrative Design II
Fall 2016

Course Description:
News, Narrative and Design II will lead students more deeply into the tools and practices of today’s digital journalists. It will focus on the use of data, multimedia and in depth reporting to craft compelling narratives that enlighten and excite readers. It will explore the digital media ecosystem and the challenges facing journalism in the 21st century. It will expand students’ media literacy, and offer tools to be both skeptical and passionate consumers of great stories. Students should have a basic understanding and enthusiasm for journalism’s practice and principles. NNDI is a prerequisite for this class.

News, Narrative and Design II builds on these core concepts of the Journalism + Design program.

1. Deep listening: Skepticism and Empathy (Speaking with community, identifying and questioning assumptions)
2. Brainstorm and Synthesis (Research, reporting and drafting)
3. Iteration + Critique (Being edited, reworking your projects)

Course Requirements:
In addition to the reporting, design and data assignments listed below: you will be expected to do the following:

1. Read the news everyday. News can come from legacy media like the NYT and the WSJ, broadcast outlets like NPR, CNN or ESPN, or digital first outlets like Buzzfeed and Vox, among others. Note: Snapchat, Facebook and Apple News are not news outlets. You may read news stories on these platforms, but be sure you know the outlet that fed the content to these platforms.
2. Using Google docs, keep a running document tracking all of your research and reporting. These include notes you take during interviews, photos you take while on the street, contact information you gather while meeting with people, inspirational art you see that drives you to be interested in a subject, a story or news article that provided context for
your work. You will be required to turn in this document as part of your final grade.

3. Homework: Reporting on larger project is ongoing, with key benchmarks throughout the semester. In addition, you will be asked to do a News Story Analysis and News Stand & Present. Instructions for those exercises are attached to the syllabus and are in the assignments folder.

4. Presence. We will have guest lecturers and speakers visit throughout the semester from some of the most influential media outlets in the world. You are not required to be in a good mood every day. You are required to respect the time and talent of your peers and your instructors. There will be no use of laptops or mobile devices in class, unless we are using them for reporting or note taking. If you text in class or if you’re found to be online for a purpose other than for class once, you’ll get a warning. If it happens again, you will be called out on it in class. If it happens a third time, you will fail this class.

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” Simone Weil, First and Last Notebooks

Grades:
Grades will be based on attendance, participation in class and fulfillment of requirements. They will also be based on improvement, hard work, and willingness to learn. A good grade requires pushing yourself, and stepping outside your comfort zone. There are no inflated grades. A grade of C is for satisfactory work, a B for good work, and an A for outstanding work.

Grade calculation:
Class Participation (attending class, contributing to class discussion by speaking in class or via Canvas, offering constructive assessments of your work and that of your colleagues): 25%
Reporting Documentation (see above for explanation): 25%
Short assignments and revisions: 25%
Final Project: 25%

Attendance Policy
● Students will lose a half grade for each unexcused absence.
● After 4 unexcused absences, you automatically fail the class.
● Lateness (more than 20 minutes without reasonable explanation) will be considered an
Absences are excused either by providing a doctor’s note or approval by the professor in consultation with the chair of the department beforehand. Students may not be excused from class by any other office in the college. I require 24 hours advance notice prior to 11:30 a.m. the Sunday or Tuesday before class for approved absences (family emergencies, unchangeable obligations, etc.)

At the Program's direction, I will keep a written attendance record.

**Week 1: Intro to NND2**

**August 29**
1. Who are you? What are you excited about? What do you know or want to know about me?
2. Where do you get your news? When/How do you consume it?
3. Examples of interesting work
4. Review syllabus
5. Introduce yourselves worksheet.

**Homework: News Analysis, due August 31**
Read these articles/essays
1) “Investors Move Next Door, Unsettling a Black Beachside Enclave”
2) “Who Are All These Trump Supporters”
http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/07/11/georgesaundersgoestotrumprallies
3) Why is it so difficult for Syrian refugees to get into the U.S.?
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/24/magazine/whyisitsoforsyrianrefugeesagharborhills.html

Answer the questions in the “News Analysis” questions sheet for all three.

**August 31**
1. Art of the Interview with Sarah Kramer
2. One or both of the exercises to follow
   - Interview classmate (20 minutes). Switch, interview the other person.
**Homework, Due September 7:**
1. Write up a 300 word (or so) story using your interview material.
2. Post interview story on Canvas before class.

**Week 2: Reviewing Writing Basics/Topic v. Story**

No class Sept 5  
*Sept 7*  
1. Review interview stories  
2. Journalism writing basics: Style and Structure Carmel Lobello.

**Homework, Due September 12:**  
Read these 2 articles and answer the “News Analysis” questions sheet  
“Keith Haring Mural May Be at Risk as Church Moves to Evict Tenants”  
https://www.dnainfo.com/newyork/20160801/morningsideheights/keithharingmuralmaybeatrisk
  
“Advocacy Group Files FTC Complaint Over Kardashians’ Instagram Ads”  
https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiforos/ftccomplaintfiledoverkardashianssocialmedia?utm_term=.gq0VJnVVj#.vsoNvpNN2

**Week 3: Finding Your Story within Your Topic**

There is a world of stories out there, but figuring out what makes a story and not just a topic you’re interested in can be hard. We’ll define the difference. And we’ll practice listening to help determine where the interesting stories live.

*Sept 12*  
Group brainstorm: What are topics that students are interested in researching and reporting?  
Hone in on 3 topics that you will explore in collaborative reporting projects over the course of the semester. Ask: How can visual thinking direct story selection? What kinds of voices do I want to include in my story? Groups will be assigned in class, according to topic interest.

**Homework, Due September 14**
1. Small groups will identify and interview 3 different people affected by their assigned topic. Each member of group submits notes and highlights the most relevant quotes.
2. Begin to gather research clips, academic studies on the topic. Add to your reporting Google Doc. Due September 19.
   http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/06/06/zarifkhanstamalesthemuslimsofsheridanwyoming

September 14:
Reporters do Research: Reporters are ethnographers, analysts, short story tellers, and researchers.
What are the tools you will need to research compelling narratives?
Review news story analysis of “Citizen Khan”
New School librarian describes library resources
**Homework: Due September 19.**
Data Scavenger Hunt: Make use of the library and the internet to help you answer these questions.

**Week 4: Reporting Review + Data Journalism**
Sept 19: Reporting Review and Data Scavenger Hunt review
Brainstorm: Where can this project go next; what further questions do you have?

**Homework, due September 26**
Keep reporting! Begin to narrow your topic and refine your questions. Notes due (i.e. expanded source list and more reporting) due on 9/26

**Sept 21**

*Data Journalism*
Generations of journalists have used numbers to tell stories. How is today’s interest in data journalism changing the kinds of stories that are being told and the manner in which they are presented? What are some of the most important and influential examples of data journalism? And how can people who aren’t “numbers people” begin to embrace data as a source?
Guest: Kendall Taggart, Buzzfeed Data Journalist gives overview of big issues in Data Journalism
Homework: via Kendall
Week 5: Thinking about Design

Journalism in the 21st century is decidedly visual. What are the opportunities that visual storytelling provides for enhancing our understanding of the topics we are passionate about? What are the limitations of using visuals to tell a story?

September 26:
In class guest: Louise Ma, J + D Design Lead
Assumptions/Associations: In consuming media, we all make assumptions and associations about what we see and what we think we know. Louise Ma will lead us through a set of exercises that help us look past what we think we know.

Homework, due September 28
Watch these two videos.
http://time.com/4353529/donnaferratodomesticviolence/

Answer the following questions on Canvas:
1. How were the approaches different or similar visually?
2. What story is each video telling?
3. What is the narrative arc of each video?
4. How are the videos similar and different?
5. How did each video use the interview with Donna Ferrato?

September 28
Louise Ma on Visual Storytelling. Using a headline or story paragraph as a prompt, we will explore ways in which storytelling can be conducted without words.

Homework, due October 5
Returning to your topic: identify visual examples that explore this topic. Visual content can include photos you have taken or found, video clips.
**Week 6: Sourcing on Social Media and the art of the pitch**

NO CLASS 10/3

October 5: Sourcing stories on social media/Art of the pitch
1. Review visual elements
2. Sourcing on social media
3. Art of the pitch

**Homework, due October 17**

With your partner(s), use interviews, research, social media content, data and visuals to hone in on two story ideas; post the pitches on Canvas. Make sure you’re documenting all your reporting on your Google Doc. Be prepared to present your pitches in class.

**Week 7: Using Data as a Source**

What kind of data constitute compelling sources for storytelling? Is there a way to find a story in every data set? How do you read data in order to reveal the story within it?

*October 10*

Data Journalism 2: Sourcing with data.
Guest: Kendall Taggart
Homework: Assigned via Kendall
NO CLASS 10/12

**Week 8: Critique and Feedback**

Everyone needs an editor, a critic, a guide. How can we learn to effectively critique the reporting of our peers? How can we learn to listen to and incorporate feedback into our reporting process. What is the best way to identify gaps, biases and opportunities in our reporting and storytelling process?

*October 17*

1. Present pitches and sources; critique story ideas; iterate. What assumptions have you
baked into your story? Do you have enough sources? What voices are missing? Are you using the right media to tell this story? How will you tell this story visually as well?

