

Practical Journalism 1 – Module Guide

Level 6 Module Code: JO3018

Module length: One semester

Module Leader: Dan Townend

Office hours: Mondays 10-12, Wednesday 10-11, Room

AIMS

- To allow you to put the range of skills and knowledge acquired in the course of your studies into practice via the production of a campus newspaper and integrated website – The River and Riveronline.
- To provide an opportunity for you to gain first-hand experience of working within a journalistic environment.
- To provide experience that will allow you to make informed decisions about your future career path, develop important media contacts, begin to build a portfolio of work, develop work-place and management skills and reflect on any possible future training needs you may have.
- Learn the practicalities of working under pressure in a busy office environment and the importance of teamwork.

WHAT YOU SHOULD LEARN – LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this module, you should be able to demonstrate:

- A critical awareness of the pressures and constraints involved in producing newspapers and other forms of media
- The skills, discipline and attention to detail necessary to be a journalist
- A critical understanding of the interaction of different roles and functions in a newspaper and website
- The ability to use your initiative in developing your contacts, chasing stories and generating copy along with production skills both in print and online
- Learn a range of 'life' skills, including autonomous working, negotiating skills, teamwork, ability to work to deadlines and developing contacts

CURRICULUM CONTENT

The module is based on the production of a fortnightly campus newspaper – The River – and the maintenance and development of its associated website, Riveronline. Each student will take on editorial roles on both the paper and website as well as contribute news, sport, entertainment and feature articles. Roles may vary, but will allow students to observe and participate in essential activities which contribute to producing a real newspaper.

The focus of The River and Riveronline will be the university and its affairs but should also reflect the neighbouring community as well as student issues. It will carry news, sport, listings, lifestyle, features and advertising – all initiated, reported, written, edited and laid out by students using the appropriate software. The River and its website will also provide an outlet for the best pieces of journalism produced by fellow students at Levels 4 & 5.

Some specific issues covered in the module will emerge from the day to day running of the newspaper and the website. Core areas to be covered include:

- learning news values
- editorial management including rotas and production planning
- the logistics of newspapers including printing, distribution and costs and the requirements to maintain a professional and updated website
- the use of social media and other methods to drive readers to the riveronline website
- Reacting to stories and producing high quality journalism at speed on the website
- editorial freedom and its limitations
- use of design software

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

I will act as Editor-in-Chief for the campus newspaper while my colleague Clare Lovell will take main responsibility for the Riveronline website. We will appoint editorial and management teams (to serve in 4 / 5 week stints) and will provide guidance online, through weekly editorial meetings (at midday on Monday and 9am on Thursday), and in seminar-style workshops.

Seminar workshops will be every Wednesday 11am – 1pm in JG3018 – EXCEPT THOSE WEEKS WHEN THE RIVER IS BEING PRODUCED.

Editorial meetings and workshops: 32 hours
Independent and directed learning: 118 hours
Total: 150 hours

THE RIVER

The first issue of the paper goes to press on Wednesday, October 12. As with any newspaper and related media operation, ideas and hard work are the keys to success.

Realistically, the module will require intensive work, particularly in the days leading up to the paper's publication. You will be producing a professional newspaper which will not only be distributed to thousands of students and staff at Kingston but also throughout the local community. The Riveronline website will effectively be a 24-hour operation with the opportunity to update the site according to events. The site should have at least five new items a week uploaded, including on non-press weeks. There will also be an opportunity to take part in other online news gathering operations, including video journalism, blogging and live blogging on events.

Producing a newspaper takes a considerable amount of time and effort and participation in the paper and website is worth 50 per cent of the total mark. It will be time well spent, not only because of what you will learn but also because your cuttings and experience will prove invaluable when it comes to applying for jobs. You will be expected to attend weekly news and features conference on a Monday at midday in the news room. Here you will set the agenda for the next issue of The River and decide what online coverage is required.

