Reporting for Visuals
Pay attention.
Be astonished.
Tell about it.

Fall 2016

Course Description
Reporting is the foundation of visual journalism like interactives, maps, charts and multimedia stories. Being a successful visual journalist requires specific reporting skills that many journalists lack, including how to mine photos and videos for information, how to collect structured data and how to imagine and pitch a visual story.

Course Outline
This outline is rough. Here’s why — we think it’s shortsighted to forecast an entire semester on the first day. We’ll update it as we go. There will be more readings and viewings assigned that we’ll assign by class. We’ll update this, as well as the class website.

There are 6 main assignments that you’ll be working on over multiple weeks.

- Annotated photos
- Breaking news exercise
- A personal map
- Process assignment
- Visualizations of elections data
- Story of a block

The are all worth 100 points. We will add up your grades on all of them and divide by 6. That will be 80% of your grade. The other 20% is participation.

Aug. 31
Syllabus day. Introductions. What this course is about. Download Illustrator. Intimidate you.
Assignment: Watch Bill Cunningham New York.
Sept. 7
**Annotation.** What swoopy arrows have to do with journalism.
Assignment: 2 annotated photos. Due next class.

Sept. 14
**Interviewing.** Look at and talk about annotated photos. Talk about interviewing and talking to people. Getting over being shy.
Assignment: go back out and make better photos. Due next class.

Sept. 21
**Reporting from social media** (aka becoming a better internet searcher). Talk about sourcing, rights, verification, hoaxes, catfishing, and how to trust information from the internet.
Assignment: Breaking news.

Sept. 28
**Visual form** (medium is the message stuff). You’ve been making things, but they probably don’t look great. Let’s fix that. You have to justify why visuals are better than words. And a large part of that is inherent in the way those visuals look and are designed.

Oct. 5
**Maps.** Why maps? Why not maps? Types of maps? So many maps.
Assignment: Your own personal map. Must draw in sharpie. Due next class.

Oct. 12
No class

Oct. 19
More maps. ~*~*~ GUEST SPEAKER ALERT ~*~*~ Derek Watkins, NYT graphics editor.

Oct. 26
**Process graphics and illustration.** When are visuals better at describing a process.
~*~*~ Guest speaker ~*~*~ Joe Ward, of the NYT graphics department.
Nov. 2 More process. More illustration.

Nov. 9 We’ll have a new president! (And Josh and I will be very tired.) Finding stories hidden in spreadsheets and looking at election data.

Nov. 16 Visualizing election results.

Nov. 22nd (It’s a Tuesday.) TK. What do you want more of? Start on final projects.

Nov. 30 Progress on final projects.

Dec. 7 Final, crit.

Course Readings and Materials The Universal Journalist (you can buy on Amazon used)

Things you should know

Bring your laptop to every class. While in class, please only work on class-related things. We won’t accept late homework unless you talk to us beforehand or something serious comes up. Three unexcused absences = failure. Be original. Don’t make stuff up.

We are easy to talk to and get ahold of. Please let us know how we’re doing, if this class sucks, or how we can make things better at any point. Don’t wait until the last day.