Professors Irene Virag, Zachary Dowdy, Jon Friedman, Karen Masterson
Tuesday Lecture: 8:30 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. Melville Library W4525
Thursday Recitation (Sections R05 – R08): 8:30 a.m. – 9:50 a.m. Classrooms TBA

I. Purpose of the Course:
Welcome to Journalism 105. This is the first of three courses in the School of Journalism’s Fundamentals of Reporting and Writing sequence and a prerequisite for the journalism major and minor programs. It is designed to introduce you, through critical exercises, applied assignments and exposure to outstanding models and examples, to the key values and skills of news reporters. These include keen observation, the tools to conduct analytical research, the ability to ask probing questions, an unflagging devotion to accuracy and fairness and a passion for the public interest.

JRN 105 and the following courses in this foundational sequence, JRN 115 and JRN 205, employ eight “threads” essential to great journalism: Reporting, Writing, Numeracy, Research, Diversity, Ethics/Journalistic Values, News Engagement, and Understanding Civic Life. JRN 105 provides an introduction to these threads, and each subsequent course adds to the foundation students have built.

II. Intended Outcomes
• **Reporting:** Hone the ability to observe keenly and accurately. Develop a “nose for news.” Demonstrate the ability to ask probing questions and to conduct a well-researched interview.
• **Writing:** Demonstrate the ability to meet deadlines, differentiate topics from story ideas, identify and write a news lede.
• **Research:** Develop a working knowledge of research and reporting tools. Explore the university library’s JRN 105 resource page. Understand the proper uses of Google and Wikipedia. Find clips on university coverage from campus and local news sources. Use LexisNexis.
• **Numeracy:** Understand why an ability to think quantitatively is important in journalism and how journalists employ numbers to find and tell stories.
• **Diversity:** Understand the role diversity plays in journalism and think critically about its uses in current coverage.
• **Ethics/Journalistic Values:** Understand the principles of ethical journalists as expressed in codes of ethics. Understand the concepts of journalistic independence and working in the public interest.
• **News Engagement:** Demonstrate a command of current events – locally, nationally and internationally.
• **Understanding Civic Life:** Develop a working knowledge of the structure and function of the university.
III. Required Texts, Videos, and Materials:

- “The Great Reporters,” by David Randall – available in the University book store and electronically through the University Library
- A daily subscription to The New York Times – See below
- Watch the School of Journalism’s weekly news broadcast. Link on Blackboard
- View the Academy Award-winning film, “Spotlight”
- Selected readings posted on Blackboard
- A reporter’s notebook
- “My Life As …” (MLA)

Through the years, some of the nation’s top journalists have visited the school to talk about their lives and careers in journalism in a series called “My Life As…”

You will be assigned to view excerpts from prior MLA talks. These can be found on the Center for News Literacy YouTube channel at http://www.youtube.com/newsliteracy.

You are required to attend all of this semester’s “My Life As…” presentations and complete a brief assignment on them. If you are unable to attend a program, please let your professor know in advance.

This semester’s lineup is in progress. Speakers and dates will be announced as the schedule is finalized. All programs are subject to change.

Please mark your calendars:

Nov. 15: Ted Koppel – veteran television journalist, winner of 25 Emmy awards and former anchor of ABC’s Nightline. Time and location to be announced.

IV. Course Requirements and Policies:

Pre- or co-requisites: JRN 101; WRT 101 or higher or equivalent, or permission of the department.

Academic Integrity: Any form of fabrication, plagiarism, cheating or other ethical offense will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Committee and can result in a failing grade for the course, dismissal from the journalism program or expulsion from the university.

Here is the university’s statement on academic dishonesty:

“Plagiarism is the use of others’ words and/or ideas without clearly acknowledging their source. As students, you are learning about other people’s ideas in your course texts, your instructors’ lectures, in-class discussions, and when doing your own research. When you incorporate those words and ideas into your own work, it is of the utmost importance that you give credit where it is due. Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is considered academic dishonesty and all instances will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. To avoid plagiarism, you must give the original author credit whenever you use another person’s ideas, opinions, drawings, or theories as well as any facts or any other pieces of information that are not common knowledge. Additionally quotations of another person’s actual spoken or written words; or a close paraphrasing of another person’s spoken or written words must also be referenced. Accurately citing all sources and putting direct quotations – of even a few key words – in quotation marks are required.”
For further information on academic integrity and the policies regarding academic dishonesty, go to Academic Judiciary at www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary

Examples of cheating include:

- Using sources for stories or assignments that are known to the student. Journalism students must not use friends, family members, roommates, classmates or business associates – anyone they know – as subjects. If you believe an exemption is warranted, you must receive prior approval from your instructor.
- Multiple submissions of the same work.
- Cheating in any form on an exam or assignment.
- Unpermitted collaboration on work.
- Falsifying any document, including excuse notes.
- Making up sources, quotes, facts or references.

