

Social Justice Writing/Reporting

JOUR 4185/6185-001

Tuesday/Thursday 1-2:25 p.m., MJ 202

Spring 2023

Prof. Laura Faith Kebede

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Office Hours: By Appointment

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Writing and reporting news and news feature stories on issues concerning social justice.

Prerequisites

JOUR 3120 or 3629; JOUR 3526

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

“Remembering the Memphis Massacre” by Beverly Bond and Susan O’Donovan (available as an eBook through the University of Memphis Library)

“A Massacre in Memphis” by Stephen Ash

[“Memphis Riots and Massacres”](#) Congressional Report, 1866

Online Civil Wrongs Research Guide at University of Memphis Library

Classroom format

The Memphis Massacre where about 50 Black people were indiscriminately killed in 1866 contributed to the successful push for the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which is the basis for many rights we enjoy today. Yet, despite recent efforts to bring this tragic history to light, the massacre is still relatively unknown in the public consciousness. Using primary sources including survivor testimony, congressional reports, newspaper articles, interviews with descendants, and other archives, students in this interdisciplinary course will research and publish stories about the Memphis Massacre and, importantly, connect the tragedies to systemic racism still present today. The class will also culminate in a public informational commemoration event in collaboration with community organizations. We aim to uncover more of the truth of what happened so this history is told more fully for generations to come.

This course pushes students to apply their discipline – whether journalism or history – to historical research and compelling storytelling to publish written, audio, and/or video pieces accessible to the public through the Institute for Public Service Reporting website, the Daily Memphian, and WKNO-FM. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Analyze primary sources

Research genealogies

Conduct oral history and journalistic interviews

Improve narrative writing
Experiment with various forms of audio/visual storytelling
Fact-check stories for accuracy

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis online learning home page: <http://memphis.instructure.com>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JOUR 4185-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for all class meetings. This work is collaborative as well as individual, so your contribution and input during class is vital. More than two absences during the semester will adversely affect your grade. Because this work involves real-world stakeholders and we are working on a deadline to publish our work, you should prioritize this class.

Assignments

All written assignments will be in Associated Press (AP) style to align with guidelines from [Hearst Journalism Awards Program](#) guidelines, which we will enter near the end of the semester. You can access the AP Stylebook [online](#) or at our library.

The weekly discussion posts in weeks 3 through 12 are meant to help you reflect on your research and reporting process and be a forum for you to seek advice or feedback from me and your peers. We will also have an embedded librarian who can point you to research materials or resources that may help you. Don't be ashamed of seeking help and guidance. We learn by asking good questions and being humble enough to recognize when we need help. This is a group effort so we have to lean on each other to make this project the best it can be.

Issues

Outside of class, I prefer that you email me your questions or concerns so I can assess if we need to hop on a call, meet in person, or handle via email. Please use your university email address. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. If you're running into lots of obstacles in your research or reporting, you should bring it up in class for us to discuss. Your peers may be facing similar problems. When putting together your written story, audio, or video, I will be available for feedback before you turn in your draft. The sooner, the better. You should call or text me if a time-sensitive issue arises in your reporting such as a source raises serious concerns and you need help coming up with a response.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following:

Book chapter presentation (100 points)

Oral presentation and slides

Project reflections for IPSR website/social media (100 points)

500 to 600 words or approved alternate format, sign up for posting schedule

Weekly discussion posts (100 points)

Research/reporting updates with discussion prompts weeks 3-12. Respond to at least two classmate's posts

AP Style quiz (50 points)

No time limit, 25 questions

Midterm progress report or story outline (150 points)

750 to 1,000 words

Other milestone project tasks (125 points)

To be assigned as needed e.g. source list, interview transcripts, document collection, data research, story draft, social media engagement planning

Draft story (125 points)

Group project

Final story (250 points)

Group project

Total 1,000 points

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%

B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%

C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%

D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%

F 0-59.4%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Due to the nature of this project, this schedule will likely change. As in the real world, we must adapt to the evolving nature of the stories and research we are working on and be flexible. However, I will keep you informed of any changes so you can plan accordingly.

Week 1: Jan. 17 and 19 Intro to Memphis Massacre: What do we know and how do we know it?

Review of expectations, syllabus, and introductions

What we know: Presentation and Q&A from Dr. Beverly Bond and/or Dr. Tim Huebner on significance of Memphis Massacre and why it matters today

How we know it: Intro to massacre testimonies, written/visual local context, population shifts

What we don't know and what we aim to find out: Find three living descendants of survivors or victims, analyze newspaper rhetoric, estimate economic impact during and after the massacre

Week 2: Jan. 24 and 26 Mapping out our project: Genealogy, Economic impact, Media rhetoric

Assign groups for stories, delegate tasks, set benchmarks and milestones

Reporting ethics: How to present yourself and explain what we're doing

Due Tuesday, Jan. 24 at class: Read and present on one chapter of either “Remembering the Memphis Massacre” or “A Massacre in Memphis” (chapters to be assigned in week 1)

Week 3, Jan. 31 and Feb. 2 Library visit: How do historians uncover and analyze the past?

