

WARNING

This course will contain material on controversial topics and frank discussions of material and subjects which may be offensive or upsetting.

CRIME REPORTING

Murders, robberies, indictments, explosions and convictions are the stuff of every news outlet on every platform. Car chases and celebrity trials draw millions of viewers and tens of millions of clicks. Police and prosecutors can draw the nation's admiration, condemnation or both. Civil liberties are violated, or protected, on the street or in the courts every day.

Through a series of scenarios and projects, this class will train you for ethical, high quality reporting on crime and the issues surrounding it. You'll also learn a little bit about PR when things go wrong -- how spin is constructed and combatted.

Eventually every journalist from beat blogger to wine critic will wade in to these difficult, ethically fraught and sometimes heart-wrenching stories.

Specific topics will include: crime on social media, police and court records, civil liberties, crime statistics, law enforcement basics and crime-related PR.

Required texts

- Bayles, Fred. *Field Guide to Covering Local News*.
- *Associated Press Stylebook 2015*.

Additional articles

In addition to materials in the assigned books and the course pack, there will be reading assignments from web sites and from stories available in online databases accessible through the UI Library.

Specialized Reporting and Writing:
Crime Reporting
JMC 3400 Section 2
Spring 2016
TTh 1:30 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.
W332 Adler Journalism Building

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Office Hours:
Tuesday 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m.
and by appointment

School of Journalism and Mass
Communication
Director: Professor David Ryfe
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Some of the policies relating to this course (such as the drop deadline) are governed by its administrative home, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 120 Schaeffer Hall.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each class will begin with a one-question quiz on material covered in recent readings and classes. Tuesday sessions will consist of lectures, discussions, activities and Q&A's surrounding the assigned reading for the week. Thursday sessions will consist of in-class exercises and hands-on skills training.

THE IOWA DOZEN

In this class we will learn the following principles, which—when spelled out—become the “Iowa Dozen.”

We will learn:

1. to write correctly and clearly
2. to conduct research and gather information responsibly
3. to edit and evaluate carefully
4. to use media technologies thoughtfully
5. to apply statistical concepts appropriately

We will value:

6. First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups
7. a diverse global community
8. creativity and independence
9. truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

We will explore:

10. mass communication theories and concepts
11. media institutions and practices
12. the role of media in shaping cultures

Over the course of the semester, the class will have two in-class writing/reporting assignments, two short homework assignments and a required research project.

You also will have the opportunity to take an extra-credit exam on AP Style and submit a long-form writing or video project for extra credit.

In-class writing/reporting assignments — 50%

Each of these reporting assignments will extend over two class sessions and result in a news story of at least 485 and at most 515 words, potentially with multimedia elements.

The first session will be a mock press conferences involving experts on a criminal justice topic or issue. At the beginning of the second session, the specific story will be announced along one or more *short* mock press conferences. Related documents or other materials will be provided as appropriate.

The story will be due in ICON at the conclusion of class. A specific grading rubric will be provided in advance. Failure to attend either session will result in an F.

Story memo — 25%

Each student will be assigned a specific past crime to research. Students will research the case and write the kind of memo that reporters typically prepare for editors periodically in the course of pitching and reporting an investigative or longform story.

Students will be graded on turning in a complete, correctly written initial draft (25%), a complete, correctly written final draft that addresses the additional questions raised by the instructor on initial draft (75%).

Quizzes — 10%

The quiz will be held promptly at the start of class and may not be made up under any circumstances. The one question will be projected on the monitors and students will be given a 3x5 notecard on which to write their answers. The type and format of the question will vary. Students with previously arranged, excused absences will not be graded on that week’s quiz.

Class participation — 10%

Attending and participating in the class is important. This grade will reflect the percent of class sessions at which the student attends, actively engages and demonstrates mastery of assigned materials. Examples of participation include: asking intelligent questions, answering questions about assigned readings, and providing positive, constructive feedback to another student.

Ride-along and court hearing — 5%

Each of these will be graded pass/fail. You are expected to go on one 2-hour police ride-along and attend and take notes on one *assigned* 2-hour court hearing. Each will involve a short, structured write-up.

Extra credit

Students will be able to receive up to 5 percentage points extra credit based on performance on a test on AP style. They may receive up to 10 percentage points of extra credit based on a reporting project done with prior approval of the instructor. A project will be at least 1,500 words with multimedia or an equivalent length video project with multimedia.

Grading System and the Use of +/-

This course and all assignments are graded on the +/- system. A+ grades are rarely given.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>						
A+	100%	B+	87% - 89.9%	C+	77% - 79.9%	D+	67% - 69.9%
A	93% - 99.9%	B	83% - 86.9%	C	73% - 76.9%	D	63% - 66.9%
A-	90% - 92.9%	B-	80% - 82.9%	C-	70% - 72.9%	D-	60% - 62.9%
						F	0% - 59.9%

Writing will be graded against suitability for professional publication. (A detailed grading rubric for each writing type will be distributed in class.)