Sources: Students will provide contact information for all sources in a story, no matter what the platform. This list includes names, telephone numbers and email addresses. Instructors will make random checks to verify sources and information. An assignment without a full list of sources will not be accepted.

Copyright: Copyright is the exclusive legal right of a creator or owner to reproduce, publish, adapt, sell or distribute his or her original work of authorship. It covers literary, dramatic, musical, artistic and other intellectual works. The published or broadcast work of student journalists, just like any other author, is protected by copyright. The School of Journalism diligently protects its own copyrighted materials and respects the copyrights of others. The SOJ expects students to abide by all SUNY, Stony Brook University and SOJ copyright policies. When in doubt about the use of any materials created by a third party, always consult with your instructor.

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. https://web.stonybrook.edu/newfaculty/StudentResources/Pages/DisabilitySupportServices.aspx.

Assessment record: As part of the ongoing internal assessment of the School of Journalism, and in keeping with accreditation requirements, examples of student work are retained for review as a measure of course-by-course progress. These are archived electronically and are for reference only.

Attendance: If circumstances prevent your attending class, the instructor must be informed by phone or email on or before the day of class or within 24 hours afterward. The policy of the School of Journalism is as follows: More than two unexcused absences will result in a 1/3-grade drop per absence, for example, from a B to a B-minus. Consistent tardiness will result in a reduced final grade.

Blackboard: There are two Blackboard sites for JRN 105. One is the “main” Lecture site, which contains all the resources you will need for work in this course, such as the syllabus and assignments. The second is the “section” site, where you will find
section-specific assignments and announcements. If your instructor wants you to upload assignments via Blackboard, he or she will put the link on the Assignments page of the section site.

Like all University communications, Blackboard is linked to your stonybrook.edu email account. Instructors frequently send links and updates by Blackboard e-mail. It is a student’s responsibility to check the site frequently for new announcements or assignments.

Failure to check e-mail will not be accepted as an excuse for missing announcements or assignment changes. For help with Blackboard, call 631-632-9602.

Conferences: Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor throughout the semester during office hours or by appointment. One or more private conferences may be required.

Deadlines: All work is due at the start of class. Work not turned in on time will lose a letter or number grade, unless the instructor makes an exception based on circumstances. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor. No work will be accepted 24 hours after the deadline; the assignment will receive an F. Meeting deadlines is a core requirement for life as a journalist. This class is the place to start.

Disruptive Behavior: Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty members are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

E-mail: All university email communications use your primary campus address (firstname.lastname@stonybrook.edu). If you are not using that address, you will not receive any university email, including Blackboard.

Extra credit opportunities: During the course of the semester, instructors may offer opportunities to earn extra credit. Students can receive extra credit for reading a biography or autobiography of a journalist and completing a brief written assignment per the instructor’s instructions. Students must submit proposals in advance.

Food and drink: Food and drink are banned in all computer classrooms.

Identifying yourself: When reporting, students must make clear to sources that they are working on stories that may be published or broadcast. Students should not tell a source: “Don’t worry, this is just for a class.” A reporter’s sources must understand that information and quotes provided can appear in print or online or be broadcast.

Library resources online: The Stony Brook University Libraries provide access to a variety of subscription resources, including newspapers (Newsday, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, etc.), journals (Columbia Journalism Review, Journalism Practice, etc.), and books (the AP Stylebook Online). More detailed information is available at http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/journalism. There is a library page designed specifically for JRN 105 at http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/jrn105
Mobile electronic devices: Students may not use personal computers, cell phones or any other personal electronic devices in class. This class is scheduled in a computer classroom. **Leave your screen dark unless otherwise instructed.**

Newspapers, TV and online news sources: Students are required to subscribe to the print edition of The New York Times. All students have access to the digital edition of The Times at Stony Brook University. You can access The Times digitally by logging on to https://myaccount.nytimes.com/verification/edupass and using your school email address to set up your username and password. For help, visit Academic Passes--How to Activate nytimes.com. Students are required to read the Saturday and Sunday papers.

Students are encouraged to follow additional news sources in print, broadcast and online. Students also are required to read the campus media and to watch the weekly School of Journalism’s broadcast.

News engagement will account for a portion of a student’s final grade.

Accuracy: Accuracy is fundamental in journalism. Mistakes can result in lawsuits and actual injury to those whose information has been reported incorrectly. Mistakes can also damage a reporter’s credibility and reputation – and may even result in a loss of job.

Laziness and sloppiness are the primary reasons for inaccuracy. A good reporter checks and double-checks the accuracy of everything in a story.

If your work contains inaccuracies, you will lose 10 points for each error. This includes the spelling of names, misquotations or incorrect facts. Misspelling of common words (they’re/their/there, its/it’s, effect/affect) will be marked off at 5 points per mistake. Just to be clear, this means 5 points off for repeating a mistake, too.

Reporters need to develop the double-checking habit. It’s important. It also takes very little time. And this is a habit that will help you no matter what career you pursue.

V. Grades:
Course grades are weighted as follows:

- Weekly Assignments & Quizzes 60 percent
- Group “News Engagement” Project 10 percent
- Final Project 20 percent
- Engagement/Participation 10 percent
In general, the grading scale is as follows:

A: 93 and above
A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89
B: 83-86
B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79
C: 73-76
C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69
D: 60-66
F: 59 and below

"A" work is superior; dramatically surpasses minimum requirements
"B" work is good; exceeds minimum requirements
"C" work meets minimum requirements
"D" work is poor; does not meet minimum requirements
"F" work is not acceptable or not turned in

Important: Only semester grades of C or above count for credit toward the journalism major or minor. Any student earning a C-minus or below who intends to continue in the journalism program must retake the class and will not be able to continue in other journalism skills classes.
VI. Class Schedule:

Schedule and assignments are subject to change.
Assignments are posted on Blackboard.
All class meetings involve discussions. Be prepared.

Week 1: Aug. 29 & Aug. 31
Why Choose Journalism?

Tuesday, Aug. 29 (Lecture)
Introduction and overview of the course and syllabus; why it is important to understand the “mind” of a reporter; why chose journalism as a career? In-class viewing of the “60 Minutes” segment on journalism student and corrupt sheriff. Introduction and discussion of course texts and upcoming assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Aug. 31:
• View “My Life As” video excerpts on Blackboard: Why I Became a Reporter – Randall Pinkston, Walt Bogdanich, Dana Priest, Lydia Cacho, Scott Higham
• Read Columbia Journalism Review piece: “With teamwork and hustle, Toledo Blade dominated after Charlottesville attack” (Link on Blackboard)
• Read New York Times piece: “Who’d be a Journalist?” (Link on Blackboard)
DUE Sept. 7:
• Write a short news story from a jumble of facts listed on Blackboard

Thursday, Aug. 31 (Recitation)
Students interview and introduce each other. Review syllabus. Introduce “news engagement” team presentations, final project and extra credit assignment. Discussion of assigned viewings/readings. What is news? In-class quiz.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 7:
• In The Great Reporters, read Chapter 5 – “Nellie Bly: The best undercover reporter in history”
• Read “Ten Days in a Madhouse” by Nellie Bly: Intro & Chapters 1, 8–14, 17 (Link on Blackboard)
• Find a news item on campus

Week 2: Sept. 5 & Sept. 7
How Reporters Gather Information
Tuesday, Sept. 5: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

Thursday, Sept. 7 (Recitation)
Nellie Bly and the power of observation. Discuss “Ten Days in a Mad House.”
Introduction to the three pillars of news reporting: observation, research and asking questions. What it means to use all your senses as an observer.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 12:
- View video / read excerpts by guest speaker Carl Safina
- Written assignment: Compile 150-word bio of Carl Safina, with list of sources. Five questions. Bring printout to class. Be prepared to ask a question. Details on Blackboard.

DUE Sept. 14:
- South P Lot Observation
- Read New York Times story by Dan Barry: “A Last Whiff of Fulton’s Fish” (Link on Blackboard)
- Watch video of Rukmini Callimachi’s “My Life As …” lecture / The journalist as witness bearer.

Week 3: Sept. 12 & Sept. 14
What It Means to Observe: Using All Your Senses

Tuesday, Sept. 12 (Lecture)
Guest speaker Carl Safina on what it means to observe.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 19:
- Port Jefferson bus ride. Write 500-word essay, with list of observations; identify three possible story ideas.

Thursday, Sept. 14 (Recitation)
Review of South P Lot assignment segues to discussion of how reporters find news. What exactly is a “nose for news,” and how do you develop one? What’s the story? How to come up with ideas and questions that could lead to stories. What’s a journalistic question? How keen observation informs excellent news reporting and writing. Discuss Dan Barry story, the work of Rukmini Callimachi. Assign teams for upcoming “news engagement” team project.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 21:
- Read “Unearthing the Secrets of New York’s Mass Graves” by Nina Bernstein and the “Times Insider” piece on how she found/reported the story. Links and written assignment details on Blackboard.
Week 4: Sept. 19 & Sept. 21
Why Research is Key

Tuesday, Sept. 19 (Lecture)
Recap the importance of observation and review best practices. Observation segues to research. Developing crucial research skills. “Check the clips.” How research enhances stories. Everything you always wanted to know about the SBU Library and how to use its resources as a student journalist. Discuss upcoming “news engagement” team project.

ASSIGNMENTS.
DUE Sept. 21:
- Fact-checking assignment.
DUE Sept. 26:
- Research assignment
- Written proposal for extra credit assignment (Essay question on Blackboard, Due Nov. 9)

Thursday, Sept. 21 (Recitation)
Discuss how research strengthens Nina Bernstein story. How research reinforces observation and serves as a tool for verification. The importance of accuracy and fact checking. In-class online library scavenger hunt. Discuss Port Jefferson bus ride observations.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 26:
- Three questions for Tuesday’s guest speaker. Bring printout to class.

Week 5: Sept. 26 & Sept. 28
The Art of Interviewing

Tuesday, Sept. 26 (Lecture)
Questions, questions, questions. The art of the interview with guest speaker. What makes a good interview – from preparation to follow up. Asking for an interview. Controlling the interview. Types of interviews.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Sept. 28:
- Deconstruct “Listening in on a Pay Phone” by Manny Fernandez: What questions did the reporter ask?
DUE Oct. 3:
- Campus “Person on the Street” interview (10 responses to assigned question. Details on Blackboard)
Thursday, Sept. 28 (Recitation)
How reporters think: Curiosity, Ingenuity, Skepticism
More questions, questions, questions. The importance of “why?” Review: What is a journalistic question? Peeling the Onion. Discuss readings. Discuss taking notes.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Oct. 5:
• Read Chapter 13 in The Great Reporters: “Meyer Berger – The reporter’s reporter”

Week 6: Oct. 3 & Oct. 5
The Art of Interviewing, Part 2

Tuesday, Oct. 3 (Lecture)
The art of the interview, continued. In-class viewing and discussion of interview clips. Skype with SOJ Alum.

Thursday, Oct. 5 (Recitation)
Recap interviewing best practices. Discuss how to write an email asking campus newsmaker for an interview. Discuss the person-on-the-street interview experience. In-class prep for upcoming press conference. News Engagement Team Presentation.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Oct 10:
• Prep for upcoming press conference with campus newsmaker. Assignment details on Blackboard: Write 250-word backgrounder, with list of sources. Submit three questions based on research. Watch video. Answer questions posted on Blackboard.
DUE Oct. 12:
• Final Project, Part 1

Week 7: Oct. 10 & Oct. 12
The Press Conference

Tuesday, Oct. 10 (Lecture)
In-class press conference with a university newsmaker. Come prepared to ask questions.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE by email Oct. 11 at noon:
• Write a brief paragraph identifying the two or three elements from the in-class press conference that you think are the most interesting, revealing, newest bits of
information to highlight in a story. Explain why you think the information is newsworthy. Submit one full quote from the university newsmaker.

Thursday, Oct. 12 (Recitation)
What is a lede? Discuss what makes an effective lede using student suggestions. What makes a good quote? Discuss readings.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Oct. 17:
- Take the “How Well Do You Know Your University?” quiz (posted on BB)
- Watch President Stanley’s “State of the University” address (link on BB)
- Study the SBU organizational chart (posted on BB)
- Read Chapter 11 in The Great Reporters: “Ernie Pyle – The reporter who never forgot who he was writing for”

Week 8: Oct. 17 & Oct. 19
Understanding Your Community: Stony Brook University

Tuesday, Oct. 17 (Lecture)
Recap of semester to date. Midterm survey. Why it’s important to know your audience and understand the place you cover. Guest Speaker: TBA. How the university works. Exploring the university website. Discuss and assign Scavenger Hunt.

