JMC Student Review

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What’s New at JMC?

JRN 101 Digital and Media Literacy (formerly JRN 231): fulfills the Interpersonal Communication Competency (avail. now).

JRN 200 Elements of Journalism: will replace ENG 325: Intermediate Composition

JRN 201 Multimedia News Writing and Reporting (formerly JRN 331): a fresh new approach to writing and reporting

JRN 341 Specialized Journalism (formerly JRN 335): gives students insight into different genres of journalism (avail. now).

In 2016, we will be launching an all new capstone experience that is being designed to truly wrap students into a simulated world of journalism and media. We will also be meeting with industry professionals for our program review in April 2016 and we will certainly create more plans for the future to be sure that students in the JMC program at Ashford University have a dynamic experience throughout their studies. So stay tuned for more exciting news about program improvements in early 2016!
Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Ted Scripps Leadership Institute conference in Minneapolis, MN. A girl from Small Town, U.S.A who has never traveled more than 30 miles in either direction from her home, made a 532-mile drive to the conference, panicking most of the way. Why was I panicking? Well, first, let me introduce myself, I’m the president of the Ashford chapter of The Society of Professional Journalists – and I’m a fraud.

At least, that’s how I’ve felt since I’ve become president. I have felt unequipped to lead anyone. This is my first foray into any type of group organization, and I’m leading it. I keep hoping that I’m making the right decisions, but it tends to get a bit overwhelming when you have no idea if you’re even leadership material. For that reason alone I’m glad I was fortunate enough to attend this conference.

SPJ-Ashford is an online organization, the only one of its kind in the nation. That in itself brings many challenges. Challenges that we are striving to overcome. One of the challenges is that our leadership team lives all over the United States, but come together through phone and email conversations as often as we can. The Scripps conference united me with a member of our leadership team and our faculty advisor. I can never thank the SPJ powers-that-be for that experience, as deep bonds were formed during that weekend conference. I was also introduced to many other SPJ members from all over the States. I believe we’ve made invaluable connections with other chapters. Connections that will follow us even after graduation.

Aside from keeping us extremely well-fed, we learned about leadership, what it means, and what type of leaders we are. With each interactive activity I got to know other members, as I got to know myself. I found that I’m all about cooperation, routine, loyalty, a good listener, and have the ability to calm excited people (I’ve worked many years in retail and calming people has been said to be my “superpower”). Over the weekend of the conference I began to believe in myself. Believe in what I, with my team, could accomplish. Will accomplish. It was a fantastic experience that I would recommend for all chapters of the SPJ leadership teams to attend. I went in worrying that I’d be found out as a fraud, but came away feeling like a pro.

Michelle Reed is a junior Journalism and Mass Communication major at Ashford University. She is also the President of SPJ@Ashford.
How would you describe the transition into your profession once you obtained your degree?

I actually got into the profession before I received my degree. My Bachelor’s degree was focused on print journalism and I felt I was missing a good knowledge of broadcasting. So I managed to get an internship with one of the local television stations in San Diego. I had that internship for a year and a half. The week after I graduated, the television station hired me. I spent another year there before moving to a different television market.

The television broadcasting industry is hard to get into, but once you are in, it’s fairly easy to move around.

You develop connections and people hear about you from other people. I was actually recruited by the stations I worked for after my San Diego start so I never sought another job. The job opportunities found me instead. So my transition was incredibly easy and I would highly recommend an internship as a way into the profession.

Were there any challenges you faced when making said transition? If so, how did you overcome them?

My challenge was more about me as a private person versus a professional challenge. I came here from Sweden and couldn't legally work until after graduation. So even though the television station wanted to hire me while I was in college, I wasn't able to accept it until after graduation.

What advantages are there having a journalism degree when entering the field?

I had a professor who told me “if you can write, you can do anything.” And I have found that to be incredibly true. I have transitioned between jobs in broadcasting, print and public relations, and it’s all been easy because I can write well. It’s all writing, just a different style depending on the audience.
If you have a degree in journalism, then you’re well prepared for the field. An employer may need to train you in a thing or two specific to the media outlet, but you already have a good, basic skill set.

I have heard journalism is a dying profession. What are your thoughts?

Journalism isn’t dying at all; journalism is merely changing and evolving. I think students going into the field will have so many exciting opportunities available to them, opportunities that weren’t available when I finished college. With all the new media and technology changes, it’s an exciting time to become a journalist. The opportunities are out there, but they are not exactly the same opportunities that were available say thirty or forty years ago. And that is good because it means our profession has evolved and grown.

Do you believe technology has helped advance journalism?

Technology has definitely advanced journalism. When I started in broadcasting we had to feed video via microwave and satellite uplinks. Going live was cumbersome and time consuming and it meant having a live truck with you at the scene. Now you can go live and feed video with merely your cellphone as a tool. It’s amazing how technology has changed the field, making everything so much easier and quicker. You can get a story on the air in no time today and that is truly exciting.

With your busy schedule, do you make it a point to find time to sit down and just write?

I simply love writing so I try to write as much as I can. However, I am currently working on my PhD so I write mostly research papers versus articles these days unfortunately. I do miss journalistic writing as I love telling stories, especially human interest stories. I think people are fascinating and good stories can be found virtually anywhere.

What made you choose to be a part of the JMC program?

I was a Teaching Assistant for Ashford for a couple of years and worked in a wide variety of online classes, including Philosophy, Education, English and Communication. Then Ashford made, in my opinion, some good changes such as smaller class sizes. But that also meant the Teaching Assistants were no longer needed. So while I lost my position, I felt the university was headed in a good direction, and in the back of my mind, I always thought I would try to come back as a professor when I had more teaching experience. And here I am, a little over two years after the Teaching Assistant positions were eliminated.

What do you look forward to most as a new member of the JMC program?

I think the JMC program has grown and changed tremendously. In my opinion, it’s a more robust program than it has ever been and it has been tailored to today’s media world. I’m looking forward to being a part of those continued changes, of improving the classes so that the Ashford students are as prepared and as competitive as possible once they get their degree. And I look forward to interacting with the Ashford JMC students on a regular basis. I especially love the online environment and the opportunities that it creates. While the online environment can be challenging at times, the positive by far outweighs the negative.

I had a professor who told me, “if you can write, you can do anything.” And I have found that to be incredibly true.

-Maddie Liseblad

Do you have any advice to aspiring journalists who are unsure as to the direction they would like to take their writing?

My advice is to try different things, different types of writing. There are some excellent opportunities here at Ashford for that. For example, there is the Ashford Humanities Review that publishes critical essays, The Ash that has poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction and art, and the JMC Student Review that contains articles on issues that are related to the journalism field. Another excellent way to get involved and learn more about journalism is the Society of Professional Journalists at Ashford. They have a blog that students can write for too.
Self-Broadcasting is the new and booming trend in social media. While, video streaming was once thought of as just a hobby it is now a popular career move. This can open many doors for those of us in the journalism world. Many broadcasts nowadays for categories such as news, can be seen via live stream. Social Media sites such as Youtube, allow users to host, edit, and broadcast their own videos online for free public viewing. The site contains different categories that are each very popular and at times cause a user’s video to go viral. A Youtube inspiration and successful marketer, Darrel Eves states in one of his many videos, “Youtube is so vast, the biggest thing in video marketing is going to be Youtube video.” However, Asia’s new self-broadcasting platforms like Periscope and Meerkat are bound to take this new trend even further. These media platforms allow you to broadcast live from your phone to the whole world. Pretty neat, right?

Are you a food lover? Well, in South Korea they have created a popular broadcasting trend called Mukbang. Mukbang allows users to live stream themselves out and about eating different kinds of food. This media platform also allows the users to interact with their cyber audience, which in return can earn them “tips” adding up to 9,000 dollars a month!