There will also be a mainly online news conference on Thursday morning at 9am. For the team in charge, expect to be in the news room for a considerable time on press days and the days leading up to it. It means hard work, but I promise you it is rewarding and good fun.

To emphasise, there will be a two hour seminar on Wednesday at 11am on weeks where we do NOT have a press day.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week 1: SEMINAR Wednesday, September 28

Introduction to The River and Riveronline; deadlines; filing copy.

What is news? Part one. Who is our readership and what do they want?

Week 2: SEMINAR Wednesday, October 5

Laying out pages, headlines, standfirsts, use of pics... Search Engine Optimisation, hyperlinks

Week 3: PRESS DAY, October 12

Week 4: SEMINAR Wednesday, October 19

River de-brief / What is news part two. What makes a news story and how do you handle it? Assessment of our online coverage.

Week 5: PRESS DAY, October 26

Week 6: READING WEEK

Week 7: SEMINAR Wednesday, November 9

River de-brief / How to not get sued or jailed - the quick newspaper and web guide to the media law

Week 8: SEMINAR Wednesday, November 16

How to handle the running story – staying calm but thinking quick. The importance of lateral thinking. Exercise in News Room

Week 9: PRESS DAY Wednesday, November 23

Week 10: SEMINAR Wednesday, November 30

The tricks of the trade and how to be a professional. Exam preparation.

Week 11: PRESS DAY, Wednesday December 7

Week 12: TIMED EXERCISE Wednesday, December 14

Timed exercise testing your writing, subbing and layout skills

ASSESSMENT

• Assessment will be in three parts – a portfolio containing:

1. An appraisal of participation in producing *The River*. We will conduct one-on-one vivas with every student to discuss your contribution to the newspaper and website, the amount of time you have spent working on the newspaper, and attendance and participation in conference, seminars and on press day. This is worth the lion's share of the total mark. Attendance and contribution is vital. (50%)

2. A portfolio of your best three stories (minimum 150 words each), either news, sport, entertainments or features that you have written for *The River* or *Riveronline*. You may also include other supporting examples of your published work in *The River* or *Riveronline*, but you should make it clear which three you have chosen to be assessed. You can also include examples of pages you have laid out as evidence of 'supporting work'. Important: you should also include the original copy you submitted before it was edited. (25%)

3. A timed exercise demonstrating writing, editing and layout skills and online awareness – 90 minutes (25%)

The Semester 1 deadline (Groups A and B) for completed portfolios containing your assessment sheets and written articles is Thursday January 5 2012 at 11AM. The timed exercise is to be handed in immediately after you take it.

LEARNING OUTCOME	ASSESSMENT STRATEGY
On completion of the module, you will be able to:	
1) Demonstrate a critical awareness of the pressures and constraints involved in producing newspapers and other forms of media	Written articles, content production and participation on <i>The River</i> and <i>Riveronline</i>
2) The skills, discipline and attention to detail necessary to be a journalist	Written articles, content production and participation on <i>The River</i> and <i>Riveronline</i> and timed exercise
3) critical understanding of the interaction of different roles and functions in a newspaper and integrated website	Participation on <i>The River</i> and <i>Riveronline</i> and appraisal
4) Learn a range of 'life' skills, including autonomous working, negotiating skills, teamwork, ability to work to deadlines and develop contacts	Participation on <i>The River</i> and <i>Riveronline</i> and appraisal

Please keep an eye on StudySpace for updates and further information. I am contactable via email on d.townend@kingston.ac.uk.
 Aside from conference on Mondays and Thursdays and seminars I will usually contact you via your university email so please keep a daily eye on that.
 Good luck and enjoy the course.

THE RIVER NEWSPAPER PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

As with any newspaper, it is vital that deadlines are kept. In reality, no matter how great an article is, if it misses the deadline and does not make the paper, it is a waste of time. In the real world, missed deadlines mean lost readers and more expense. Deadlines will be set according to the production schedules and journalists and writers will be informed by section heads when they need to file. If you are told by a section head or other senior editorial member of staff to file, it carries the same authority as if I had said it.

