



SYLLABUS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS JOURNALISM

Instructor: Andrew Whitehead
andrewwhiteheadbbc@gmail.com

Contact Hours: 40

LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A bitter war in Ukraine ... a looming presidential election in the US ... a newly assertive China ... and increasingly sharp fault lines on issues relating to gender, race, climate and policing. There's a lot happening in the world – and the rise of digital and social media, and the slow eclipse of traditional news platforms, makes it difficult to know where to turn for reliable information and an authoritative account of what's unfolding and why.

This course will look at the crisis affecting so many aspects of international news journalism: the fake news debate; the digital disruption of the business model for news providers; the culture wars which bring another layer of controversy and contestation to our understanding of what's happening all around us; news networks which want to tell us that to think as well as what's happening; and a creeping authoritarianism in some parts of the world which is making it more difficult for reporters to do their job.

As we navigate through these issues, we will listen to and interrogate the arguments put forward in a brand-new audio series, 'Frontlines of Journalism', presented by one of the BBC's most experienced international correspondents, Jeremy Bowen (see 'Course Preparation' section for how to access this). We will also look at how the digital revolution is affecting not simply the consumption of news but also the sort of stories news journalists are pursuing. And we will examine the health of news journalism in the UK, the US and elsewhere.

The key requirement for this course is that you are curious about the world and the way it is changing. You will need to read widely about how the world is reported. The course is mainly about news journalism but there will also be opportunities to write or broadcast in journalistic style.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides an introduction to methods of news journalism, changes within the profession and particularly the impact of web-based news providers and what is often called citizen journalism. Students will consider the ethics of news journalism and gain an understanding of issues surrounding impartiality and inherent bias. Students will be able to demonstrate basic journalistic writing or presentational skills.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Five pieces of work will be required from students during this course, as outlined below. Three short pieces of written analysis will each account for 15% of the marks; two journalistic exercises will each account for 25% of available marks. The remaining 5% will be awarded for participation in class and attendance.

Academic Integrity: it is expected that any written work submitted for this course is entirely the student's own work. If you have relied on any source material, you will need to identify those. Failure to acknowledge a source could leave you open to the charge of plagiarism and, at the least, result in failure to secure a passing grade for this course.

Attendance: every class (whether virtual, on site or a field trip) must be attended. See the attendance policy for details.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each week, there will be a guiding theme to the course about an aspect of news journalism – and as much as possible, guest speakers (most of whom are current senior practitioners of news journalism - details subject to change) will be scheduled to fit this timetable. Students should expect to make a presentation or submit a piece of writing each week.

- **Week One:** the changing face of news; journalistic ethics; is impartiality the same as balance?
- **Required preparation:** listen to the first three 15-minute podcasts in Jeremy Bowen's 'Frontlines of Journalism' series; be sure to consume news journalism across a variety of platforms and make efforts to access titles, networks and platforms with which you are not familiar (for example, al Jazeera - <https://www.aljazeera.com/>)
- **Course work:** A written discussion (400 words) on one of the key concepts or arguments in Jeremy Bowen's audio series

- **Week Two:** is the age of the old-style foreign correspondent over? What role for political journalism in an era of intense polarisation?
- **Required preparation:** listen to the next three programmes in the 'Frontlines of Journalism' series; looks at lots of reporting of UK politics.

- **Speaker:** Olivia Utley [@OliviaUtley](#) a political reporter with the new TV network [GB News](#) and previously with the *Telegraph* and the *Sun* will talk about the reporting of British politics.
 - **Visit:** we will visit the London global HQ of the [Guardian](#) newspaper and website
 - **Course work:** A brief comparison (400 words) of political reporting in the UK and the US
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- **Week Three:** we will look at the fake news debate, the rise of citizen journalism, and the vexed issue of verification (how you can be sure that what you are being told or shown is what it seems to be)
 - **Required preparation:** the concluding programmes in the ‘Frontlines of Journalism’ series; look at the BBC’s new ‘Verify’ initiative <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65650822>
 - **Visit:** we will spend a few hours in the East End of London, a hugely interesting and diverse area which is generally off the tourist trail – and you will be expected to develop a piece of journalism based on our visit
 - **Course work:** A written submission (400 words) relating to fake news or verification
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- **Week Four:** the digital revolution in global news, and how the big broadcasters are responding to the impact of social media; reporting war and conflict
 - **Required preparation:** the Reuters Institute reports listed below
 - **Course work:** A piece of reporting or a feature – text, audio, video or image-led – arising out of our visit to the East End.
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- **Week Five:** What is investigative journalism - and when does investigation become intrusion? what impact is the authoritarian turn in much of the world having on the way that journalists operate, and the level of trust in their work
 - **Required preparation:** look at examples of Mick Brown’s journalism
 - **Speaker:** Mick Brown [@mickbrownwriter](#) is a hugely experienced writer for [The Telegraph](#) with a track record in investigative journalism and in feature writing
 - **Course work:** A substantial piece of reportage based in part on first-hand observation or interaction suitable for a newspaper or website or for broadcast.

COURSE PREPARATION

Topical articles will be specified prior to the commencement of the course, and articles relating to current news stories featuring in class discussions will be circulated during the course.

It is imperative that you consume a range of news media: broadcast news, newspaper, magazine, conventional news website, new-style website. These should include the weekly magazine *The*

Economist, the news websites of the BBC, al Jazeera, the *Guardian*, and as best you can (these are subscription sites) the *Telegraph* and the *New York Times*.

- do spare time to listen to the new radio/podcast series ‘Frontlines of Journalism’ by one of the BBC’s most experienced correspondents, Jeremy Bowen – a series of ten 15-minute programmes broadcast in May 2023 – you may not be able to access the audio from the US but you will when in the UK. You will need to register for a free BBC account before listening. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0fly2vx>
- the hugely influential Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford also publishes an annual look at journalism, media and technology trends and predictions – here’s the 2023 report: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/journalism-media-and-technology-trends-and-predictions-2023>
- the Reuters Institute also publishes an annual digital news report – it comes out in June and you will find it here: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/> - and here’s last year’s: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/dnr-executive-summary>
- and do take a look at this very recent survey of trust in news media in the US: <https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2023/05/08/2023-trust-in-media-what-news-outlets-trust-poll>

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Andrew Whitehead [@john_pether](https://twitter.com/john_pether) was the Editor of BBC World Service News, the BBC’s biggest radio network reaching 100 million listeners around the world. During his career, he has been a foreign correspondent, a correspondent covering British politics, a news presenter and a maker of award-winning documentaries. Andrew is currently an honorary professor at the University of Nottingham and he teaches at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, India. He has spent a semester as a Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellow at the University of Michigan. He continues to [contribute to newspapers, journals and news websites](#) as well as making [radio programmes](#).

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