

JO513 ADVANCED PHOTOJOURNALISM

Spring 2018

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Class: Wednesday 8-10:45am, rm: B25

Office Hours: COM B-33. Hours: Monday 5:15-7:15 pm,
Wednesday 3-5 pm

EQUIPMENT RESERVATION LINK: wco.bu.edu

“Each day as the earth revolves towards sunrise, members of a select human species awaken to observe the world with three eyes instead of two. They are the photojournalists of the world, men and women who write the visual biography of humankind on earth.” — John Morris

Photojournalism is a demanding, competitive profession.

Advances in photo technology have leveled the playing field to the extent that almost anyone with top quality equipment can enter the arena and compete with the best. But the best seem always to succeed, to capture the images that have both immediate and lasting value, connecting readers and viewers to their local communities and to the world at large. Although modern cameras enable everyone to take pictures, the best photojournalists stay ahead of the pack.

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the necessary tools to enter the profession of visual journalism, and to succeed. It will be hard work, but no more demanding than the field itself. It should also be fun. I have never known a photographer who decided on this career for a reason other than the pursuit of interesting experiences. At this point it is expected students will have mastered the basics of photography, and are familiar with the requirements of photojournalism. This course offers the opportunity to move ahead into doing photojournalism on a professional level.

Your photos should be clean, graphic and easy to read. Dodging and burning is okay, but stay within the rules. Blacks can be snappy but maintain detail. Crop wisely and use the original aspect ratio.

Day-To-Day

Week One, January 24

Class Intro – review syllabus, class structure, software, hardware. You'll need a hard drive.

Week Two, January 31

workflow, asset management – bring best photos to class

Week Three, February 7

Due: Features – No pigeons, squirrels or ducks, and no photos of friends, roommates or relatives. Photograph interesting moments of life all around you. Get ids. Write good captions.

10 points

Week Four, February 14

Due: Portrait, editorial style – Shoot a variety of angles, distances and focal lengths! Shoot a variety of situations

and find a variety of backgrounds.

10 points

Week Five, February 21

Due: Photo package of Neighborhood – Cover it! Shoot portraits of shop owners and residents. Talk to people. Photograph artists and bakers and barbers. Photograph features of life on the street. Photograph people working. Shoot scene setters, use backgrounds well, tell a story with your pictures. Look for overviews – shoot from up high and down low. Talk to people. Engage people. Tell them what you are looking for – a picture story of their neighborhood!

10 points

homework: prepare pitch

Week Six, February 28

Due: Photo Package 1

10 points

homework: prepare elevator pitch to class. What is the visual element of your subject? Who is the main character? What are the issues? Do you have access? Who cares about it? – who is your audience and what's new about your story? What's your interest?

Week Seven, March 7 Spring Break

Week Eight, March 14

Due: Photo Package 2

10 points

homework: prepare pitch

Week Nine, March 21

Due: Photo Package 3

10 points

homework: prepare elevator pitch to class. What is the

visual element of your story? Who is the main character? What are the issues? Do you have access? Who cares? – who is your audience and what’s new about your story? What’s your interest? Can you return at least three times to go deeper with your story?

Week Ten, March 28

Due: Pitch Photo Essay in class.

Week Eleven, April 4

Due: Photo Essay

shoot 1

review

Week Twelve, April 11

shoot 2

Due: review

Week Thirteen, April 18

shoot 3

Due: review photo edit complete and publish

30 points

Week fourteen, April 25

fieldtrip

Week fifteen, May 2

Due: Published photo essay

participation + blog 10 points

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be expected to have achieved specific goals and acquired defined skill sets, including:

- The ability to take a set of photographs of a subject or event that will communicate the essence of that subject matter to the viewer of the photographs.
- The ability to edit a collection of photos into a package with an effective and coherent storyline.
- The ability to write publication quality captions and provide written reporting to complement photo stories in order to deliver a complete editorial product to viewers.
- The ability to generate a variety of ideas for publication quality photo stories, reflecting diversity of subject matter.
- Knowledge of professional practices and ethics in photojournalism.
- The ability to articulate criticism of photographs and photo stories in order to contribute to their improvement.
- The ability to manage workflow in order to adhere to strict weekly deadlines.
- Mastery of photographic skills utilizing digital photo equipment including the full range of lenses and lighting options.
- Consistent use of advanced photographic techniques

including lighting, motion, depth of field, and effective composition to achieve the maximum quality of images.

- Competence in digital processing of images in order to provide photographs that achieve publication quality in color balance, exposure, sharpness, and resolution.
- Basic knowledge of business practices and opportunities in the professional field of photojournalism.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS: Throughout the term, you will be working on picture stories: not just pictures, but stories. Each week, you must turn in at least two written story ideas that are well thought out and fully developed, with information about how you would approach producing that story. I will serve as your “editor” and will require you to sell me on your ideas in the same way you would need to convince a website or publication editor to give you space for your story. Each week you will produce one finished story that must include 5 selected images, with well-written captions and/or a story block. **Complete, informative, well-written captions are an absolute requirement;** photos without written information are of no use in the wider world. The photos and words must work together as if you are producing a photo package for the internet or a full-page photo essay in a newspaper or magazine. You will submit stories to a blog, with both the images and

written component meeting the standards required for publication. These include proper color balance, exposure, and sharpness in the images; and accurate, comprehensive information in the written component.

You are also encouraged to explore multi-media presentations for weekly assignments and final projects, although this is not a course requirement.

The primary goal of this course is to learn how to inform people through your photography. The partnership of photographs and other media is explored extensively in other classes.

To get you started, I will give you several story ideas. If you wish, you can choose from among these until you have generated ideas of your own. I can assist with story ideas should you need help. These are standard assignments of the kind you would expect during the course of work at a publication or online news outlet.

1. **WORK.** Find a subject who is engaged in an interesting, unusual profession. Follow that person as long as it takes to tell the story of who they are and what they do, and convey it in your photos.
2. **NEWS EVENT.** Find an event that can yield a picture story. Remember that your job is to connect your readers/viewers to that event. Stay away from routine

events unless they can be made interesting.

3. **SPORTS EVENT.** Cover a sports event, but don't just shoot action. Look for storytelling moments. Quite often the best photos are reaction shots from players, coaches, and fans.
4. **GROUP ACTIVITY.** Examples include the production of a play, a dance troupe in rehearsal and performance, students making a film.
5. **PERSONAL PROFILE.** Spend time with a person you do not know well, telling the story of his or her life. Subjects could include a person with an unusual lifestyle or set of relationships, or someone facing special challenges.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS: Occasionally the entire class will be assigned to cover one topic or event, in much the same way the staff of a publication works. The goal will be to provide comprehensive coverage and to experience working as a team. In the past these projects have included the Boston Marathon, the New Hampshire presidential primary, election night, and the Head of the Charles rowing regatta.

FINAL PROJECT: From your picture story ideas, you must generate one for an ongoing project that will yield either a 10-photo story or a multimedia package due at the end of the term. You will need to get going on this early.

You can't put it off until the last week of the term and expect any degree of success. You should take the opportunity to produce a piece of work you would be proud to have in your portfolio.

GRADING: Grades will be based on quality of work and ideas, and on effort shown. It is not expected that everyone's talent level will be equal, but full effort and commitment are required at all times. We will critique student work as a group in class, and student participation is mandatory. You must treat the due dates of your photo stories as you would an assignment deadline. Photo stories are due at the beginning of class each week, and late work will not be accepted without a very compelling reason. Each weekly photo story submitted will have equal weight, but the final project will be the equivalent of two weekly stories.

CLASS SESSIONS: Class structure and subject matter will vary in response to student interests. Therefore, I will not give you a rigid schedule of classes for the term. However, the "standard" class will start with a presentation and discussion on a defined topic, followed by a critique session of your weekly picture stories. These critiques are among the most important opportunities in the course. Therefore, it is imperative that photo stories are ready for presentation at the start of every class. The learning experience in this course is a collaborative effort. You will learn not only from your own successes and mistakes but

also from the experiences of others in the class. I require students to offer opinions and to share ideas. Please engage. The sooner you learn to articulate your ideas and opinions, the more you will grow as a photographer.

The use of any personal electronic devices during class sessions is not allowed: no tweeting, texting, internet surfing, or Facebook time is permitted. There will be at least one break in every class session if you need to catch up with the rest of the world.

Classes may include guest lectures by working photographers in different arenas of photojournalism. These presentations will be tailored to the needs and interests of the class. We will also study and discuss the work of successful photographers, learning from their experiences and techniques. In the past, visiting speakers have come from the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, the Associated Press, and independent photographers who work for a variety of news organizations, publications, and clients. Examples of topics covered in class have included:

- • James Nachtwey, “War Photographer”
- • “Deadline Every Second: On Assignment with Twelve Associated Press Photojournalists”
- • Multimedia story-telling, including Mediastorm and

the New York Times “One in Eight Million”

- • Eddie Adams, “An Unlikely Weapon”
- • Dave LaBelle, “The Lesson”
- • Bill Frakes, Straw Hat Visuals
- • National and regional award-winning photographs
- • Sports photography
- • Ethics and the law in photojournalism
- • The business of the profession: making a living doing photography
- • Current controversies, such as digital manipulation and photo illustration

REQUIRED READING – nyt.com, 30-60 minutes a day. Also follow a number of other divergent news sources like PBS, NPR, as well as other online news sites. Be informed.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS: These books are not required course reading, but I urge you to read them if you are serious about your work in photography.

Photojournalism – The Professionals’ Approach: Seventh Edition, Kenneth Kobre

ISBN 978-0-7506-8593-1

Truth Needs No Ally, Howard Chapnick ISBN
0-8262-0955-6

Get The Picture, John Morris ISBN 0-679-45258-3

BE SURE TO READ AND COMPLY WITH BOSTON
UNIVERSITY'S UNIVERSAL **ACADEMIC CONDUCT
CODE**.

Please note that classroom proceedings for this course might be recorded for purposes including, but not limited to, student illness, religious holidays, disability accommodations, or student course review. Note also that recording devices are prohibited in the classroom except with the instructor's permission.