**Homework, due October 19**
Revise your pitches, based on class feedback.

**October 19**
1. Louise Ma: Critique like a Pro exercise: Using "prompts" students will roleplay the practice of critiquing a project.
2. Midterm evaluation

**Homework, Due October 24**
Incorporate the feedback you received in class, conduct additional reporting and write a first draft of your story. Remember to document your process in the same way you documented your research.

**Week 9: Visual/Aural Narratives**

**October 24:**
Multimedia, part 2
1. Guest speaker Gabe Johnson/Jarrard Cole at WSJ/Val Lapinski at the Guardian, on working in multimedia
2. Review reporting projects

**Homework, due October 26**
1. Play with Medium.com (Instructor will set up class site ahead of time). Post your first story draft to the class Medium page
2. Photo sequencing exercise, post to Medium class page

**October 26**
Review photo sequencing homework
Critical thinking: Whose voices matter? Guest Speakers: Sally Herships, Marketplace, Julia Furlan, Buzzfeed Audio,

**Homework, due October 31**
Read three Election 2016 stories of your choice and do a Standing Story Pitch for each
Week 10: Election 2016

October 31
You think Halloween is creepy, disturbing, frightful? Have you been following this election season?
We get caught up on the latest in the election, which is now only one week away. Present standing
story pitches for your articles.

Homework, Due November 2
1. Research: What NYC neighborhoods have the biggest proportion of Trump supporters?
   Hillary supporters? History of election fraud?

November 2
Go over recording techniques. Out of the classroom and into the streets: Record on the Street
interviews and take photos about the upcoming election; make sure to find diverse points of view.
Get name, age, where they live, etc.
Homework: Post and transcribe interview excerpts and photos on Medium.

Week 11: Election 2016

November 7
1. Play your favorite excerpts. What was the overall feel/mindset of the people we
   interviewed?

Homework, due November 8: Vote

November 9: Day after election day
Class discussion: What happened? Get out again and get On the Street reactions to the election. 45
mins. Stand and present your findings. Be ready to play your best interview.

Homework, Due November 14
1. Revisit your reporting projects. Ask a question related to your reporting project on your
   FB page or Twitter account. See what kinds of reponses you get.
2. “How audience engagement editors are guiding online discussions”:
   http://www.cjr.org/analysis/before_many_americans_had_awoken.php
3. “Facebook Live, Too Much, Too Soon”
4. “A comic treatment of a tragically broken process in journalism”
https://medium.com/wearehearken/acomictreatmentofatragicallybrokenprocessinjournalism722886dc37e5#.aswasgeyd

**Week 12: Building in audience engagement**

*November 14*
Why care what your audience thinks? Who reads the comments anyway? We look at how your audience can become sources for furthering your reporting.

*November 16*
Look again at your reporting projects. Where are the gaps in data, in sourcing? What voices are missing?

**Guest: Data Journalism #3 with Kendall Taggart**

*Homework:* Read: “Journalism, Even When It’s Tilted”
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/business/media/journalismisstillatworkevenwhenitspractitionerhasaslant.html

**Week 13: Big Topic: Fact v. Opinion**

Digital news has led to an explosion of opinion. How do we ferret out bias in reporting? What is the difference between exposing bias and being committed to transparency?

**11/22: Reviewing your reporting projects. Where are the gaps?** (**Wednesday’s class meets Tuesday, 11/22)**

*Holiday Homework*

“Inside the NY Times' audience development strategy”
http://digiday.com/publishers/insidenytimesaudiencedevelopmentstrategy/

“State of the News Media, 2016”
http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/stateofthenewsmedia2016/

Thanksgiving break: No class 11/23 or 11/24
**Week 14: Big Topic: Audience Development and Data**

November 28: The digital ecosystem is changing the way news outlets produce the news. In some ways, it’s the worst of times. Audiences are fragmented, fewer people are paying for news. At the same time, it’s a period of stretching and innovation. In this class, we learn to be unafraid of analytics.

Guests: Amanda Lilly and Vivyan Tran on audience development, digital optimization, SEO at the WSJ.

*Homework:*  
*November 30:*  
Catch up on reporting projects

**Homework, due December 5. Watch John Oliver on the death of local news:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq2_wSsDwkQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq2_wSsDwkQ)

**Week 15: The death and rebirth of news**

*December 5*  
Special guests: Senior editors from legacy and digital first outlets. Interview and short profile, reading synthesis on state of the industry TK.

*December 7*  
Reporting project updates

**Week 16: Meeting Deadlines!**

*December 12:*  
One-on-one sessions to review reporting projects

*December 14:* Group critique of reporting projects

**Week 17: Wrapping it all up**
December 19

Final projects due.

What did we learn? Where do we go next?