In-class and out-of-class writing assignments may be revised within 24 hours of being returned by the professor. Revisions can be improved by up to 10 percentage points to a maximum of 95 percent.

Outside-of-class assignments turned in up to 24 hours late will be penalized 10 points and are not eligible for revision. Assignments will not be accepted more than 24 hours late.

POLICIES

Class attendance/absences

You are expected to attend all classes. **Any unavoidable absences should be arranged at least 24 hours in advance at the discretion of the instructor.** Serious illnesses and personal

emergencies will be handled in accordance with the appropriate CLAS and university policies.

A NOTE FROM THE WRITING CENTER

Visit the Writing Center this semester and take the stress out of writing assignments.

Book a 30 minute appointment when you need it.

Reserve a regular weekly meeting for the entire semester — register now through our website: <http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/>.

Upload a draft to our online system and get comments and suggestions by email.

Sign up for graduate student programs and professional development opportunities.

All our services are free (it's the best deal in town). Check out our website at writingcenter.uiowa.edu or stop by to see us in 110 EPB.

The Writing Center is hosted by the Department of Rhetoric and supported by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Submitting of previously published materials

You cannot submit previously published material to satisfy an assignment. Work for publication may be submitted to satisfy an assignment if it is turned in prior to its submission for publication, under terms arranged in advance with the instructor.

Publication of materials from class

You own your words and, where appropriate, are encouraged to pursue publication.

Identifying yourself

You must always honestly represent yourself. As such you should always identify yourself. Unless you are working on a specific story assignment for a specific publication (like the *D.I.*), that means identifying yourself as a student journalist doing work for potential professional publication.

Deadlines

All work must be turned in through the class ICON Dropbox and will be considered on time based on the ICON timestamp. If turning in through ICON is impossible, arrangements must be made in advance.

JMC LEARNING OUTCOMES

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here: <http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment>. We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes.

This course contributes to these learning outcomes by reinforcing learning outcomes in writing/storytelling, law/ethics and multiculturalism. Achieving these outcomes means the ability to:

- Writing/Storytelling
 - demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.
 - display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.
 - demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.
- Law/Ethics
 - demonstrate knowledge of libel and invasion of privacy law.
 - demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.
 - demonstrate an ability to explain their ethical approaches and reasoning about a particular dilemma in terms that can be understood by a diverse group of people.
- Multiculturalism
 - demonstrate an ability to produce media that serve the needs and interests of diverse communities and reflect their voices and experiences.
 - demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the cultures, histories, perspectives, and socio-economic and political situations of diverse groups.

This class has other, course specific outcomes as well. After this class you should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the structure of U.S. criminal justice system
- write crime-related stories in Associated Press style
- do public records and media research both online and in person
- demonstrate understanding of public records law
- demonstrate knowledge of criminal justice statistics

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Week	Topics and assignments	Readings (all readings due Tuesday)
Week 1 Jan. 19 Jan. 21	Overview of the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Watch tutorials on Lexis-Nexis, Factiva and NewsBank (due Thursday) - Bayles, Introduction (due Thursday)
Basics of police and courts		
Week 2 Jan. 26 Jan. 28	Crime writing fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bayles, Chapter 1 - 2 - AP Stylebook, "Guide to Punctuation" - "Unsolved," Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel
Week 3 Feb. 2 Feb. 4	Crime writing fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bayles, Chapter 5 - AP Stylebook entries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acronyms • capitalization • accused • allege • arrest • assassin, killer, murderer • indict • murder • homicide, murder, manslaughter - "Police Shootings," Washington Post
Week 4 Feb. 9 Feb. 11	Law enforcement basics Recap - sign up for ride along	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Police Records</i> RCFP - AP Stylebook entries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • police department • prosecutor • sheriff • military titles - 10-codes and phonetic alphabet
Week 5 Feb. 16 Feb. 18	In-class reporting assignment	
Week 6 Feb. 23 Feb. 25	Breaking news coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AP Stylebook "Briefing on Media Law" - LA Times coverage of Isla Vista massacre

Week	Topics and assignments	Readings (all readings due Tuesday)
Week 7 March 1 March 3	Covering the Court House - sign up for court hearing - assigned case to research	- Bayles, Chapter 7
Week 8 March 8 March 10	Longform	- "Homicide" - Readings in ICON
(Spring Break) Research, investigations, issues and trends		
Week 9 March 22 March 24	Open Records	- Bayles, "Beat Backgrounder: Filing a FOIA" - <i>Access to Public Records and Meetings in Iowa</i> (public records sections) - "State Integrity 2015"
Week 10 March 29 March 31	Online research techniques	- Readings in ICON
Week 11 April 5 April 7	Crime statistics and civil rights - final week for court hearings	- "The Strong Arm of the Law" - Readings in ICON
Storytelling methods		
Week 12 April 12 April 14	Broadcast	- AP Stylebook, "Broadcast Guidelines" - Readings in ICON
Week 13 April 19 April 21	Social media Peer-editing (1 hour on Thursday) - draft research memo due Tuesday by class time	- Bayles, Chapter 4 - AP Stylebook, "Social Media Guidelines" - Aurora Shooting Twitter Coverage
Week 14 April 26 April 28	Crisis Communication Discussion of Pulitzer Prizes AP style exam (Thursday) - draft memo returned Tuesday after class	- Selected material from Pulitzer Prizes (assigned April 21) - Readings in ICON
Week 15 May 3 May 5	In-class reporting assignment	
	- research memo due Monday - research memo returned to students Wednesday by 5 p.m. - research memo revisions due Friday by 11:59 p.m.	

Online readings/resources

Jan. 21

Lexis-Nexis Academic

<http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/go.php?c=4684793>

Factiva

<http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/go.php?c=4684691>

NewsBank Access World News

<http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/go.php?c=4684484>

Basic Research YouTube playlist

<http://bit.ly/1ZxPifZ>

Jan. 26

Barton, Gina. "Unsolved," Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. (2015)

<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/unsolved-335136521.html>

Feb. 2

Washington Post staff. "Police Shootings," *The Washington Post*. (2015)

Selections:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/police-shootings/>

<http://wapo.st/1ZneUvX>

<http://wapo.st/1Puermq>

<http://wapo.st/1OkPtbo>

<http://wapo.st/1Qjrtbj>

Feb. 9

Alphabet and "10-codes" from Iowa State Parol "General Order 07-22." (2007)

<http://bit.ly/1OsRaUi>

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, *Police Records*. (2008)

<http://www.rcfp.org/rcfp/orders/docs/POLICE.pdf>

Feb. 29

LA Times coverage of the Isla Vista massacre. (2014)

<http://www.pulitzer.org/finalists/5367>

March 8

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. *Access to Public Records and Meetings in Iowa*. (2011)

<http://www.rcfp.org/rcfp/orders/docs/ogg/IA.pdf>

Mills, Lauren, et al. "2015 State Integrity Investigation," *IowaWatch*. (2015)

<http://bit.ly/1ng5vuP>

<http://bit.ly/1nud6pd>

<http://bit.ly/20anFfe>

March 22

Simon, David. "Homicide: A year on the killing streets," *Baltimore Sun*. (June 9 - June 11, 1991)

Find in online database(s). There are three stories.

April 5

Nalder, Eric, et al. "The Strong Arm of the Law," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. (Feb. 28 - March 1, 2008)

Find in online database(s). There are nine stories.

April 19

Denver Post staff. "Aurora Theater Shooting: Social Media." *The Denver Post*. (July 20 - July 24, 2012)

<http://extras.denverpost.com/contests/2012/aurora-theater-shooting-denver-post-final-full.pdf>

THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Administrative Home

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#).

Electronic Communication

University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondence ([Operations Manual, III.15.2](#). Scroll down to k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See <http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/> for more information.

Academic Honesty

All students taking CLAS courses have, in essence, agreed to the College's [Code of Academic Honesty](#): "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the [IOWA Challenge](#). I promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

CLAS Final Examination Policies

The date and time of every final examination is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. It is the student's responsibility to know the date, time, and place of the final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS [Academic Policies Handbook](#)).

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the [Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator](#) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the [Public Safety website](#).

Reporting Crime. Find out how to report and respond to many types of crimes and criminal behavior. On This Page. Reporting Criminal Activity. America's Most Wanted Criminals. Bomb Threats by Telephone. Report suspected crime, like traffic violations and illegal drug use, to local authorities. Or you can report it to your nearest state police office. Find contact information: Online. In your local telephone directory under Police Departments or Local Governments. How to Report Federal Law Violations. Both violent crime and property crime declined between 2018 and 2019, according to the Crime in the United States report. The FBI released detailed data on nearly 6.6 million criminal offenses reported via the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) in 2018. More Information. UCR Publications. View all UCR publications, including Crime in the United States, NIBRS, LEOKA, and Hate Crime Statistics reports, as well as topical reports on cargo theft, human trafficking, federal crime data, and more. If you've been a victim of crime, you'll need to decide whether or not to tell the police. It's okay to feel unsure about this or worry about what will happen if you do. You might think that the police won't care. Maybe you've had a bad experience with the police in the past.