JOUR 482: International and Cross-Cultural Reporting

Instructor Name: Kari Barber
Office Location: RSJ 103D
Phone Number: 202-487-4239
Email Address: karibarber@unr.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description: Best practices in both foreign reporting and reporting in culturally diverse communities within the United States. Analysis of global and historical contexts for cross-cultural news content.

This course satisfies Core Objective 11: Global Contexts
Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

The course will challenge students to consider their own perspectives, the role of the ‘other’ in shaping narratives, and the viewpoints of various cultures and strategies for cross-cultural mass media communications.

Course Pre/Co-requisites, Recommended Preparation: Journalism major, minor or department consent.

Required texts, course materials: There will be no set required textbook, but each student will complete a survey of media related to foreign reporting based on an exhaustive list of books, articles and documentary films.

Students will have free online passes to the New York Times, and international articles of interest will be posted on class forums and discussed in class.

Each student will also be given access to excerpts from books, relevant newspaper and magazine articles, news videos and documentaries. There will also be a series of guest speakers (in-person and via Skype), from the United States and abroad.

Course Objectives: The goal of the class is to prepare students to report effectively in the international arena as well as on diaspora communities, and to understand complexities, challenges and opportunities in the global media landscape. A foreign
correspondent is a journalist working on stories in a country not his/her own, while diaspora communities are groups of people living outside their shared country of origin.

- Students will plan for international reporting trips, identifying issues of interest in the global community.
- Students will learn the processes of sourcing and developing quality cross-cultural story ideas from around the world.
- Students will identify diaspora personalities and topics from the Reno/Tahoe area.
- Students will learn to execute story ideas to create professional cross-cultural media content.
- Students will learn about pitching and selling stories for today and tomorrow’s media marketplace.
- Students will gain a deep understanding of the history and permutations of foreign correspondence.
- Students will learn about the use and effect of propaganda, spin and media in world geopolitics.
- Students will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of citizen and social media in a global context and how it relates to overall media.
- Students will learn how population patterns and movements shape media narratives.
- And students will practice communicating accurately and effectively for diverse international media audiences.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students will be able to:

- analyze their own cultural biases and that of international journalists within a geographical and historical framework
- use media to contextualize current events and experiences in relation to historical events and global contexts
• critically examine and assess complex issues and problems of a global nature in international journalism and foreign reporting
• identify and apply multiple perspectives pertaining to global issues through a comparative study of media coverage
• identify, analyze, and interpret connections between localized events and members of a diaspora and their global contexts
• evaluate and articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts for the purposes of journalistic reporting
• demonstrate how local and global contexts of ideas or events affect understandings of contemporary and important historical ideas, events, or issues in regards to media

Unique class procedures /structures: Since foreign correspondence requires a high level of curiosity, courage, stamina, creativity, collegiality and dynamism, active participation and frequent teamwork will be expected from students.

There will be team, web-based practice assignments during class time, as well as group work for some graded assignments. There will also be workshops where students cross-edit each other’s rough drafts and pitches.

Any change or addition to the syllabus will be communicated to students.

Finally, students will be encouraged to communicate with their professor and have a midterm one-on-one assessment.

Description of Course Requirements:

About Me Assignment -- 5 %

Students will write a 2-3 page essay about their own personal bias vis a vis stories in the media. They will present their personal cultural background and indicate what type of international or diaspora exposure, if any, they’ve previously had. They will also write about which countries they would be interested in reporting about in their future career. In this assignment, students will be assessed based on their written analysis of their own biases and standing compared with geographically distant places and other cultures. The purpose of this assignment is to help students situate themselves and their reporting work in respect to the greater world.

In-Class International News Writing -- 5 %
After practicing this in class, students will have an in-class, on deadline, assignment, where they will choose ten top international stories of the day, and write concise, two to three short sentences on each, presenting them in order of importance. They will then be asked to develop two or three stories in longer form adding the proper historical and geographical context. Students will be assessed on their ability to integrate historical and global contexts into their understanding and written presentation of a given news story.

**Oral Presentation on an International Journalist -- 5%**

Students will each choose a separate journalist from the past or present who has excelled in international reporting. They will each make a 5-8 minute oral presentation in class on this journalist, explaining his/her contributions to international media and/or society. They will be encouraged to select journalists from around the world and throughout history. Students will be asked to place the journalist of their choosing within his/her time frame, and his/her biases to better understand evolving historical and geographical contexts.

**Survey of Media on International Foreign Reporting -- 5%**

Students will choose from a list of books, documentaries and articles to write a 3-4 page comparative paper on a topic facing international journalism. In this assignment, students will be evaluated on their ability to critically examine and assess complex issues and problems of a global nature in international journalism and foreign reporting.

**Group Presentation on a World Theme in the Media -- 10%**

In groups, students will choose a major world theme (ex: gender equality, human rights, access to water ....) and discuss how it is being covered by various international media. Each team will research and find who some of the major players are on this theme and present some of the key issues being discussed focussing on how different media choose to cover the story. They will also present how they would pursue this theme as reporters. In this assignment, students will be assessed on their ability to identify and apply multiple perspectives pertaining to global issues through a comparative study of media coverage.

**Trip File -- 20%**

Students will write a detailed plan on preparing for a foreign reporting trip. They will pick a place, and briefly present its current social, military, cultural and economic challenges. They will also research and present what kind of coverage is currently being produced
from their chosen place and by whom. Finally, they will draw up a plan of relevant story
ideas they would want to pursue, a list of contacts to interview, what type of logistics
they would face, as well as a detailed budget and clients who could pay them for their
output. Students will be graded on the thoroughness of their research and feasibility of
their plan.

**Diaspora Assignment 1 -- 10 %**

Students will profile a foreign student at UNR, preferably from the place they picked for
their trip file assignment. The story could be print, audio or video. There will also need to
be a profile picture. The student’s profile story will be assessed based on their capacity
to identify, analyze, and interpret connections between localized events, a member of a
local diaspora and the global context.

**Group Diaspora Assignment 2 -- 15%**

Groups of students will pick different diaspora themes or communities in the
Reno/Tahoe region and prepare a multimedia web page with reporting, data
visualization, photography, audio and video. Their work will be assessed based on their
ability to integrate the diaspora theme and community they’ve chosen to focus on within
local, national and international contexts.

**Additional Impromptu Assignment on Foreign Stories Being Covered in Media --
5%**

Students will be asked to write an essay reflecting on important stories being covered in
the media in an unannounced essay quiz. They will be asked to evaluate how
information from contemporary articles shape their own worldview and how others might
interpret the same information. In this assignment, students will be assessed in their
knowledge of international current affairs and their ability to demonstrate how local and
global contexts of ideas or events in the media result in nuanced or conflicting
understandings of contemporary and/or historical ideas, events, or experiences.

**Class presence, professionalism and participation … 20%**

Students will be asked to express their opinions, question ideas, restate important
lecture points, and frequently debate issues. They will need to show respect to their
colleagues and professor. Punctuality will also be very important.

**Grading Criteria, Scale, and Standards:**
93 - 100% = A  
90 - 92.9% = A-  
87 - 89.9% = B+  
83 - 86.9% = B  
80 - 82.9% = B-  
77 - 79.9% = C+  
73 - 76.9% = C  
70 - 72.9% = C-  
67 - 69.9% = D+  
63 - 66.9% = D  
60 - 62.9% = D-  
Below 60% = F

Examples: Suppose out of 1000 total points you earn:
950 points = 95% = A  
850 points = 85% = B  
750 points = 75% = C  
650 points = 65% = D

Plus and minus grades will be used. For content work, generally an A (90-100%) is work which could be publishable with minor changes, a B (80-89%) is publishable with light editing, a C (70-79%) is publishable after substantial changes, a D (60-69%) has major problems with conception, construction, reporting, writing, facts, an F (below 60%) misses the point of the assignment and/or contains serious errors.

Policies regarding late work and make-up exams:
As foreign correspondence is extremely deadline-driven and without excuses, late assignments or missed in-class exams will not be accepted without valid excuses.

Course Calendar/Topics Outline:

**WEEK 1** Class Logistics and Geography of International Journalism, Risks and Rewards: Where to go and when to go -- About Me Assignment

**WEEK 2** Before You Go: A Practical Guide to Foreign Correspondence - Logistics on how to hit the ground running, getting sources and ideas before you go, finding fixers, identifying competition, frenemies, helpful organizations… Also practice selecting and writing international headline news. -- International News Writing Assignment

**WEEK 3** Safety First in a Dangerous World: Training, Conflict reporting, Minimizing Risks, Embedding, Avoiding Disease
WEEK 4 History and Trends in Foreign Correspondence - From the past to the present and future, legacy and innovative media, dealing with social media, following or breaking the mold

WEEK 5 Books, Films and Articles on Foreign Correspondence -- Survey of Media on International Foreign Reporting

WEEK 6 Journeys in International Reporting: from Fallen Heroes to Anonymous Truth Tellers -- Oral Presentations on an International Journalist

WEEK 7 Ethics in International Reporting, Propaganda, Spin and Media Effects on Geopolitics -- Group Presentation on a World Theme in the Media

WEEK 8 How to guide on selecting and reporting stories, finding community leaders, effective interview techniques, gathering reporting material, conception, construction, correction and delivery strategies

WEEK 9 Dollars and Sense … How to Pitch and Sell Stories and Budget Reporting Trips -- Trip File assignment

WEEK 10 An evolving audience and the relationship between media and social media

WEEK 11 Guest Speakers/Interaction with foreign journalism students

WEEK 12 A smaller and smaller world with fewer and fewer barriers: Links between immigration, media and how we understand the world

WEEK 13 Identifying Diaspora Communities and Issues -- Profile of a Foreign Student at UNR assignment

WEEK 14 Reporting and Pitching Diaspora Stories

WEEK 15 In-Class Work on Diaspora Stories
Diaspora Group Reporting assignment

WEEK 16 Final Thoughts and Going Professional

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: "Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog."
**Statement of Disability Services:** "Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations."

**Statement for Academic Success Services:** For example, "Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring-center](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring-center)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [http://www.unr.edu/writing-center](http://www.unr.edu/writing-center)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student."

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording:** "Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded."