Graduate Student Handbook
2018 Cohort

Master of Arts in
Media Innovation

Reynolds School of Journalism
University of Nevada, Reno
Welcome to a Reno Sunrise
Welcome to the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno!

In summer 2006 the Reynolds School launched a new master’s program in interactive environmental journalism, an intensive three-semester cohort program designed to spur innovation in environmental journalism. The program has since evolved to a Master of Arts in Media Innovation, in which students are free to choose their own areas of study from a menu of electives constituting four different tracks: Strategic Communications, Media Entrepreneurship, News Innovation, and Media Studies. More than 85 students have now graduated from the program (we have a 90% graduation rate) and are working in jobs at MSNBC, National Public Radio, Swift Communications, the Reno Gazette-Journal, Plum TV, the State Tourism office, the University of Nevada, PR agencies and many more. You are members of the eleventh cohort of students.

The tradition of journalism education at the University of Nevada has a long and distinguished career, beginning with the first journalism course taught in 1921. Eleven students graduated from journalism in 1924; by 1985 this number had grown to 150. Today nearly 500 undergraduate students are enrolled in journalism courses at the school. The first Master of Arts degree was awarded in 1966 and since then nearly 200 graduate degrees have been awarded by the school.

The graduate program

The graduate program in media innovation explores a simple, but profound set of questions: What role does, and can, journalism play in helping people generate, evaluate, share and act on civic knowledge? Can we use interactive and innovative forms of journalism to connect citizens in a discussion about public issues that enriches everyone’s understanding?

The program is designed for students with skills in writing and critical thinking. We start off with courses in written and visual storytelling, but we begin with the expectation that you have the skills and interest to rapidly acquire these tools and practices for creating innovative media. We engage graduate fellows in re-imagining media by applying theoretical groundings, intellectual rigor and practical insights to experiments in media innovation.

Center for Advanced Media Studies at the Reynolds School

CAMS (Center for Advanced Media Studies), directed by Professor Gi Woong Yun, presents frequent talks with innovators from the UNR faculty and from across the country. Previous speakers include Dean Baquet from The New York Times, Mónica Guzmán of The Seattle Times, and Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist Renée Byer. Our first speaker this year will be Les Zaitz, owner of The Malheur Enterprise, who took on an entire state buerocracy in a follow-up to a murder investigation. He will be at the school Sept 20, and you are encouraged to attend this and other talks sponsored by the Reynolds School.
To complete the master’s degree in interactive journalism, you will need to complete the following courses with a grade of C or better, and maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (a B average). A total of 33 graduate credits are required to graduate. Students who come to us with significant media experience may wish to test out of the first semester foundation courses (JOUR 707 and JOUR 756) and substitute additional electives.

**FALL 2017**
3 credits - JOUR 720: The Future of Media (Ben Birkinbine)
3 credits - JOUR 707: Storytelling I: Writing (Caesar Andrews)
3 credits - JOUR 756: Storytelling II: Multimedia (Ezequiel Korin)

**SPRING 2018**
3 credits - JOUR 755: Engagement (TBA)
3 credits - JOUR 703: Innovation (TBA)
Electives

**SUMMER 2017**
3 credits - JOUR 695: Practicum. (Internship)
Electives

**FALL 2018**
3 credits - JOUR 796: Professional Project, or a Completion Portfolio and two workshops (see pages 5 and 6).
Electives

Electives: you need to take four electives (12 credits) to complete the program. These can be taken in any semester, including the summer, and should deepen your knowledge in a specific area (Strategic Communications, Media Entrepreneurship, News Innovation, or Media Studies) and be approved by the graduate director and your committee chair.

33 credits TOTAL (21 MUST BE NUMBERED 700 OR ABOVE.)
In addition to completing at least 33 credits and maintaining a 3.0 GPA, you will need to produce a professional journalism project (or a thesis equivalent) under the supervision of three faculty members (your “graduate committee”). The deadlines listed below presume a three-semester program. You may, however, opt to take four semesters to complete the program, rather than three. All course work must be completed within six years preceding the awarding of the degree. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines and requirements of the Graduate School. These are detailed on the graduate school website and within this handbook. The deadlines below presume a December, 2018 graduation date.

