Instructor
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Office hours
T-Th: 11 to noon
Wed: 2 to 3:30
And by appointment
(I'll gladly meet at
other days or times.
Just let me know and
we can schedule an
appointment.)

Class meets
11 to 12:15 p.m.
or
12:30 to 1:45 p.m.
Mon. and Wed.,
202 Stauffer-Flint

Online
Blackboard will be
the central location
for course materials.
We will use other
tools during the
semester, but the
schedule,
assignments and
other important
information will be
on Blackboard.

What is this course?

So you want to be a journalist. And why not? People rave about your writing. You amaze them with your computer skills and your knowledge of Facebook. You dream of sitting in your cozy cabin and writing pithy essays about important events. You look at advertisements and say, "I could do better than that." You aspire to become the Next Big Thing in marketing or play-by-play sports or event planning or movie reviewing.

Whatever you dream about in journalism, this is where you start. It's a course in finding, gathering and using information. That sounds so dry and boring, though. Really, this is a course in honing your curiosity, stoking your enthusiasm for finding answers and building your confidence as a researcher, a writer and whatever else you aspire to be. It's about figuring out where to go when you have questions and then figuring out what to do with all that information once you've filled your recorder with interviews, your spreadsheet with data and your notebook with doodles. (Actually, we hope you'll fill your notebook with great ideas, but we also know how journalism students procrastinate. Hence, the doodles.)

This is a class about questions. Only by crafting good questions can you expect to find good answers. Only by using high-quality sources can you expect to find high-quality information. With that in mind, we want you to be able to formulate questions that will help you think better, help you research better and help you analyze information better. So we'll approach this semester with broad questions we want you to help us answer. This isn't an exercise in philosophy, although we hope you'll formulate a philosophy about

information this semester. It is a pursuit of knowledge, of better preparing yourself for a world awash in information both good and bad, in media both trusted and shady, in resources of all kinds that you must scrutinize if you hope to learn and act as a citizen, a worker and a scholar.

Course goals

By the end of this course, you should be able to do following:
- Better understand the scope, forms and purposes of information.
- Ask pertinent questions that allow you to find and interpret information, and explain it clearly.
- Critically evaluate information sources, research data and your own work for credibility, accuracy, completeness, and diversity.
- Develop focused plans for research projects.
- Use a variety of digital and non-digital tools for research.

Achieving the course goals

We will work toward those goals in several ways:
- Completing online modules that contain readings, video, audio and interactive components.
- Participating in discussions and guest lectures.
- Completing in-class and out-of-class assignments on your own and in groups.
- Creating sites or individual blogs for curating information.
- Completing written or multimedia assignments over readings, concepts and other facets of the course.

Class format

This is a hybrid class, so your work will be both online and in-person. You will have assignments to work through online *before* class meets each week. These assignments will include a combination of videos, readings, discussions, and self-assessments. If you don't complete the online assignments, you will not only be lost when we meet in the classroom, but your grade will suffer. So please keep up.

This isn't a class where you will come into the room and sit back in your seat. You will work in teams to discuss material, plan projects and give presentations. The class is structured to promote active learning. The idea is to give students freedom to explore areas that interest them, and to create an open atmosphere that makes it fun to learn. That works only if everyone is willing to participate, though, so come to class with the right mindset.

Required book:

➡ Daniel H. Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future.*
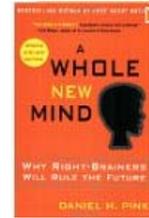
Required materials:

➡ Access to Blackboard.
➡ A planner and calendar (either digital or physical).
➡ An open mind and a willingness to think broadly about the future.

Suggested materials:

➡ Laptop computer. If you have one, bring it to class each week.
➡ Associated Press stylebook.

Assignments

WE will experiment with many approaches to learning in this class, individually and in teams. These will include web projects, library projects, online journals, an individual curation project, group multimedia projects, class discussions, and reports in class about your findings and your ideas.

Each student will be part of a learning team that will discuss readings, videos and other material each week, lead class discussions and work on other projects. These teams are an important part of the learning process in this class. It's important that you remain involved in the teams, take part in discussions, and do your share of the work. If you don't, your learning and your grade will suffer.

> ## Watch for changes
>
> The **requirements for this course are very likely to change** to accommodate unscheduled events, visitors or unanticipated developments, or to provide an opportunity to re-emphasize certain skills. **Check the schedule often.**

Grading

This is a projects-based class. You will have no quizzes or tests. Rather, your grade depends on the work you do before class (primarily writing about the readings, videos and other materials), in class (discussions and presentations), and outside class (a group project and an individual project). This is not a class where you can sit back at the beginning of the semester and hope to make up for lost ground at midterm or in the second half of the semester. You must remain engaged week to week if you hope to succeed. **There is no extra credit**, so focus on producing consistent high-quality work.

Here's a brief breakdown of the grading. You will find detailed information in the pages that follow. Read it. My grading system differs from those in most other classes. It is intended to help you focus on learning rather than on grades. If you don't understand something, ask questions.

Grade breakdown

- ➡ Group project: 30 percent
- ➡ Weekly journals: 30 percent
- ➡ Research proposal for group project: 15 percent
- ➡ Attendance and participation: 10 percent
- ➡ Individual curation project: 10 percent
- ➡ Google course: 5 percent

Important note: Journalism majors must receive a grade of C or better in this class to advance to other courses in the school. A grade or C- or lower means the student must retake the course.

Grading (the more detailed version)

1. Group project (30 percent)
This is the heart of the class and will provide many opportunities to learn by putting the course materials to use. The project has two parts: a proposal and a project. I'll provide a separate handout on creating a proposal, but essentially you'll identify an idea for a multimedia project and do the background research necessary to justify the project, along with an outline for completing it.

The project should relate in some way to information, research, digital tools, journalism or the digital humanities. The idea is to give students the freedom to explore ideas that interest them and to use digital tools to research and to create material in ways that help us all better understand the digital world. Here are examples from previous semesters:

- ➡ An interactive guide for finding study spaces
- ➡ An e-book on KU traditions
- ➡ A digital survival guide for freshmen
- ➡ A prototype website for creating portfolios of creative work and bartering with others for their creative work
- ➡ A prototype app for basketball campers
- ➡ A series of videos and a social media plan for reaching out to new journalism students

These are just examples. Group members should discuss ideas and come to a consensus on a project. We will work on this in class.

I'll post a rubric on Blackboard with the criteria I'll use for grading the final project. I'll use such categories as focus, quality, originality, creativity, organization and attention to detail.

Group participation and membership
Group work is a vital component of the modern workplace. That doesn't make it easy, though. I have yet to find a perfect method of evaluating everyone in a group. To help make sure that all members do their part to make each project a success, here's what we'll try this semester.

- **Periodic reports**. These reports will rotate among group members. You will have two to complete during the first half of the semester, based on the participation in the project proposal and in other group work. **One is due Feb. 26. The other is due on March 12.** After break, each group will turn in a weekly report on the work of each member. **The first of those reports is due on April 2.**
- **Option to fire a group member**. If a majority of group members feel that another member is not contributing his or her fair share of the work, they may vote to remove that person from the group. This is like firing an employee. If that happens, the remaining group members should notify me and give the reasons for the firing. The member who has been removed from the group will then have two choices: Ask to be admitted to another group or complete the project alone. Other groups are not obligated to take on new members. If the person cannot find another group to join, he or she must complete the group project alone. The evaluation criteria will remain the same.

Note: Firing a group member should be a last resort. If you are having problems with another group member, talk with me first and we'll try to resolve the issues.

2. Project proposal (15 percent)
A research proposal provides background information for a project and justification for moving it forward. It's essentially a narrative that explains and justifies your project and then provides details on how you will complete it. All research, whatever the form, is really your voice entering a broader discussion. So you should use the proposal to explain what you will add to the conversation.

A traditional research proposal has an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, a timetable and a bibliography. The proposal for this class will be slightly different, though it will contain the same elements. Here's a shorthand version of what should be in your proposal:

1. **Introduction.** A few paragraphs to introduce your topic and explain what it's about and why it needs to be done.
2. **Background, context and relevant research.** Create a narrative to explain why the subject area is important, what others have done similar to your project,

and how your project will be different. What secondary research helps us understand the needs of your audience, explains the subject matter, or helps justify your approach. Think of this area as a funnel: Start with broad information and continue to narrow the focus. At the end of this section, you essentially want to explain why similar projects are lacking and how yours will fill in a gap. This is not something you do off the top of your head. Rather, it should reflect substantial research about the topic, the audience and the format.

3. **Form.** Explain the format of your project in more detail. For instance, will it be a website? An app? A documentary? A social media strategy? Why this form? What elements will it include? Who is the audience? Again, provide background information and justification.

4. **What will each group member do?** This is self-explanatory, but you should explain the contributions each member of the group will make. These may change and overlap, but everyone should have a substantial role.

5. **Timetable for completing the project.** Provide a week-by-week outline of what you will need to do to make sure the project is completed on time.