Meet at Hooks Central Library in the Memphis-Shelby County Room on 4th floor, 3030 Poplar Ave, Memphis, TN 38111. Guest presenter: Wayne Dowdy, library archivist

Project group check in, Q&A, troubleshoot any issues arising

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb. 3: Memphis Massacre site visit discussion post: What do you see? What are some ways we can visually represent then and now?

Week 4, Feb. 7 and 9 Guest lecture: How do journalists uncover and analyze the past?

Virtual guest presentation by [Rachel Swarnes](#) of New York University and the New York Times, and [Jerry Mitchell](#) of the Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting

Project group check in, Q&A, troubleshoot any issues arising

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10: Discussion post and responses

Week 5, Feb. 14 and 16 Research/storytelling workshop

Research: Analyzing a primary source with historical context

Interviewing: Prepare and secure the vital information you need while respecting your source

Audio storytelling: recording, script writing, audio editing

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17: Complete AP Style quiz; discussion post and responses

Week 6, Feb. 21 and 23 Group work with assistance from experts

For genealogy group: Daja Henry, secretary for the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society of Memphis, TN and the Mid-South and an inaugural Frances Ellen Watkins Harper news fellow with The 19th

For economic impact group: Laura-Thorne Kincaide, an author of [“After the Burning: The Economic Effects of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre”](#)

For media rhetoric group: Dr. Joe Hayden, University of Memphis

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24: Milestone tasks TBD; discussion post and responses

Week 7, Feb. 28 and March 2 Role of historians and journalists in crafting public memory

Guest presenters: Dr. Thomas Hrach of University of Memphis, and John Ashworth of Tennesseans for Historical Justice and the Lynching Sites Project

Project group check in, Q&A, troubleshoot any issues arising

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 3: Progress report and/or story outline; discussion post and responses

Week 8, March 6-12

No classes: SPRING BREAK

Week 9, March 14 and 16 Community engagement in journalism and museums

Panel discussion with Veda Ajamu of the National Civil Rights Museum, and Caroline Bauman of Chalkbeat

How do journalists seek audience information needs from the community before, during, and after reporting? How do museum staff make history relevant to their communities outside their

walls?

Now that we have a better idea of what our content will be, what commemoration/information event can we have in conjunction with the upcoming anniversary?

Due at Tuesday, March 14 at class: Milestone tasks TBD

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 17: Discussion post and responses

*Week 10, March 21 and 23 **Begin production***

Peer review, instructor feedback

Group work on event details

Due Tuesday, March 21 at class: Story/audio/video drafts

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 24: Discussion post and responses

*Week 11, March 28 and 30 **Final production***

Finish up addressing edits

Group work

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 31: Discussion post and responses

*Week 12, April 4 and 6 **Publish***

Publish stories/audio/video

Due Tuesday, April 4 at class: Final story/audio/video

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, April 7: Discussion post and responses

*Week 13, April 11 and 13 **Post-publishing reflection/engagement***

Final event planning

Submit project to Hearst Awards

Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, April 14: Discussion post and responses

*Week 14-15, April 17-26 **Post-publishing engagement***

Group reflections

Social media engagement

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in JOUR 4185

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications

professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Gain familiarity with ethical issues in reporter neutrality and objectivity in coverage of issues of social justice.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Relate stories to intended audience.
- Think critically regarding story sources and information gathering particularly as they related to marginalized and oppressed communities.
- Demonstrate an ability to prepare reports and write about issues such as race, class, sexuality, gender, gender identity and expression, ability and religion.
- Acquire ability to conduct interviews, gather information in person, by phone and digitally, as well as conceptualize a story.
- Demonstrate ability to use trauma informed reporting techniques.
- Demonstrate basic video shooting and editing skills.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Become aware of the professional protocol such as story meetings and reporter responsibilities.
- Learn about the importance of critical thinking in justice stories.

Understanding

- Understand the ethical and professional challenges facing a journalist today.
- Appreciate the role of social media and the internet in today's journalism industry.
- Study the principles of effective storytelling.

Application

- Develop story ideas, setting up interviews, selecting appropriate sources for stories, writing news stories in various formats, editing.
- Take weekly news quizzes.
- Give and receive criticism by peers when stories are reviewed collectively in class.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio

should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C- for undergraduate; B- for graduate) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website and the LiveSafe App regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.