Program of Study: a list of all the courses you have taken, and plan to take, to complete your degree, signed by all three of your committee members. April 20, 2018

Graduate Application: filed online (graduation fee ~ $75) Oct. 1, 2018

Notice of Completion: a form signed by all three of your committee members upon successful completion of your professional project or portfolio review. Dec. 9, 2018

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Professional Project Final Requirements

Students may elect to complete a professional project or a thesis research paper (3 credits - JOUR 796) to graduate with a master’s degree from the Reynolds School of Journalism. This work will be guided by a three-member graduate committee. A project must be accompanied by a reflective paper.

**Process:** The student will choose a member of the graduate faculty at the Reynolds School to chair the committee. Faculty members should be chosen for their expertise in the student’s area of interest. The student and committee chair together will select a second committee member from our graduate faculty and a third graduate faculty committee member from outside the RSJ. The chair is responsible for overseeing the student’s work and determining when the project is ready to be presented to the committee.

**Proposal:** Students choose a project topic in consultation with the committee chair. Once a topic is agreed upon, the student prepares a written proposal outlining the goals of the project, the work to be completed and a proposed timeline. Once the proposal is approved by the chair it will be circulated to the committee for comments. The student should not proceed further until the scope of work has been agreed to by the full committee.

**Requirements:** The project should meet the following criteria:
- Address a significant professional or scholarly research question
- Incorporate elements of innovation and/or interactivity
- Reflect professional standards in content and execution
- Be accompanied by a reflective paper that identifies the key lessons learned in the project and how it addressed these criteria

The student needs to stay in close contact with the chair of the committee to insure that the work is proceeding according to schedule and in line with the agreed upon proposal.

**Oral defense:** Once the project has been completed to the satisfaction of the committee chair, the student will organize a meeting of the full committee. The project and reflective paper will be circulated to the committee to allow for review prior to the defense meeting. The defense will include a 15 minute presentation by the student and a Q&A session with the full committee. Other students and faculty may be invited to the presentation.

At the end of the defense, the student will be informed of one of three outcomes: Pass, Not Pass, or Pass with Revisions. In the case of not passing, the student may work with the chair to revise the project in light of feedback and to schedule a second defense meeting. If revisions are recommended the student and committee chair can generally address those changes without additional committee involvement.
Alternate Final Requirements

Students who do not elect to complete a professional project may instead pursue the alternate final requirements to graduate with a master’s degree from the Reynolds School of Journalism.

- The Professional Portfolio
- Oral Defense
- Two Workshops

The Professional Portfolio:
The Professional Portfolio will be an opportunity for you to consider all that you have accomplished in your graduate work. In most cases it will be in the form of a web site where the pages focus on different aspects of your growth in the program and how this has culminated in your professional preparation for the evolving media landscape. You will determine the best ways to present your work, with help from your faculty advisor. You ought to be able to identify one critical component of your work that stands out and represents a potential bridge into your professional career.

The portfolio development will be guided by a three-member graduate committee. You will choose a member of the graduate faculty in journalism to chair the committee. You and the committee chair will select a second committee member from the journalism faculty and a third committee member from another unit at the university.

The Oral Defense:
During your final semester, while working on the Professional Portfolio, you will register for a 1-credit oral defence (JOUR 791 - “Special Seminar Topic”). When your Professional Portfolio is ready for presentation you will schedule an oral defence session to be attended by your graduate committee. During this session you will begin with an introductory presentation of your portfolio, followed by a Q&A session with the faculty.

Two Workshops:
Periodically during the year we will schedule special two-day workshops with visiting scholars, media professionals, or UNR faculty. Each of these will be available as a 1-credit elective (JOUR 791 - “Special Seminar Topic”) for which you may register. As a part of the “alternate final requirements” you must register for and participate in at least two of these workshops. You may, however, complete an additional 3-credit elective in lieu of the two workshops.
Assistantships: All graduate students holding an assistantship (teaching GTA or GRA) are considered Nevada residents for tuition purposes. Non-resident tuition is only waived for the duration of the assistantship. To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be admitted to a degree-granting program and be in good academic standing. The student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 and must be continuously enrolled in at least six graduate level credits (600-700) throughout the duration of the assistantship.

State-funded assistantships (GTA/GRA) may be held for a maximum of: three (3) years for master’s degree students and five (5) years for doctoral degree students.

General information on assistantships: [http://www.unr.edu/grad/funding/graduate-assistantships](http://www.unr.edu/grad/funding/graduate-assistantships)
Graduate Assistantship handbook: [http://www.unr.edu/Documents/administration-finance/hr/hr-graduate/GA_handbook.pdf](http://www.unr.edu/Documents/administration-finance/hr/hr-graduate/GA_handbook.pdf)

Health Insurance: All domestic degree seeking graduate students, who are enrolled in six or more credits (regardless of the course level) in a semester, will be automatically enrolled and billed for the University sponsored health insurance for each term they are eligible (fall & spring/summer). If a student has other comparable coverage and would like to waive out of the student health insurance, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the University online waiver form prior to the deadline. If approved, a health insurance waiver is good for the current academic year only. A new waiver must be submitted each academic year. All international graduate students are required to carry student health insurance, and the cost will be automatically added to your student account. Any international graduate students with insurance questions must contact the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) directly. [http://www.unr.edu/grad/health-insurance](http://www.unr.edu/grad/health-insurance)

Continuous Enrollment: To maintain “good standing” all graduate students are required to enroll in a minimum of three (3) graduate credits each fall and spring semester until they graduate. International students may be required to enroll in nine graduate credits each fall and spring semester depending on the requirements of their visa. All students holding assistantships (whether teaching or research assistantships) are required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) graduate credits each semester they hold the assistantship.

Leave of Absence: Students in good standing may request a leave of absence by completing a leave of absence form available on the Graduate School website ([http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/leaveofabsencer_9.23.pdf](http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/leaveofabsencer_9.23.pdf)) during which time they are not required to maintain continuous registration. Usually, a leave of absence is approved for one or two semesters. The leave of absence request may be extended by the student filing an additional leave of absence form. Students applying for a leave of absence should not have any “incomplete” grades which could be changed to “F” and have a detrimental impact on their cumulative GPA. Requests for leave of absences must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the leave is to begin.
Reinstatement: When a student has been absent for one semester or more without an approved leave of absence, they may request reinstatement via the Reinstatement form (available on the Graduate School website: http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/noticereinstatement-graduatestanding_9.23.pdf). This form allows the program the option to recommend the student be re-admitted to their graduate program based on their previous admission OR require the student to re-apply for admission which would require students to submit a new application for admission and pay the application fee. The Notice of Reinstatement to Graduate Standing must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the reinstatement is to begin.

Graduate School Forms

Declaration of Advisor/MajorAdvisor/Committee Chair: For master’s students, completed form must be submitted to the Graduate School by the end of the student’s second semester. http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/declaration-of-advisor

Program of Study: For our master’s program, completed form must be submitted to the Graduate School by the beginning of the student’s third semester. http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/program-of-study.pdf

Graduation Application: Must be submitted to the graduate school several weeks in advance. Check website for exact dates. http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/graduation-application

Notice of Completion: Completed form should be submitted after all requirements have been met. http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/notice-of-completion-master-degree.pdf

Exit Survey: http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/exit-survey

You can find an updated list of forms and requirements here: http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms
CAMS Graduate Student Research Grants are intended to support Reynolds School graduate student scholarship and promote the mission of the RSJ graduate program as a base for innovation and entrepreneurship. The definition of research, as used here, encompasses both scholarly publication and creative production.

Amounts
Individual grant applications may be submitted for up to $500. Collaborative applications involving multiple students may be submitted for up to $1,000. A total of $3,000 will be available during the 2016/2017 academic year.

Eligibility
All full-time Reynolds School graduate students are eligible to apply. Collaborative applications among graduate students are encouraged. Graduate students who receive a grant are not eligible to apply for one year following the completion of a previous funded project.

Use of funds
Grants may be used toward expenses related to the specific research project, such as: travel, training, books and materials, equipment and software, student workers. Funds may not be used to augment salary. Funds must be expended by December 31, 2017, unless otherwise authorized by the director of graduate studies.

How to apply
A two-page description of the project and a proposed budget must be submitted to the director of graduate studies. Applications will be reviewed and awarded by the director and a subcommittee of graduate faculty on a rolling basis.

Applications should address:
- The nature of the project and the specific use of the requested funds
- The contribution that a grant would make to the success of the project
- The potential for publication or presentation

Evaluation
A final report summarizing the outcome of the project is due to the director of graduate studies within one month of the completion of the project.
The Graduate Studies Lab, in room 104, will be your work and office space, lab space, and communal space for the time you are in the program.

**Computers**: During the time classes are in session you are free to use the computers along the wall as you walk into the graduate space. Outside of class time, students are encouraged to work in the classroom. There are enough computers for everyone to claim one for their own during their time in the program. Unlike the computers in our undergraduate labs, files are retained on the Graduate Studies Lab computers after a user logs out. You should, however, initiate and maintain a regular file backup regimen, using an external drive and/or a cloud repository (e.g. Dropbox). You are free to decorate your space and stake a claim over a particular desk and computer.

Lockers are also available in the graduate studies area for keeping your things secure during the day.

The small room at the end of the 104 hall is available for group meetings team workspaces. We’ll use it informally unless it becomes in such demand that we need a sign-up sheet.

You will be able to use your Student ID card to get in the front door of the building and in the graduate studies lab after regular building hours. Access can be arranged at the beginning of the fall semester after you fill out the appropriate forms. Barbara Trainor and Raeven Blackman-Shipp are the go-to staff in the dean’s office for issues related to keys, room security, paper supplies and related questions.

You are free to use the kitchen area accessed from the Linn Reading Room as long as you clean up faithfully and remove food from the refrigerator before it becomes a problem.

Cameras and audio recorders are available for checkout in room 214 of the journalism school.

Additional computer labs are available in the journalism school in rooms 214 (the “open lab”), 201 and 202. The Knowledge Center library has a fully equipped multimedia center on the first floor (the @One Lab) with video and audio equipment available for check out.

**Notes about use**
Please use the department equipment wisely and ethically. No copying of university software or use of pirated software is tolerated. Do not run multiple copies on the laser printers; do not use printers as photocopying machines. Copies related directly to your work in the graduate program may be made on the copy machine in the break room on the third floor or in the alcove on the second floor.

You may receive and send faxes related to graduate work on the machine in the break room on the third floor. The number is 775-784-6656. You may also use the refrigerator, microwave and sink in this room. Please respect all those who use this space by keeping it clean, never leaving any dirty dishes in the sink, marking your own items clearly and not using or taking the property of others.
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Other Campus Contacts:

Financial Aid; 784-4666; http://www.finaid.unr.edu  
Graduate School; 784-6869; http://www.unr.edu/grad  
Graduate Student Association; 784-4629; http://www.unr.edu/gsa

The Knowledge Center

Our library is the largest in the state with thousands of books and electronic resources. A number of valuable research databases are available, including Lexis Nexis and the Sage collection. The @One Center in the basement has Macintosh and Windows computers with a wide array of software. Also located there is the Digital Media Lab, an equipment checkout area, a multimedia library, a printing center, and the DataWorks lab. The library’s website is: http://knowledgecenter.unr.edu

One of the most valuable library resources for our students is the tutorial site lynda.com. As a registered student you have full and free access to all Lynda.com tutorials, which cover media software and much more. They can be accessed here: http://lynda.unr.edu. You’ll need a NetID to log in.

The librarian assigned to journalism is:  
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(775) 682-5638  
214-H, Knowledge Center

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RSJ Graduate Program Facebook group page: 
https://www.facebook.com/groups/108354569313646

2018 Cohort Facebook group page: 
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1386125038175270/