6. **Bibliography.** What secondary and primary sources have you found related to your project. Again, this will change and expand as you work on the project, but it's especially important to identify articles, books, websites, blogs, videos and other material you can use in your research. **This should include no fewer than 15 sources.**

3. Weekly journal post over readings and videos

You will create a journal on Blackboard and use that space to analyze and synthesize the readings, and to reflect on your work in the class. Although this is called a journal, it's really more like a blog post or a short essay. It should show depth of thought, precise writing, and connections among ideas. I'll provide examples of the type of work I'm after. I'll also provide a grading rubric.

Deadline: Your weekly journal entries are **due no later than midnight Sunday each week**.

Learning goals. By Feb. 2, you are to create a journal entry outlining your learning goals for the semester. This is a difficult task, and my guess is that you haven't had to anything like this before. Learning goals are crucial to your growth as a student and a professional, though, and are intended to help you learn independently. To help you get started, I'd suggest following this format:

▶ *Start by writing about your career goals.* What facets of journalism are you most interested in? What would you like to learn more about? Where would you like to be a few years after graduation?

▶ *Then discuss your strengths and weaknesses* in relation to those goals. What areas are you most comfortable with? What areas do you need work in and why?

▶ *Then consider what you would like to learn from this class.* How might this class help you bolster your strengths and shore up your weaknesses? What class topics

are you most interested in? What topics would you like to pursue beyond those listed?

➥ *Then focus on organization.* How will you keep track of the assignments and deadlines? How will you prepare yourself to learn, and how will you achieve your learning goals?

Those are just a few of the questions you might consider as you create a learning plan. I encourage you to add your own. This class is intended to help you learn independently, so use the opportunity to your advantage.

Proposal for curation project. By Feb. 10, you should create a journal entry explaining the focus and purpose of your curation project. See No. 4 below for details on that project.

Midterm self-evaluation. You will revisit your learning goals at midterm, evaluating your work up to that point. For the midterm self-evaluation, you should explain how you have been working toward your learning goals (where you have succeeded and where you could have done better?) and what you still hope to learn. How has your perspective changed since the beginning of class? How have you been applying your learning? You should also explain what you have done to build on your curation project. The midterm self-evaluation must be posted in your journal by **midnight March 12**.

Curation report. In the midterm self-evaluation, you should also provide a report on your curation project: What is the focus and what sort of routine have you established for finding material? What sorts of materials have you collected, and how have you organized them? How will you build on your work during the rest of the semester? You should also provide a link to your curation project so I can see your work. (See below for more information on the curation project.)

Final self-evaluation. For the final self-evaluation, you should reflect on the semester, explaining how you met or didn't meet your learning goals, what you have gained from the course, how you have applied your learning, and how you plan to keep learning and improving after the course. You should also summarize your thoughts about the class: What were the strengths and weaknesses of the class? What, if anything, would you do differently? How did the material fit together (or not)? What insights you have gained? What questions do you still have about information, research, digital humanities or other areas we have covered? What sorts of materials have you collected? How have you organized it? The final self-evaluation must be posted by **midnight on May 7.**

Curation report. In your final self-evaluation, you should also provide a wrap-up report on your curation project. That report should be similar to the one at midterm but should explain how your project evolved over the semester. What have you learned from it? Do you have a following for your curated work? Do you plan to continue with the project?

4. Individual curation project (10 percent)
This is separate from the group project. It is intended to help you explore a topic you are interested in by gathering and displaying digital information. You could approach this in several ways. For instance, you could create a blog (or continue an existing blog), adding regular posts in which you aggregate and comment on material you gather from various web resources. You could also use a tool like ScoopIt, Evernote, Diigo, Delicious and create a collection of links, tools and useful articles related to an area you are interested in.

The curation project has two primary goals: to help you gain expertise in an area of interest, and to get you into the habit of saving and organizing useful material you can draw upon later. This is also an excellent opportunity to start building an audience. ScoopIt works especially well for that.

You are free to include material from the readings in your curation, but you should go beyond that. This will be a repository you can draw on and build on for years to come. **This is not something you take on at the last minute.** Rather, you must build it week by week. ScoopIt, Evernote, Diigo and Delicious all have browser add-ons that make it easy to save links and articles. Find one that works well for you and start using it.

An important part of a curation project is setting up a constant feed of material you monitor. You can do that through RSS feeds and mailing lists, or by following individuals or groups on Twitter or other social media. The idea is to monitor a topic or topics routinely, and you should explain that routine in your self-evaluations.

This project is not about volume. Rather, it should represent thoughtful, systematic collection of useful material, along with thoughtful organization. You should write about your curation project in your weekly journal when appropriate and include a synopsis and a link to the project in your midterm and final self-evaluations. (See No. 3 above.)

I'll grade you twice during the semester based on focus of topic, regularity of posts, and your summary of what you set out to accomplish, how that has gone and what you've learned. One thing I want to make clear: If you wait until the last minute and add lots of material before your midterm and final reports are due, you will receive little credit for the project. As I said above, this is about routine and consistency.