REMINDER: Attendance required at tonight’s screening of “Obit,” a documentary film about NYT obituary writers. Details TBA. Assignment and deadline will be posted on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS
DUE Oct. 24:
- Final Project, Part 2
DUE Oct. 26:
- SBU Scavenger Hunt

Thursday, Oct. 19

Week 9: Oct. 24 & Oct. 26
Topics to Story Ideas

Tuesday, Oct. 24 (Lecture)
How to turn topics into story ideas. The essential question – What’s the story? Finding story ideas via the three pillars of reporting. In-class topic-to-story exercise. Skype with SOJ alum.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Oct. 26:
- What’s in your refrigerator?

DUE Oct. 31:
- Photo blog to be uploaded on Blackboard

**Thursday, Oct. 26**


**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Nov. 7:
- Extra Credit: Read “The Ketchup Conundrum” by Malcolm Gladwell (link on Blackboard) and answer assigned essay question.

**Week 10: Oct. 31 & Nov. 2**

**Why Diversity Matters**

**Tuesday, Oct. 31 (Lecture)**

The importance of diversity. The importance of source diversity and serving diverse communities. In-class viewing of Nightline’s “The Color Line and the Bus Line.” Skype with SOJ alum.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Nov. 2:
- Written assignments based on Nightline segment and companion interview, also based on NYT story about harassment of female sports journalists and “mean tweets” videos.

DUE TBA:
- View video of Michael Rezendes’ “My Life As …” lecture as background for watching “Spotlight.” Class viewing of “Spotlight” – Details To Be Announced.

**Thursday, Nov. 2 (Recitation)**

Identifying and overcoming discomfort. Discussion and review of Nightline segment and diversity assignments. Update on final project.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Nov. 7:
- Research and prepare questions for guest reporter. Write 200-word backgrounder.
- Vote for favorite Photo Blog

DUE Nov. 9:
• Read Chapter 3 in *The Great Reporters*: “A.J. Liebling – The most quotable wit ever by-lined”
• Extra Credit Book Essay

**Week 11: Nov. 7 & Nov. 9**

**How Reporters Work**

**Tuesday, Nov. 7 (Lecture)**
The life of a reporter. A reporter visits.

**ASSIGNMENTS**
**DUE: Nov. 14**
• Watch “Spotlight” before Nov. 14 lecture. A class screening will be arranged. Details TBA.
• Written assignment on “Spotlight.” Details on Blackboard.
**DUE TBA:**
• Part 3 & Part 4 of Final Project – Deadlines Vary

**Thursday, Nov. 9 (Recitation)**

**ASSIGNMENTS**
**DUE Nov. 14**
• Write 200-word backgrounder on upcoming MLA speaker, Ted Koppel. List of three questions.

**Week 12: Nov. 14 & Nov. 16**

**Journalistic Ethics, Independence and the Public Interest**

**Tuesday, Nov. 14 (Lecture)**
The importance of journalistic ethics using “Spotlight” as a jumping off point. What are journalistic ethics? Why do they matter? What does it mean to work in the public interest. Video of Will James on ethical dilemmas encountered while covering the Sandy Hook shootings. Four case studies in journalistic ethics. Skype with SOJ alum.

**REMINDER: Ted Koppel MLA Nov. 15. Details and assignment on Blackboard.**

**Thursday, Nov. 16 (Recitation)**
**Week 13: Nov. 21 & Nov. 23**

**Looking Ahead**

**Tuesday, Nov. 21 (Lecture)**
Future opportunities for students in the School of Journalism: Internships, WSHU, Journalism Without Walls. A panel of students share their experiences and perspectives.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Nov. 30:
- Read Chapter 2 in *The Great Reporters*: “Edna Buchanan – the best crime reporter there’s ever been”

**Thursday, Nov. 23:** NO CLASS – Thanksgiving

**Week 14: Nov. 28 & Nov. 30**

**Tuesday, Nov. 28 (Recitation)**
News Engagement Team Presentations. Visit to SOJ studio – details TBA.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

DUE Dec. 7:
- Final Project PART 4 (Submit all parts of project as one package)

**Thursday, Nov. 30 (Recitation)**
News Engagement Team Presentations. Visit to SOJ studio – details TBA.

**WEEK 15: Dec. 5 & Dec 7**

**Inside the Mind of a Reporter**

**Tuesday, Dec. 5 (Lecture)**
Recap and review of the semester. How the Academy Award-winning “Spotlight” synthesizes the themes of JRN 105 and reveals insights into the mind of a reporter. Student survey. What’s really in the mind of a reporter. Skype with SOJ alum.

**Thursday, Dec. 7 (Recitation)**
Recap and review, continued. Inside the mind of a reporter – you. Hand in final project.