To file a story, put it in the new copy basket at the top of the practical journalism 1 section of blackboard. If you follow the links for upload copy it should be clear. I will look at every piece and if necessary make suggestions on changes or rewrites. I will then put it in the appropriate copy basket (news, sport etc) for the sections heads to deal with and get any changes done. The copy will then be ready for the subs and layout people to pick up and lay out on pages.

In general features and entertainment copy should be all in by the Monday before production week (ie 9 days before press day). News stories I expect from the Wednesday before production week onwards so that there is a flow of work for the subbing and layout team. These deadlines may change according to the demands of the paper, as in real life. It is your responsibility to make sure you know when copy is needed and make sure it is there. This is an important element of the course. So, taking your first issue of the term as an example...

Monday, September 26

Conference – features decided and commissioned for upcoming issue and long term news projects discussed

Thursday September 29

Online conference – refresh site. Discuss news stories/blogs/features for next few days. Commission pix, videos etc

Monday, October 3

Conference – All news stories commissioned for this issue
All features and entertainment copy should be filed by today so they can be edited and be ready by Wednesday morning for subs to 'take' and lay out on the page during the week. All features and pics should be filed to the system on StudySpace.

Wednesday, October 5

By the end of the day the first 'back of the book' news stories should be filed and accompanying pics should be up on Blackboard. More copy should come in over the next few days. Work continues through the week on laying out pages.

Thursday October 6

Online conference

Monday, October 10

Final news conference for this issue for late news pages as well as features and entertainments conference for issue 2 (and articles commissioned). Decide what can be uploaded early

Tuesday, October 11

Work continues on laying out pages

Wednesday, October 12

PRESS DAY – issue 1 of the semester – with pages sent as pdfs to printers. A hectic and busy day with a late finish likely

Thursday, October 13

Upload issue – work on follow ups, new stories.

Friday, October 14 – ISSUE DELIVERED BY 10AM AT MAIN RECEPTION.
STUDENTS TO DISTRIBUTE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bull, Andy, Multimedia Journalism – a Practical Guide, Routledge, 2010
Carroll, Brian, Writing for Digital Media, Routledge (NY and London), 2010
Chippindale and Horrie, Stick It Up Your Punter, Pocket Books, 1999
Evans, Harold, Essential English: For Journalists, Editors and Writers, Pimlico, 2000
Evans, Harold, Editing and Design: A Five-Volume Manual of English, Typography and Layout, Hardcover, 1973 (this is the original full newspaper guide from the 1970s – hard to find but a classic. Useful and fascinating).
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Kanigel, Rachele, The Student Newspaper Survival Guide, Blackwell, 2006
Marr, Andrew, My Trade, Pan, 2005
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Randall, David, The Universal Journalist, Pluto, 1996
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Waterhouse, Keith, On Newspaper Style, Penguin, 1993
Waugh, Evelyn, Scoop, Penguin, 1938

Centre for Academic Support and Employability

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences runs a Centre for Academic Support and Employability (CASE) where students can get one-to-one help with assessments. The Centre operates on an informal drop-in basis, providing specific help for students at all levels with their studies: presentation, referencing, structuring and editing traditional academic writing, as well as multimedia texts. Specialist workshops are also offered each semester. In addition, the Employability Co-ordinator offers a twice weekly drop-in service in CASE.

All FASS students are encouraged to get as much help as possible with their academic work from CASE; no appointment is necessary, but at busy times consultations may be limited to 10-15 minutes.

The Centre is located in Tower 703 and opens from week 5, 10am – 5pm Monday – Thursday and 10am – 3pm on Friday. The Centre is open during the intersemester break and the summer assessment period until the end of May. FASS Postgraduate students preparing their dissertation may book a 30-minute advice session from June to mid-September. PhD students can book a 60-minute session.

CASE general enquiries and postgraduate appointment requests can be addressed to: