

## J361: REPORTING 1

CRN: 14230

Fall 2022

Allen 314

2 to 3:50 p. m. Tuesdays, Thursdays

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### Student drop-in and appointment hours, virtual and in-person:

- **In-person drop-in hours, no appointment necessary, Allen 328:**
  - Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **In-person, phone or Zoom appointments:**
  - Schedule at this link: <https://calendly.com/lorimshontz>.
- **What are these for?** They're for you. Getting to know your instructors matters—research shows that students who connect with faculty have more success in college. It matters to me, too: I'm better able to make recommendations for internships and jobs, and I'm able give better advice for scheduling, etc. Plus, it's fun to get to know everyone.
  - You don't need a specific question or problem to come to drop-in hours or make an appointment. We can just chat.

### A NOTE ABOUT THIS TERM

Yes, we're meeting in person. And that's a good thing.

But yes, we are still in a pandemic, and I've built our class with that in mind.

Even if we weren't, the past two and a half years have been disruptive for so many reasons, in higher education and out. This syllabus – especially the attendance, late assignment and grading policies -- reflects what I've learned during the pandemic:

- Flexibility can be a virtue, but it must be balanced with structure and standards.
- Coming to class when you're ill – COVID-19, the flu, anything else – hurts everyone.
- The social part of education is vital. Learning isn't just about ideas and tasks.
- Taking time to build community matters.

I want to promise, right here at the top of the syllabus, that **I will take into account your struggles this term**. You won't be penalized for getting sick, for needing to take care of family members who are sick, for being anxious or depressed.

We will work together to make this the best experience we can. I'm looking forward to it.

## WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Journalism is a public service. That's why our industry is in the Constitution ... well, the Bill of Rights, as part of the First Amendment. Everything we do this term will keep that concept—the public—front and center.

Sometimes performing a public service means holding public officials to account. Sometimes it means in-depth, investigative journalism. Sometimes it means showing up—in person or over Zoom—to cover city council meetings or school board meetings.

But often, day to day journalism is more about reflecting a community back to itself. It's about showing up to events and documenting what happens. It's about telling stories about people who live interesting lives. It's about answering questions from the public. It's about explaining what's happening—and why it's happening—to people who need to know, and it's about providing information that people need to live their lives.

You can see all of this happening now, as we grapple with the pandemic, climate change, racism, threats to democracy. Learning the basics of how to do this—and to do these things in a way that fosters trust in a public that has lost trust in our industry *or* never had it in the first place—is what Reporting 1 is all about.

This term, we're going to focus on four main principles:

1. **Building community.** When you're performing a public service, which journalism is, you need to know how to work with the public. It also means you need to notice which parts of the public have not always been included. And it means that you, too, need to be a citizen of the communities you belong to. We'll talk about what that means.

We're going to start by building community among ourselves, using techniques that will help you when you've got your Journalist Hat on.

2. **What is journalism? Why does it matter?** There's a famous truism about journalists—that we cover the news to “give people a voice.” Frankly, that's wrong. People have voices. We don't give them voices.

What we do, using our skills and values and talents and knowledge, is *elevate and amplify those voices*. We will talk about which ones the industry has chosen to elevate—and why. We'll also discuss who the industry has not amplified—and why.

We're going to read some of the leading thinkers who are working to help journalists do a better job working with the communities they cover for the public good. I call this kind of writing and thinking Capital J Journalism. It's the foundation of what we do—and why we do it.

3. **Thinking like a reporter.** What is news? What are the values we use—and the assumptions we make—as we decide what is worthy of being covered? How do we

identify sources? How do we come up with story ideas? Do we want to push this story out with a news alert, and if so, what do we want to emphasize?

We're going to observe how the news is being covered, ask questions and come up with plans and ideas to do it ourselves—ethically and transparently.

4. **Writing like a journalist.** Not every journalist, I know, is a Writer. But every journalist **MUST** write. And not just news stories. You'll write emails, photo captions, scripts, tweets, Instagram and TikTok captions, grant proposals, etc.

Even if you aren't filing daily news stories, you need to know the form and how to use it. We are going to focus on words, sentences and paragraphs—and especially important, how they fit together. The craft matters.

As you can see, there's a lot going on, both in terms of sharpening your skills as a journalist and in deepening how you think about the principles that define our industry. I've built a consistent weekly schedule to help you keep track, and by the end of this class, you'll be able to do the following:

- **Identify and apply news values.** Specifically, you'll be able to pinpoint the most newsworthy information in an interview, speech and event—and in news coverage you consume.
- **Identify and evaluate sources.** This means both human sources and background research—non-human sources, if you will. Specifically, you'll be able to determine key sources to interview—if not by name, at least by describing the kind of people you're looking for. You'll also be able to determine who isn't worth an interview—and explain why. You'll also learn the best ways to prepare for interviews, gather context and history, and choose statistics.
- **Evaluate how diversity and inclusion—in sources, story ideas and journalists—makes a difference in news coverage.** This is directly related to rebuilding trust in the news media, which much of the public has lost or never had. It also makes our work more accurate.
- **Collect information through interviews, observation and background research.** A key concept here: Interviewing is not all about asking questions. One of the big things you will learn: to LISTEN.
- **Write clearly, concisely and correctly.** This includes crafting strong sentences, especially news alerts and ledes, and structuring stories logically.

**Important note:** Also, you're going to learn to be **flexible**. Even in typical times, news doesn't happen on a schedule, and I need to improvise. This term, although we're back in person, there's still a pandemic. The general trauma all of us have experienced at various levels over the past couple of years isn't going to suddenly disappear. **So I am sure that at**

some point this term, I will need to change class activities—maybe even an assignment—to make this work.

I will communicate changes via Canvas announcements.

## WHAT YOU'LL READ AND WHAT YOU'LL NEED

*If you don't read news, you can't write it.* We are going to discuss during the first week of class how we want to follow the news this term. Stay tuned for details.

You will need to use The Associated Press Stylebook. Here are your options:

- Free through the Knight Library: [click this link](#) (you'll need your DuckID)
- You can also buy the book through the Duck Store, or you can subscribe to the [AP Stylebook Online](#). (I like the online version, which is slightly more expensive, because it automatically updates.) If you are going to do this work as a career, at some point you'll likely need to buy this. It doesn't have to be now.

All other readings will be links or PDFs posted on Canvas.

### The Technology:

- **Canvas:** Everything you need for this class is at [canvas.uoregon.edu](https://canvas.uoregon.edu); log in with your DuckID.
- **Zoom:** I will create a Zoom link just in case circumstances dictate that we need to learn remotely at times during this term. You can access this video conferencing system through the Canvas page. I've set up one recurring meeting for the entire term. The Zoom password: YesWeWrite. You'll need that password, which is also in the Zoom invite, and you'll be placed in a waiting room until I let you in.
- **Technical support:** If you have questions about accessing and using Canvas, visit the [Canvas support page](#). Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone or live chat: [541-346-4357](tel:541-346-4357) | [livehelp.uoregon.edu](https://livehelp.uoregon.edu).
  - **If you face Internet access challenges:** Companies are offering free access during this challenging time. To learn more about options, visit Information Services' [web page on going remote](#).

## WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

I know this class has a lot of details to worry about. Our weekly schedule is to reduce that list by one. Assignments are always due Thursdays and Mondays. (Week One is the only exception.) Thursday assignments are always writing or reporting. Monday assignments are always a reflection.

- **Monday, 11:59 p.m.: Weekly reflection assignment due.** This is due Monday night for two reasons: (1) To prepare you for Tuesday’s class and (2) To help me plan the activity for Tuesday’s class. I need to see what you are thinking about, what you are asking questions about. These readings and listenings will focus on what I call Capital J Journalism—the big-picture ideas behind the stories. *Values. Ethics. Inclusion. Public Service. Democracy. This will help you begin to develop your personal philosophy of journalism.* This is deep thinking and critical reflection, which we need to do to improve not just the industry, but our countries and communities.
- **Tuesday, 2 p.m.: Interactive class activities.** These will be based on the reflection assignment and what’s happening in the news.
- **Thursday, 2 p.m.: Writing Circle.** This is about practicing the Craft. It’s dedicated time to write and report. You will get the assignment when we meet, and then you’ll have an hour to work – doing interviews, writing ledes, etc. Everything is a fast turnaround; you will turn in assignments at 3:05 p.m., and we will reconvene at 3:15 to discuss what you did and why. *Getting reps – focused practice, such as drills at basketball practice or scales at the piano – is necessary to do this work well.*
- **Thursday, 11:59 p.m.: Weekly reporting/writing assignment due.** This breaks up your weekly schedule, avoids the Sunday night deadline so many SOJC classes have and gives me several days to give feedback before we meet again Tuesday.

## COMMUNICATING WITH ME

My favorite part of teaching is talking with students—getting to know you, coaching you, connecting you with former students I think you should know. So please don’t hesitate to contact me with questions, suggestions ... even complaints. I mean it.

In addition to your two individual conferences this term, this is how you can reach me—and how I’ll reach you. Communication is a two-way street, and I’ll do my best to hold up my end.

- **Canvas announcements:** This is the easiest way to reach the entire class, so I’ll primarily post updates and changes here. You should receive announcements in your inbox. If you don’t, let me know.
- **Email:** I am reachable via email, [lshontz@uoregon.edu](mailto:lshontz@uoregon.edu), and I’ll get back to you within 24 hours.
  - I am building time away from my job into my schedule this term, and I recommend you do something similar. This means:
    - I do not answer emails on Sundays – that’s the day to replenish that I’ve built in for myself this term – or after 8 p.m. weekdays.
    - I also don’t answer emails first thing in the morning—that’s my thinking/reading time. I’ll get back to my inbox late morning.

*Important: If something's not working for you, let me know as soon as you can.*

## BASIC NEEDS

If you have challenges outside the classroom that are making it harder for you to learn, there is help for you. If you're comfortable telling me about any such challenge you are facing, please do so. If there is anything I can do to help, I will.

**You can also get information and help at these links:**

- **Mental health:** The UO's [Counseling Center](#) is open; see the link for information about in-person appointments and remote options. Note that there is a [Let's Talk service](#), which enables you to talk to a human being without making appointment; you Zoom in for designated drop-in hours each day.
- **Food:** If you are having trouble affording food, please [visit this webpage](#), where the UO has a list of resources and programs with free food.
- **Internet:** If you are having trouble getting online, please [visit this webpage](#), which has some no-cost and low-cost options for students.
- **Accessible Education Center:** I know that some of you may have disabilities or other health conditions that make remote instruction more difficult. And as always, the University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. I encourage you to contact the [Accessible Education Center](#) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).
- **In general:** If you are having trouble connecting with the university in any way, email [uoadvising@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoadvising@uoregon.edu).

## WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU

**Come to class – when you are healthy.**

- **Attendance policy:** This is a face-to-face class, and you need to be here and to interact with the rest of the class to be successful. A successful class, like a successful piece of journalism, requires a diversity of perspectives, which means your attendance matters. I want you to benefit from coming to class. I want your classmates to benefit from your presence. I want to benefit from having you all in class, too.
- ***While there is no automatic grade deduction for missing class, if you miss more than four classes this term, you are unlikely to pass.***
- You can find the university's COVID resources [at this link](#). Let's take care of each other.

**Participate, and be respectful:** We are going to work together to create guidelines for how we treat each other. This basic principle will be the foundation of everything we do this term. We will learn together—and I include myself in that “we.” Journalism is in disruption, so we’re all learning all the time.

**Make deadline:** Every assignment has a deadline, and there’s a good reason for them. Reflections are due so that I have time to read them all and use what I learn to plan our class. Writing and reporting assignments are due so that I have time to give you feedback that you can use for your next assignment(s).

- **Late Assignment policy:** Life happens, in j-school and in newsrooms. When you’re covering breaking news, deadlines are not negotiable, but in other circumstances they can be. In recognition of this, *I allow three late assignments with no penalty. You can use a 24-hour grace period three times.* You don’t have to email me; just turn it in when you are finished. If you need more than 24 extra hours or find yourself needing more than three automatic extensions, then email me, and we’ll talk about solutions.

**Be accurate:** Credibility is everything in journalism. This is an introductory class, so you’ll have some time to get the hang of it. *Starting Oct. 31 (Week Six), a story can receive no higher than a C-minus if it has a major fact error such as the misspelling of the subject’s name, the incorrect outcome of an event or a misidentification of a major figure in the story or exercise.* Minor factual errors and earlier major errors will be penalized less harshly.

**Have fun!** I know this might seem odd, or even wrong, given all that is happening right now. But reporting – even on serious subjects, even when the work is hard – can be a joy. Hanging out with journalists and with people who respect journalism should be invigorating and challenging—and I hope you think of that as fun. I want our Reporting 1 community will be a comfortable and engaging place for you to be a part of.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

**Prompt feedback and return of assignments:** I will return your assignments—with feedback and, if applicable, a grade—before the next assignment is due. Usually, that will be within a week of turning in an assignment. If something prevents me from meeting my goal, I will let you know in advance.

**High standards:** As I said above, I’m not going to penalize you for circumstances that are beyond your control. That said, I would be doing you—and the communities who rely on accurate and excellent reporting—a disservice if I didn’t hold you to a high standard on your weekly written assignments. *To get an A or a B, expect to spend at least four hours a week outside of class reading, reporting/researching, writing and reflecting.*

**Help:** If you’re struggling, let me know. *If my comments on your story are unhelpful or if you don’t understand them, email me and let me know.* Communication requires at least two people; I will work to hold up my end of the conversation.

## GRADING

I want you to focus on improving your writing and reporting and critical thinking, not on trying to reach a certain grade. Peer-reviewed scholarly research (that's the highest standard) shows that grades prevent students from absorbing and using feedback. ***And the feedback is the point; that's how you learn.*** The most important part of this class is building a foundation that the rest of your journalistic work will stand on.

I have built a grading scale that reflects this knowledge—it's a little different than what you're used to, I know, so we'll talk about it, in class and out. I promise there will be no surprises! We will meet twice this term to discuss your progress, and we will have a short meeting during finals week to discuss your final grade. More details with each assignment. No surprises!

Here's how it breaks down:

- **Reflective work, 30%:** This includes both the reflections to prepare for our Tuesday classes and your personal assessments of what you learned in your reporting and writing assignments.
- **Building blocks, 20%:** These are the building-block assignments that will prepare you for the news stories.
- **Writing Circle, 10%:** These are the weekly assignments you'll turn in during our Thursday classes. If you turn them in, you get an A.
- **News stories, 40%:** I'll grade your revisions, but this does not mean that you are turning in a "rough draft" for the original assignment. Each version of the story needs to be your best possible work.

**Letter grades:** I'm not using points this term, or percentages. We will discuss what A, B, C, D and F work look like for each assignment. Again: no surprises!

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University Student Conduct Code ([conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct.

You will be able to use your notes and any other resources you need for all assignments in this class—which is exactly how it works in a newsroom.

In J361—and in any journalism class or environment, in person or remote—academic integrity means the following:



- **Do not plagiarize:** Do not copy someone else’s work and pass it off as your own. That includes the work of professional reporters as well as the work of your classmates, friends, family, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, teammates, roommates, fellow club officers, etc. You get the picture.
- **Attribute your work properly:** Use first and last names for everyone you quote or paraphrase in a story. Quotations are direct quotes—don’t tweak what someone said to make the sentence sound better. If you use information from another news source, attribute it to that source.
- **Don’t copy directly from websites or other background sources:** This is plagiarism, too. Don’t think you can fool me—or your readers—by changing a word or two around. That doesn’t fly. Again: Attribute your work properly. ***Be especially careful if you are cutting and pasting information from the internet.*** In fact, don’t do it.
- **Do not make things up:** Don’t invent sources, facts, people, scenarios, scores, quotes, etc. I truly hope this is self-evident.
- **Do not interview family, friends and/or acquaintances:** Credibility is everything. If you use people you know well as sources, your readers have cause to doubt whether you are being fully truthful or withholding information that would be damaging to those close to you.
- **IF YOU AREN’T SURE, ASK:** You’re still beginning journalists. If you are unsure about whether you’re skirting too close to the line, ask me.

*If you plagiarize or otherwise violate these principles of academic integrity, you will flunk this class. Period.*

## WRITING CENTRAL

Need another pair of eyes on your writing? Need someone to brainstorm interview ideas with? You should. No one writes in a vacuum, especially journalists, whose work informs the public.

Starting Week Three, you can get that help at Writing Central, where trained undergraduate coaches help with everything from fleshing out story ideas to crafting stronger sentences and improving your grammar/AP style. Coaches also can help with resumes and cover letters, personal statements and scholarship applications.

Feedback is available three ways:

- Pop-In Hours, 3-5 p.m. Monday through Thursday in Allen 106.
- Appointments: In person or over Zoom.
- Drop-n-Go: submit your work online and receive feedback within 48 hours.

To make appointments use the Drop-n-Go feature, visit [writingcentral.uoregon.edu](http://writingcentral.uoregon.edu).

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

The best journalism reflects the community it covers. That's why I am passionate about increasing and maintaining diversity in newsrooms. If everyone is the same gender, race, ethnic group, sexual identity, religion, etc., you're going to produce a homogenous publication that is at best boring, at worst riddled with errors of fact and/or omission.

In this class, I will encourage open inquiry, freedom of expression and respect for difference. I expect you to respect the differences among you and your classmates and between the class and me. I will respect yours. We can certainly disagree—in fact, I expect that we will at times. But we can all respect each other, and we can all learn from each other.

If anything in this class makes you uncomfortable, let me know ASAP. Let's talk about it.

## SCHEDULE

**This could change, based on news events or life in general.  
I'll announce changes on Canvas and in class.**

### Week One: Sept. 27 to Oct. 2

**Capital J Journalism and Craft:** Building community; being a citizen

**Writing circle:** Reflection practice

#### Assignments:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Wednesday (note date exception):**
  - Letter to Lori (send in body of email to [lshontz@uoregon.edu](mailto:lshontz@uoregon.edu); this is the only assignment you will turn in like this)
  - Syllabus quiz (upload to Canvas, which is how you'll do everything else)
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Reflection No. 1: What's in the news?

**Readings/listenings/viewings:** Pay attention to the news. Note what you are reading/listening to/watching. Be ready to discuss and make recommendations next week.

### Week Two: Oct. 3-9

**Capital J Journalism:** Identifying and critiquing journalistic values

**Craft:** Reporting: Listening and researching

**Writing circle:** Quoting. Distilling

#### Assignments:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 2: Journalistic values
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Reporting Assignment No. 1: History and context

**Reading/listening:**

- For Monday reflection:
  - [Is journalism a form of activism?](#) Danielle Tcholakian, Longreads
- For Thursday assignment:
  - [The legacy of anti-Asian violence – and its erasure – in America](#), Bob Garfield, On the Media (19:42)

**Week Three: Oct. 10-16**

**Capital J Journalism:** Putting journalistic values into practice

**Craft:** Reporting: More listening. More researching

**Writing circle:** Ledes, with a focus on identifying what the news is

**Assignments:**

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 3: Ed Yong
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Reporting Assignment No. 2: Hamed Aleaziz

**Reading:**

- [How the pandemic defeated America](#), by Ed Yong, The Atlantic. (Note: This is a long story, so leave yourself time.)

**Week Four: Oct. 17-23**

**Capital J Journalism:** We've got a terrific guest this week: Hamed Aleaziz, an SOJC alum who is the immigration policy reporter for the Los Angeles Times. You've already prepared for him with last week's background reporting assignment.

**Craft:** Story structure and organization

**Writing circle:** Hamed Aleaziz story

**Assignments:**

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 4: Longform interview
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** News story No. 1: Advance obit, original

**Listening:**

- [Longform podcast No. 423: Ed Yong, The Atlantic](#). (Length: 49 minutes.)

**Week Five: Oct. 24-30**

**Craft:** Story conferences this week, so we won't meet for class activities or for writing circle. You'll sign up for a 20-minute individual appointment with me.

**Note:** Use this week – specifically the lack of class time – wisely: Start revising after we meet. Visit Writing Central after we meet. And you’ve got more reading than usual for the Week Six reflection, so plan ahead.

**Assignment:**

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 5: Ethics
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Story conference memo

**Reading:**

- [SPJ Code of Ethics](#), Society of Professional Journalists

**Week Six: Oct. 31 to Nov. 6**

**Capital J Journalism and Capital C Craft:** Putting inclusivity into practice

**Writing circle:** Ledes

**Assignments:**

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 6: Inclusion
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** News story No. 1, advance obituary, revision

**Readings:**

- [Talking about journalism’s class problem](#), by Heather Bryant
- [Promoting based on potential: How The Atlantic is putting a lot more women in charge](#), by Laura Hazard Owen, Nieman Lab
- [How the journalism industry’s elitism locks out folks from underrepresented backgrounds](#), by Omar Rashad

**Week Seven: Nov. 7-13**

**Capital J Journalism:** Appreciative Inquiry

**Craft:** Interviewing, which means listening

**Writing circle:** Distillation

**Assignments:**

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 7: Listening
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Reporting Assignment No. 3: Listening

**Reading/viewing:**

- [Appreciative interviewing](#), by Mike Fancher, from Interviewing, the Oregon Method
- [Why we need constructive elements in journalism](#), Cathrine Gyldensted, TEDxDresden

## Week Eight: Nov. 14-20

**Capital J Journalism and Craft:** Trauma-informed journalism

**Writing Circle:** Yes: More ledes

### Assignments:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 8: Trauma-informed journalism
- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** News story No. 2, original

### Readings:

- [I survived a mass shooting. Here's my advice to other journalists.](#) By Selene San Felice, The Capital Gazette, for Poynter.org.
- ["I haven't really been able to just sit there:" More than a month after the shooting how the town of Highland park is coping.](#) By Hannah Docter-Loeb, Slate

## Week Nine: Nov. 21-27

**Craft:** Story conferences this week, so we won't meet as a class. This will give you some flexibility to go home for the Thanksgiving break; we can meet on Zoom or in person.

### Assignments:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Monday:** Reflection No. 9: Reconsiderations

### Readings:

- [A reckoning over objectivity, led by Black Journalists](#), by Wesley Lowery, for The New York Times
- [What happens when news outlets stop talking and start listening?](#) By Ashley Alvarado, KPCC, for Nieman Reports

## Week 10: Nov. 28 to Dec. 4

**Capital J Journalism:** What's next? Your career in the SOJC and beyond

**Craft:** Polishing and revising

**Writing circle:** Proofreading.

### Assignment:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Thursday:** Reflection No. 10: My journalistic philosophy

## Finals Week

### Assignment:

- **Due 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6:** News story No. 2, revision

- **Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 7 and 8:** Final conferences with Lori