**INTERNATIONAL REPORTING**

**SPRING 2019**

**JOU 4316C 3 credits**

**CRN -----**

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**Florida Atlantic University**

**School of Communication and Multimedia Studies**

Meeting day and time: Thursdays 2-4:50 p.m.

Classroom: Social Science Bldg. Room 200

Instructor: Ilene Prusher

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Office Phone: 561-297-6265

Office Hours: Thursdays 11:15 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Office Location: Culture and Society Bldg. Room 220

**Required book:**

*Breaking News: A Stunning and Memorable Account of Reporting from Some of the Most Dangerous Places in the World,* by Martin Fletcher (St. Martin’s Press, 2008).

ISBN-10: 0312371195

ISBN-13: 978-0312371197

**Recommended book:**

*The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, by Kim Barker (Doubleday, 2011).

ISBN-10: 0385533314

ISBN-13: 978-0385533317

**\* Each week includes mandatory readings that are chapters taken from various journalistic books, as well as articles and multimedia journalism series. These are available in Canvas or via links that are embedded in this syllabus.**

**Other readings:** Students should be reading and listening to international affairs coverage in multiple news outlets and sources on a *daily* basis*.*If you are not familiar with AP style, the AP Stylebook is highly recommended.

To read the NYT, you may use an account set up exclusively for my students:

Go to the NYT site:

For username type in: FAUNewsLab@gmail.com

For password type in: GrayLady99

**Course Description and Learning Objectives:**

This course in international reporting is designed to give students an in-depth look at the challenges and realities faced by foreign correspondents, journalists who cover international affairs, and reporters who focus on foreign policy or other issues of global interest. The course has several objectives: (1) To introduce students to some of the best contemporary reporting on international affairs; (2) to familiarize students with the evolution of Western reportage from war zones; (3) to enable students to acquire an understanding of how journalists working in the international arena operate, particularly in areas of conflict; (4) to provide opportunities for students to report and write stories focused on international affairs, foreign policy and immigration; (5) to make students conversant in key issues and controversies facing journalists working in the international arena.

Coursework will involve a combination of actual assignments with a global focus, readings of exemplary work in international reporting, and discussion of current and past coverage of global news hubs. Students will choose a country, region or issue in which to specialize for the duration of the course. As part of these assignments, students will develop their writing and reporting skills. At least one story will be "workshopped" in class with an eye towards developing writing style and combining reportage with an analytical, journalistic voice. Students will follow AP style and will write stories as if being submitted for publication. In short, it is not acceptable to simply survey what has been published on a subject, but original reporting is required.

Journalism is a dynamic and evolving discipline. As such, our syllabus is dynamic and evolves alongside the news. Course assignments are subject to change as we monitor the latest developments and choose coverage subjects that have news value or are of interest to a wider audience.

**Story guidelines and coursework expectations:**

1. Stories should be submitted as if intended for immediate or near-immediate publication. Student stories are evaluated not just for content, but also for clarity, logical organization, accuracy and presentation – including correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization and spelling. **In essence, student writing is judged by the amount of editing required to make it publishable. Everything counts.** Consequently, students will be expected to proofread their work vigorously before delivering it to the instructor by deadline. Stories riddled with typos and other avoidable mistakes or clouded by poor organization will be downgraded by a full letter grade from what they might otherwise have earned based on the story’s content alone. A repetitive pattern of sloppy writing can result in a grade below, or well below, the passing threshold of C.

2. You can learn a great deal by regularly reading examples of international reporting in leading publications and paying close attention to the way journalists cover these stories. When you find an interesting story, read once for content and comprehension, then read a second time for structure.

3. All stories for this course should be written in the third-person. **No first-person stories**, essays or op-eds will be accepted unless the student seeks and receives the explicit permission of the instructor. Any student who disregards these guidelines and uses phrases such as: “And then I decided to ask…,” “We spoke to several students…” or “When I asked her how she felt, she responded…” will automatically lose 20 points on the assignment. When choosing interviewees, **do not interview family members, close friends, employers** or anyone with whom you have a close relationship. Such relationships present a conflict of interest as you attempt to write freely and fairly about a given subject. Should you want an exception to this rule, seek the instructor’s permission with an explanation. Always assume there’s a possibility that you might ultimately publish the story in the University Press or another publication. Therefore, aim to quote accurately and fairly – and tell your interviewee/source that you hope to publish the story if possible.

4. Students must quote people using their **first and last names**. Check for correct spelling. Also ask for interviewees’ age and profession, as well as other useful information such as where they live and where they’re from. If they’re students, include their major and their year (ie. “an FAU junior majoring in biology”) in addition to their age. Always look for opportunities to ask more questions to write a more informative story.

5. One-source stories are not acceptable. Journalists must always seek diverse sources and should not base an entire story on any one source.

6. Never make up names of sources or news organizations. Students who make up sources or quotes risk failing the course. Similarly, plagiarizing by cutting and pasting whole paragraphs of previously published material into your story is grounds for failure. If your only option to get a bit of crucial information or a quote is to borrow from another news source, you must mention that source in the story – and ideally embed a link as well.

7. Use the buddy system. Make a friend or two in the first few weeks of class. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting up to speed with whatever you missed.

An important note on sourcing:

Stories should have a combination of originally reported material in addition to research in the form of sourcing based on what you read elsewhere. A story that is a rewrite or pastiche of a story that’s already been reported elsewhere is unacceptable. With the exception of the op-ed/blog assignment, every story you submit must have original reporting in it.

Grade Composition:

• 60% -- 3 stories worth 20% each

• 20% -- an op-ed (opinion plus research) or blog post (a newsy briefing or round-up that digests or otherwise synthesizes the latest news, sometimes with a spin or angle, and includes at least five links to current stories)

• 10% -- Final presentation

• 10% -- Attendance and class participation

Story categories include:

- Locally reported story on an international, multinational or global issue

- Stories about international visitors to FAU (visiting faculty or students) doing something of interest at FAU, ie. research, activism, expertise is a news-generating part of the world.

- Profiles (e.g. activist, entrepreneur, person in leadership position, refugee, academic, etc.)

- Stories on international issues or policy debates reported through interviews with academics and other experts, think tanks, decision-makers, interest groups, other stakeholders or observers

- Stories that shed light on the immigrant or refugee experience in Florida

- Stories examining issues with major international implications (e.g. climate change; Zika; terrorism; refugees from conflict and economic strife)

**Story submission requirements:**

All story submissions must:

* Include a headline and byline. Put headline in **bold** font to avoid confusion with the lead.
* Be saved according to your last name and story slug. (e.g. Hutchinson-Korea; Jones-Trafficking)
* Be typed and double spaced on a Microsoft Word document using the 12-point Times New Roman font, a standard across the news industry.
* Be submitted electronically via e-mail to the professor as Word (.doc or .docx) attachment unless a hard copy is requested, and uploaded to the correct Google drive folder. Do not write in a Google doc unless requested by the instructor.
* Be delivered by deadline.
* Meet the minimum word count, or exceed it the maximum by no more than 200 words.
* Incorporate the minimum number of required sources
* Be significantly free of grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. Proofread and spellcheck. To improve your chances of submitting a story that reads well, give it to a friend to read before you submit – or read it aloud to yourself.
* Include, below the story, the contact information for any sources obtained by the student. For example: name and phone number or email address for a person; name of website and URL for a web document.
* Be written exclusively for this class. **No recycled stories** – assignments written for other journalism classes – are permitted. Also, the instructor does not accept stories already edited and published by the University Press or other professional publications. The instructor needs to see original student writing (known as “raw copy”) and not work spruced up by a copy desk.
* Not be formatted to look like a published article in a newspaper, magazine or website. First-draft journalism requires your raw copy, and you will receive feedback via “Track Changes” or other notations in the document. If you have photo, you can attach it in an email,

**Basic grading rubric for stories: 2 parts at 50% each**

A. Overall content: depth of reporting and research; student initiative and determination in arranging interviews; originality; readability; accuracy; complexity; overall story value.

B. Journalistic elements: solid lead; nut graph; proper use of quotations and other sources; more than one source in story. Plus technical execution: This includes grammar, spelling, sentence structure and story flow. Key question: Is the story ready to run or would it take extensive editing for it to be published?

**Number grade equivalencies:**

**A** **range**: Stories that require almost no editing or minimal at that; exhibit few to no grammar, punctuation or spelling; adhere closely to news-writing rules (objectivity, accuracy, attribution, quotation, AP style and such); flow smoothly and logically from start to finish; contain solid and accurate reporting. In other words, written to publishable or almost publishable standards.

**B range:** Stories that show promise but requiring minor editing and some restructuring to meet the publication bar; contain no more than a small number of news-format mistakes; need stronger reporting; contain more minor accuracy issues.

**C range**: Stories that are borderline but salvageable; require moderate to heavier editing because grammar/punctuation/spelling problems and/or new style violations; employ a confusing or hard-to-follow structure; contain significant reporting holes or other significant problems.

**D range**: Stories that exhibit seriously unclear writing and garbled story flow; require heavy-duty editing; contain too many writing errors or new style violations; show virtually no evidence of proof-reading; ignore assignment rules; include major factual errors or other key errors.

**F range**: Not worth an edit. Stories that are irreparably flawed or seriously off the assignment mark; that are riddled with mistakes; stories submitted well past deadline; stories that contain plagiarized material or fabricated content (facts and quotes) or break other rules of journalistic ethics.

**Grade ranges**

Final grades for this course are posted on Blackboard and follow the default Blackboard grade range for FAU. Those values are:

A = 94 and above

A- = 90 to less than 94

B+ = 87 to less than 90

B = 84 to less than 87

B- = 80 to less than 84

C+ = 77 to less than 80

C = 74 to less than 77

C- = 70 to less than 74

D+ = 67 to less than 70

D = 64 to less than 67

D- = 60 to less than 64

F = 0 percent to less than 60

**Deadlines and late paper penalties:**

In journalism, deadlines are firm. Late work may be rejected and graded “F” at the instructor’s discretion or assessed a late-paper penalty. At minimum, students should expect a half letter grade or full letter grade deduction for a late assignment. If you are in danger of missing a deadline you must **email the professor in advance of the original deadline to request a extension, explaining the reason for the request**. Verbal communication does not count. The extension is not granted until the instructor responds with an approval.

**Cell phone / lab computers policy:**

Mobile phones: These must remain **off AND off your desk** in class. The FAU policy on personal communication devices states: “In order to enhance and maintain a productive atmosphere for education, personal communication devices, such as cellular telephones and pagers, are to be disabled in class sessions.”

Lab computers: These are restricted to class work only. Excessive use of FAU computers to surf the internet, check social media sites, watch videos, catch up on email or perform other tasks unrelated to the course and its assignments will negatively impact the attendance and class participation grade at the instructor’s discretion.

**Academic integrity:**

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over another. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see <http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf>

**Plagiarism / fabrication**

Copying another author’s written work verbatim, or close to it, and passing that off as your own without proper attribution or credit is plagiarism, a serious breach of journalism ethics. This prohibited practice can lead to an F for the assignment or the entire course, as well as disciplinary action by the department or university. Since the mode of writing in this course is nonfiction, instances of fabrication – inventing or making up sources and information – will not be tolerated. Such fabrication or falsification of material will bring the violator an F for the assignment or course.

**Disability policy statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU’s campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at [www.fau.edu/sas/](http://www.fau.edu/sas/)

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center**

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU’s Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

**---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------COURSE SCHEDULE**

**CLASS 1, Jan. 12 –** Introduction to International Reporting

Overview of syllabus and course expectations

Short NewsLab assignment: simulation of breaking news story in Kabul

HW: Purchase and begin reading: *Breaking News* by Martin Fletcher

Read“Reporting Overseas” I and II in Blackboard

**CLASS 2, Jan. 19**

**Come to class having read:**

- “Reporting Overseas” I and II – *The Associated Press Reporting Handbook*

**Come to class ready to discuss**:

- The issue(s) or region(s) you would like to focus on as part of your coursework

In addition to checking for the latest stories in your issue or region under Google News, dig a little deeper and look for some more substantive background reading on the area in question. Here’s my top 10 list for Spring 2017.

1. Columbia International Affairs Online (free access via FAU library)

<https://libweb.fau.edu/blog/ciao/>

2. Foreign Affairs Journal: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>

3. The Center for Strategic and International Studies: <https://www.csis.org>

4. The Brookings Institution: <https://www.brookings.edu/>

5. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>

6. The United States Institute of Peace: <http://www.usip.org/>

7. The Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.cfr.org/>

8. Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/>

9. The Institute for National Security Studies: <http://www.inss.org.il>

10. The EastWest Institute (EWI): <https://www.eastwest.ngo/>

**CLASS 3, Jan. 26**

**Due Thursday morning at 10 a.m.:** Three story possibilities for upcoming assignments, plus a profile idea. **(Similar to beat notes or a story advisory.)**

The proposals or “pitches” should each be about a paragraph long and should be specific enough to pique an editor’s interest. This does not yet commit you to stories, because news developments, access issues and the instructor’s feedback may impact your initial story proposal. Submit via email and bring a print version to class for discussion.

**Come to class having read:**

- “My First War” by Edith Lederer, *War Torn*

- “Woman’s Work: The Twisted Reality of a Freelancer in Syria,” by Francesca Borri

<http://www.cjr.org/feature/womans_work.php>

**CLASS 4, Feb. 2**

**Come to class having read:**

- “Would You Like to Eat Now or Wait for the Ceasefire?” by Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*

In this meeting, we will discuss how reporters working internationally strive to vary their sourcing, particularly in a conflict zone where each party has an interest in “spinning” the story. Compare current coverage of this region in stories in The Daily Star, Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, the Turkish Daily News, the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), Al Monitor, etc.

**CLASS 5, Feb. 9**

*First story due: Submit by 12 noon via email.*

**Come to class having read:**

- The first three links to last year’s winner of the Pulitzer Prize in International Reporting, the NYT’s Alissa Rubin for her reporting on women in Afghanistan. Read the entry cover letter as well.

<http://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/210>

<http://www.pulitzer.org/winners/alissa-j-rubin>

Optional: view the short doc that accompanies the story (warning: contains graphic content)

**CLASS 6, Feb. 16**

**Workshop I: Come to class having read first set of classmate stories**

Check-in: Meeting to discuss Story 2

**CLASS 7, Feb. 23**

**Workshop II: Come to class having read second set of classmate stories**

**CLASS 8**, **Mar. 2**

FILM BREAK: We will view one of the following two classics and then hold a discussion on Western journalists at war, the use of fixers and other “local staff” who are sometimes put in harm’s way in pursuit of the story: **“The Killing Fields”** or **“The Year of Living Dangerously”**

**SPRING BREAK: MARCH 6 – 12**

**Beach and poolside reading suggestions:** *Scoop* by Evelyn Waugh; *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene; *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*, by Geraldine Brooks

**CLASS 9, Mar. 16**

**Come to class having read:**

Intro + first three stories of “[Firestone and the Warlord](https://www.propublica.org/article/firestone-and-the-warlord-intro)” by ProPublica and Frontline

*Second story due Friday, Mar. 17 by 4 p.m. via email.*

**CLASS 10, Mar. 23**

Check-in: Meeting to discuss Story 3

**Come to class having read:**

Last four stories of “[Firestone and the Warlord](https://www.propublica.org/article/firestone-and-the-warlord-intro)” by ProPublica and Frontline

**Also read:** Editor’s note, How We Reported, and Firestone’s Response

**CLASS 11, Mar. 30**

**Come to class having read:**

**-** “Raising,” Chapter 8 of *Baghdad Fixer,* by Ilene Prusher

- “Poisoning the Well,” Part Four of *At Home in the World: Collected Writings from The Wall Street Journal,* by Daniel Pearl (book edited by Helene Cooper)

**CLASS 12, April 6**

**Come to class having read:**

- An AP Investigation Helps Free Slaves in the 20th Century

<https://www.ap.org/explore/seafood-from-slaves/>

*Third story due Friday April 7 by 4 p.m. via email.*

This story is a profile that should be done as a “live-in” or “day-in-the-life” feature on an international person or “new” immigrant in South Florida. (Details to be discussed.)

**CLASS 13, April 13**

Examination of recent successes and shortcomings in international reporting. How are the latest developments in technology and digital reporting tools impacting the quality, scope and reach of journalism? How has the political climate in the US and the controversies over fake news and foreign hacking influenced how we view international reporting? Case studies will include the Panama Papers and Wikileaks, among others.

**CLASS 14, April 20**

Presentations and final discussion.

Issue briefing or commentary – in the form of a blog post or op-ed – due at 12 noon.

**Extra credit option:** Read *The Taliban Shuffle* by Kim Barkerand compare with its recent film adaptation, “Whiskey Tango Foxtrot.”

**FINAL:** APRIL 27, 1:15 – 3:45 p.m.

**Deadlines for four assignments – each worth 20% of grade:**

Story 1: Feb. 9 at 12 noon (news story or feature)

→ A rewrite is due within a week of receiving professor and peer feedback

Story 2: Mar. 17 at 4 p.m. (news story or feature)

Story 3: April 7 at 4 p.m. (profile)

Story 4: April 20 at 12 noon (op-ed)

**Stories should be a minimum of 700 words and a maximum of 1,200 words.** (Students submitting a story under or over length should provide a 1-2 sentence explanation of the reasons for doing so.) Op-eds and blogs should be no longer than 800 words.

**Regulation 2.007 Religious Observances:**

(1) The University recognizes and values students' rights to observe and practice their religious beliefs. This regulation provides a procedure in which students may seek reasonable accommodation of their religious observances, practices, and beliefs in regard to admission, class attendance, the scheduling of examinations, major class events, major University activities, and work assignments.

(2) The University will reasonably accommodate a student's religious observances, practices, and beliefs as they pertain to the following:

a. Admissions: The University will not deny admission to any student because of the religious observance, practice, or belief of the student.

b. Class Attendance: Any student, upon notifying his or her instructor, will be excused from class or other scheduled academic or educational activity to observe a religious holy day of his or her personal faith. Such notification shall be made no later than the end of the second week of the applicable academic term. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic or educational activity because of religious observances, practices or beliefs. Students should review course requirements and meeting days and times to avoid foreseeable conflicts, as excessive absences in a given term may prevent a student from successfully completing the academic requirements of a course.

c. Work Assignments: Students who are excused from class or a specific work assignment or other academic or educational activity for the purpose of observing a religious holy day will be responsible for the material covered in their absence, but shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up any missed work. Missed work shall be made up in accordance with a timetable set by the student's instructor or as prescribed by the instructor at the beginning of the academic term.

d. Examinations, Major Class Events, Major University Activities: The University, by and through itself and its instructors, shall use reasonable efforts not to schedule major examination, major class events, or major University activities on a recognized religious holy day. A recognized religious holy day is a significant day of religious observance as recognized by the highest governing body of that particular religious faith. Evidence of such recognition shall be provided by the student unless the holy day has been previously recognized by the University on its University Calendar as a day of observance in which the University is closed in observance of the holiday.

(3) Any student who believes that he or she has been unreasonably denied an educational benefit due to his or her religious belief or practices may seek redress of the decision by filing a complaint for failure to provide a religious accommodation with the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs. Any such complaint will be processed and investigated in accordance with the University’s established procedure regarding alleged discrimination and harassment. Specific Authority: Article IX of the Florida Constitution, 1006.53, F.S., Board of Governors Regulation 6.0115. History–New 8-6-12.