Self-Broadcasting is taking the world by storm, and I myself may just jump on the train! This change is so popular it is actually impacting tv ratings. Comcast, one of the largest cable providers, reported a loss of 2.5 million subscribers since 2008. Another popular cable provider, Time Warner, reported that they’ve had a .8 million subscriber loss since 2007. This goes without saying, but those who are watching cable are missing the real entertainment!

However, there are others who feel that self-broadcasting may actually impact people negatively. For example, as a self-broadcaster your job is to record yourself, your likes, your dislikes, and basically anything you want. Therefore, someone who live streams really puts themselves out there and are subject to severe cyber bullying. In fact, a lot of sites allow their users to be under the age of eighteen, which can subject young teens to this severe cyber bullying as well. Cyber bullying in social media has been linked to depression in teenagers during multiple studies according to the article in Scientific American, “Social Media's Cyber Bullying Linked to Teen Depression.” Stephanie Pappas states “Victimization of young people online has received an increasing level of scrutiny, particularly after a series of high-profile suicides of teenagers who were reportedly bullied on various social networks.”

So, in the end, self-broadcasting can be a fun, creative, and productive career move as long as you are aware of your audience and the material you are putting out there for the world to see.

Reference:


Shelby Moore is a published and self-publishing writer who is excelling further at Ashford University. She plans to pursue a career in Journalism or Publishing.
Question: Is it Oklahoma, OK or Okla.?

The Associated Press has issued several guidelines on how to incorporate state references into written articles in order to ensure consistency, accuracy and easy understanding. Numerous newspapers, magazines and other publications follow the AP style; however, even some editors have struggle with state abbreviations. Here are three steps to getting it right:

1. All states that are five letters or fewer alongside Alaska and Hawaii (non-contiguous states) are **ALWAYS** spelled out in the body of text.
   - Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah

2. **ALL** 50 U.S. states must be spelled out in the body of text whether they are used alone or alongside a city or town.
   - E.g. San Francisco, California

3. Use state abbreviations alongside the city or town in **datelines, lists, notes and other sections** outside the body of text. If the state is mentioned in the dateline, the state is not required in the body of text. Use city or town.
   - State abbreviation list


Answer: It must be written the **city** alongside the abbreviation **Okla.** in the dateline. If there is a dateline the state name can be omitted in the body of text. Otherwise, it must be written **Oklahoma** in the body of text.
Over the past several weeks, social media has been criticized, chastised and bashed.

What people have been using as personal records of their lives has been ruled as lies, which were hiding fruitless attempts for social superiority. Most recently, it made the spotlight that people seemed to be using it again for the wrong reasons, this time for useless social unity.

According to the Pew Research Center there are 65% of adult Americans actively using social media. However, it never gets a favourable reputation whether that is because it lacks transparency or because it is ineffectual.

Social media has been on fire as a result of the tragic incidents in Paris. People have used this medium to condemn the terrorist attacks and to adamantly show their love for the victims. Many people have changed their social media profile to feature a tri-coloured flag but the critiques have not ceased. Changing the profile picture is just pointless, they say. However, social media is where it all started.

The first recall of the attacks as reported by the BBC News comes from a user who posted a Tweet concerned about an explosion in the Stade de France. Moreover, it was another person who first posted about the shootings at the bar Le Carillon. It was thanks to the speed and communication power of social media that the word was spread and journalists took the lead.

Of course, social media has its flaws. It may hide selfish and greedy moves but it also encompasses attempts to support community, to help people learn and to allow for compassionate messages to reach many hearts. We have to be thankful that these people became amateur journalists that night and they believed in the good of social media.

References

The last 20 years have been the deadliest in the history of journalism, according to Newseum, a Washington museum of journalism history. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reports that 92 journalists were killed around the world last year – 61 of those died by confirmed motive. “Confirmed motive” is defined by the CPJ as one in which “it is reasonably certain that a journalist was murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work, in crossfire during combat situations, or while carrying out a dangerous assignment such as coverage of a street protest.” As of this date, 66 journalists have already paid the ultimate price for reporting the news in 2015 - 48 by confirmed motive. That’s roughly one journalist killed every four days while performing his or her job.

So why take the risk? Why do so many journalists put their lives in jeopardy to retrieve a story? For many, a strong sense of duty in reporting the news seems to drive them into areas where others dare to tread.

Freelance photographer Nicole Tung described an inexplicable draw to one of the most dangerous countries on earth while speaking at a September event at the Paley Center in New York. Tung told an audience of women at the International Women’s Media Foundation forum that she still harbors a continual desire to return to Syria. “I desperately want to go back,” she said.

As Tung sees it, there’s a massive need for unbiased reporters in areas experiencing great conflict. “We’re relying on Syrian journalists, and oftentimes it’s difficult for them to be objective,” said Tung.

Still, Syria remains a country where few freelance reporters travel to because of the danger represented by this country. According to Reporters Without Borders (RWB), 40 journalists have been killed in Syria since March 2011, while 178 were reported missing. Robert Mahoney, from the CPJ, believes that countries under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) may be to blame for this violence. “ISIS seems to have a policy of stopping independent news coverage in areas under its control,” he said.

The ease in which social media content can be uploaded to platforms such as Facebook and YouTube has also made reporters less important to insurgents for getting their message out. According to a 2012 study by the United States Institute of Peace, “almost all footage used on the air” during the 2011-12 Arab Spring conflict came from social media.

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Without a need for their services, freelance journalists are finding themselves less the purveyors of footage about kidnappings, attacks and murders as they are increasingly becoming victims of the same.

While this danger is becoming more prevalent, diminished budgets at major news organizations are pushing more and more agencies to rely on freelancers for the stories they’re not willing or able to send their own reporters to retrieve. According to senior security advisor Frank Smyth of the CPJ, “There are more journalists on front lines with less institutional support than ever before.”

Freelance photojournalist Gary Knight recalls the danger he faced while covering the 1993 Bosnian war. Barely surviving on the meager proceeds of his photo sales, Knight slept on the floor of friends’ hotel rooms, then drove the 3-mile stretch of Sarajevo known as Sniper Alley in order to use the satellite-phone at a local TV station to call clients. “I would put the driver’s seat on maximum recline and drive as fast as I could,” recounts Knight.

While Knight spent his days driving the bullet gauntlet, his ABC News producer wife, Fiona Turner, was traveling in style and safety. Replete with armored car, satellite telephone and $10,000 emergency cash, Turner traveled safely through the city streets with her crew and chief correspondent.

Without the protection of a major news network, some freelancers turn to the military for protection in obtaining and reporting the news. According to former U.S. Army public affairs officer Maj. Scott Keith, allowing freelancers to embed with the military has given “the public a first-hand look into how our service members conduct operations, provide humanitarian support, fight and live in a deployed environment.”

U.S. Army Sergeant John Bentley spent years working with freelancers who embedded with the Army throughout Afghanistan and Iraq. “In general,” Bentley said, “there aren’t a lot of people who will come and be able to do what soldiers can do.”

During his first tour of Iraq in 2007, Bentley met one particular journalist that stood out - freelance text reporter and video journalist James Foley.

“[Foley] was really trying to get better at what he was doing,” Bentley recounted.

While Bentley made a decision to serve as a military broadcast journalist, he found it hard to believe that a civilian would willingly do the same. “What was different about Jim was that he made a choice to do this type of thing. “[A freelancer’s] paycheck’s not solid. They have to take a lot of tougher assignments to get a story that is newsworthy. They have to prove themselves a little bit more so they can get that solid job where they are going to get paid on a regular basis,” Bentley explained.

“That’s one of the things I saw in Jim. He was willing to take what he could get and make something out of it...He was like, I’ll come. I’ll go. I’ll do it.”

“Coming” meant Foley had to find his way to a foreign country, at his expense. “Going” meant he had to supply his combat gear - since the military does not supply equipment to non-military personnel. “Doing it” meant hiking for miles in some of the toughest terrain on earth, all the while never knowing if he’d ever return. Bentley explained, “They don’t have to wear the same gear, but just walking around for hours at a time can be a little bit difficult.”

In spite of the lack of training and provided equipment, Foley did well whenever he joined troops for missions. “For Jim, it was almost like he fit right in. He didn’t wear a uniform, but he fit right in. Those types of journalists are only a small percentage. There are only a few who can come and do this overseas in a combat zone.”

In spite of how well Foley fit in with the military, it was while he was researching stories on his own that he was captured and held hostage, not once but twice in just over a year. In April 2011, Foley was captured and held hostage for 44 days in Libya by Muammar Gaddafi loyalists.

Upon his release, Foley’s editors at the GlobalPost (GP) tried in vain to settle him back in the U.S. GP President Philip Balboni explained that Jim was “chafing to return” to Libya.

Foley tried to explain the call to a group of students at Marquette University. “It was kind of a siren song that called me out to the front lines. It’s not enough to see it from the distance.”
Likewise, journalist Agnes Taile couldn’t leave the dangers of her job behind, either. While serving as a television reporter in Cameroon in 2006, Taile was dragged from her home, beaten, strangled, and left for dead.

Undeterred, it was just two years later, that Taile chose to walk towards a conflict in Chad that caused residents to flee for their lives. “It is your job to get the story. If you don’t do it, who’s going to do it? I’m just doing my job,” she said.

As determined as journalists are to work in dangerous situations, others are steadfast in their resolve to keep them safe. Since April 2015, 84 news organizations have agreed to support and abide by the Global Safety Principles and Practices created by the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma. The practices include guidelines for both journalists and news organizations, alike.

For journalists, the principles include such things as being trained in first aid, committing to wearing ballistic or gun-safety gear, and completing an “industry-recognized hostile environment course.”

For news organizations, leaders are asked to factor training costs, safety equipment, and insurance into the expense of hiring freelancers. Additionally, assigning work in conflict zones should not occur outside of first considering the safety of the reporters tasked with assignments.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) is notably absent in the field of journalism; all the while journalists are becoming more and more endangered in an increasingly hostile work environment. According to OSHA, 4,500 workers die in workplace related accidents each year. But what of journalists who perform field work?

“They’ve got no experience, no safety training, no health insurance, no armored car, no flak vest, no helmet, no good local fixer to keep them out of trouble, and no editor back home to encourage them to be safe,” said veteran New York Times reporter Michael Kamber. “What is comes down to is, they have no money in a situation where having money behind you keeps you safe.”

If advocates like the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation have anything to say about it, that can all change by the adoption of the Global Safety Principles and Practices.

“It’s your job to get the story. If you don’t do it, who’s going to do it? I’m just doing my job.”

“The Foundation is committed to defending the rights of every American citizen...by advancing safety measures for freelance journalists in conflict zones...”

As Bentley explained, “If it doesn’t look right – if it doesn’t feel right – you may want to remove yourself from a situation.” Simple words to live by - for journalists everywhere.

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GET TO KNOW YOUR JMC FACULTY

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Elsie Goycoolea is a Spanish student pursuing a career in journalism and psychology to help connect news and people together. She is the editor-in-chief of the JMC Student Review.

Gregory Keogh is a desert-dwelling father of one girl and sports enthusiast with a passion for writing.

Benjamin Williams is trying to start up a new career in the realm of Journalism. Ideally, a sports writing career would be his dream job, but anything that allows him to apply his writing ability is something that he enjoys doing.

Not a Member of SPJ@Ashford?

Check out the great work your student organization is doing and learn how to get involved at www.spjashford.org