5. Participation and attendance (10 percent)
This includes completing all readings and online assignments; participating in class in online discussions and occasional Popplet discussions; completing the Google course, the group project and the curation project; and completing any other work the instructor assigns. Popplet (www.popplet.com) is a visual tool that allows you to add text, photos and videos, and to show connections among ideas and concepts. We'll talk more about it before we use it.

The time you spend in class in an important part of your learning. If you miss class or fail to do assignments, your entire group will suffer. So come to class prepared to participate and discuss. You are responsible for budgeting your time and meeting deadlines for assignments.

Attendance is mandatory. You will have only one unexcused absence. A second unexcused absence will result in your grade dropping a half-point, from A to A-, for instance, or B to B-. It will drop another half-point if you have three unexcused absences and another half-point if you miss four, and so on. This deduction is independent of your coursework. That means that even if you complete all the work successfully, the top grade you can achieve will decline with each absence after the first.

If you are sick and cannot attend class, or if you are going to be late, contact me, preferably **before** class. If you do so, you may be excused from that day's assignment. If you do not contact me, **you will receive an unexcused absence.**

6. Completion of Google course

All students must complete a self-paced online course called Power Searching With Google. It contains a combination of readings, videos and assignments. I'll grade your work based on a journal entry you create on Blackboard. You don't need to list answers to self-tests from the course or to list every detail. Rather, summarize and make notes about the material you want to remember. Do this for each of the six units. All work in the Google course **must be completed by Feb. 24**.

The skills you gain from this Google course are crucial to your success in the class. I'd suggest you start immediately. It's not something you can rush through at the last minute.

Course link: http://www.powersearchingwithgoogle.com/course/ps/course.html

Note: Be honest as you work through this course. Do your own work. Failure to do your own work will be considered an act of academic misconduct and may result in your expulsion from the class. (See the syllabus for more details.) If you are thinking about cheating, don't. The penalty is simply too high.

We will NOT have a final exam in this class.

Academic Misconduct

In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts, and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. You may be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism.

We strictly follow the code of Academic Misconduct detailed in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. University policies covering academic misconduct are spelled out in the current Student Handbook, which is available free in 213 Strong Hall.

Here's some clarification:
If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes on paper or on electronic devices. Unauthorized materials include any forms of nonverbal communication (one cough, the answer is A; two coughs, the answer is B, etc.). Copying an answer from someone else's work is also cheating.

Plagiarism is stealing. You take someone else's ideas, thoughts, or words, and you present them as your own original work. This includes taking ideas from written sources, such as books, as well as materials on the Internet. Cutting and pasting materials from the Internet and presenting that work as if it was your own is plagiarism. There may be times when you want to incorporate another person's ideas, opinions and words into the papers you write, to make a point or to provide background. If you do, it is essential that you attribute that information—that you explain where the information came from and give credit where credit is due.
F**abrication and falsification mean that you made it up.** This can include making up an entire interview or embellishing a fact, quote, or statistic to make it sound better. Don't do it.

Policy on Plagiarism and Fabrication or Falsification

The School of Journalism **does not** tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence or falsification of evidence.

Penalties for engaging in such behavior can include a failing grade for this course and expulsion from the school.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the instructors.

The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations*, revised FY98.*

Plagiarism
Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.

Fabrication and Falsification
Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 864-7669 (864-SNOW).

Missing class

Students who miss three or more consecutive days because of illness or injury can request a *Documentation of Illness/Injury* statement from Student Health Services or another medical provider. Students who have illnesses or injuries of shorter duration and who schedule appointments at Student Health Services can obtain a copy of their medical records containing information about their visit by submitting an Authorization for Use/Disclosure form to the Student Health Services Records and Registration Department.

> **University assistance**
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> If an emergency or crisis causes you to miss three or more days of class, the **Academic Achievement and Access Center** can help contact your professors.
>
> **Office**: 22 Strong
> **Phone**: 785-864-4064.
> **Fax:** 785-864-2817.

Special needs

The Academic Achievement & Access Center coordinates accommodations and services for all KU students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted the AAAC, please do so as soon as possible. That office is located in 22 Strong Hall; the phone number is 785-864-4064 (V/TTY).

Information about the center's services can be found at http://disability.ku.edu. Please contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

Copying or Recording

Course materials prepared by the instructors, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructors are the property of the instructors. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructors is prohibited. On request, the instructors will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructors, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Adding and Dropping

Here is School of Journalism policy, by which you must abide:

"No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.

"Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.

"The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

"The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid.

"Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid."