

Global Journalism: Searching for Truth in the Age of Fake News

Center for European Studies

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Full course description

Most of what we learn about global news events comes to us from the mass media, an industry often described as being grounded in objectivity. But in this era of “alternative facts” even the concept of objectivity is highly subjective. Differences based on culture, language, politics, economics, power structures and a variety of other factors abound. Just what is fake news when one country’s “terrorist” bent on senseless destruction is another’s “martyr” sacrificing lives for a just cause?

These variations become all the more complicated in an industry facing a continuous state of flux, with governments, satellite transmissions, the Internet, mobile devices, social networks and citizen journalists all playing key roles. This course will examine current events and the way they are covered in a variety of media outlets around the world, looking at framing, bias, stereotypes, context, story structure and placement. Through lectures, discussions, a field trip and class presentations, students will study why news is reported as it is around the world and in the process become discerning media consumers better able to filter the noise and make decisions for themselves.

Course Format: Roughly the first half of the course will be spent with lectures and discussions that examine the way news is covered around the world and why variations exist. The final half will be devoted to student presentations on current event coverage. The presentations will employ a “town hall” approach in which groups of students lead discussions on the issues and their coverage to classroom peers, being graded not just on content but audience engagement and participation.

Topics of Discussion: Fake News, The Four Theories of the Press; News Values; News and Feature Story Structure; Media Effects and Communication Theory; Journalists and Media Organizations; Media Gatekeepers; Sources; Culture, Bias and Stereotypes; Language, Framing and Context; Legal Issues; Power and Economic Issues.

Presentation Topics: Ongoing and breaking stories in the news.

Course Instructor: Professor Maxey Parrish of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, has a background in media relations and journalism education. He graduated from Baylor with a Bachelor of Arts in

journalism and spent almost 25 years handling media relations for U.S. college sports competitions as well as international teams for the U.S. Olympic Committee. At the Barcelona Olympics, he directed publicity for the U.S. athletics team, where his coverage won a Best in the Nation Writing Award and served as the basis for his Master of Science degree thesis. At the Atlanta Games he coordinated media interviews at the Olympic Stadium. He has also worked international sports events throughout Europe and South Korea. For the past 21 years he has been on the faculty of the Department of Journalism, Public Relations & New Media at Baylor where he has won numerous teaching awards, including being named the university's Carr P. Collins Outstanding Professor. He has led 22 student groups on international trips and visited some 40 countries, altogether living in Europe more than two years. Last spring he served as a Visiting Scholar at St Andrews University in Scotland.

General disclaimer: on-campus education and activities, as well as trips and visits related to the course are conditional. E.g. (Dutch) travel advice should be positive regarding the region that will be visited and institutions should be able to accept visitors. In case a proposed activity, trip or visit cannot continue due to circumstances, (online) alternatives may be organized.

Course objectives

Students will have a better understanding of international journalism systems and how they present stories, making them better able to seek the truth in media they consume.

Prerequisites

None. A minimum number of 8 students is required for the course to take place.

Recommended reading

Global Journalism: An Introduction, by Michael Bromley and Vera Slavtcheva-Petkova. Bromley and Slavtcheva-Petkova look at international journalism in the digital age.

Understanding Global News: A Critical Introduction, by Jaap van Ginneken, a widely recognized Dutch scholar. Van Ginneken brings a variety of disciplines to his study of worldwide news coverage.

MST2001

Period 6

15 Jul 2024 - 1 Aug 2024

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

M.P. Parrish

[S. van der Laan](#)

Teaching methods:

Lecture(s), Presentation(s), Research, Work in subgroups

Assessment methods:

Attendance, Observation, Participation, Presentation

Keywords:

Fake News, Comparative analysis, Global news coverage, Media systems, Media outlets, Media outputs, Media across cultures, Consumer control, Traditional news, Fake, Infotainment, News distribution evolution, Social media, Media transitions, Media evolution, Cultural differences.