



481

JOUR 481
Special Topics Reporting

INSTRUCTOR: Josh Meltzer

OFFICE: 130 MMTH
PHONE: 270-745-2070
CELL: 270-799-9839
josh.meltzer@wku.edu

SPAIN IN THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

SPECIAL TOPICS MULTIMEDIA REPORTING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, taught concurrently with SPAN### will allow you to work immersively in Salamanca, Spain putting to practice the language and reporting skills you have acquired up to this point in a variety of mediums. The final goal of this course is to produce and publish a multi-platformed-based team project on issues related to the current economic crisis in Spain.

We will work as a team, which will both allow students to bring their strengths and expertise to the table, while simultaneously requiring each student to dive into a realm of journalism in which they are not as familiar or comfortable.

The project will use the latest technology available to multimedia journalists to tell the stories of the people who allow us to tell their powerful stories.

GOALS

- **Story Research** – Determine as a class the focus and direction of our project and identify stories that we will report and edit while in Spain. Students will be expected to go beyond what has been already reported, to find stories that represent how Spain's diverse population and experience is affected by the crisis.
- **Language Use** – Students will use Spanish language in the field in reporting and editing, and will be expected to produce the site in Spanish and English.
- **Website** – Define and outline the goals of the website. For whom are we reporting and how will we deliver those stories.
- **Mediums** – Based on experience, interest and story topic, determine in what medium we will report each story. Each student will be not only encouraged, but expected to improve their skills in areas that they are not as proficient.
- **Deadlines** – Like other journalism courses, we will set and hold to our agreed upon deadlines to complete the project on time.
- **Teamwork** – Each member of the team will be expected to work closely with other team members to produce projects collaboratively, either through medium or within mediums.
- **Brand and distribute** the project to a wide audience, both in Spain and abroad.

Grade Breakdown

Final Project	80%
Weekly Journal	10%
Critiques & Participation	20%

A+ 100	A 98-93	A- 90-92
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-63	D- 62-60
F 59 and below		

Important dates:**PROJECT PLANNING**

This is an ambitious project in the amount of time we will have while in Spain to report, edit and produce the final website. To do this, we must begin early, with preliminary research and planning. Students will be expected to complete required reading and attend several planning sessions, held towards the middle and end of the Spring semester. We will coordinate these meetings with logistics meetings required to plan the travels. During these sessions, we will begin to focus the project, discuss the current news in Spain as it relates to our topic and determine the direction and look of the website. These meetings will be made at times that will not conflict with Spring term courses, and will be held to a minimum so as not to interfere with your Spring studies, but we simply must meet several times before we leave to make plans, as our course will move very quickly once we're in Spain.

CLASS MEETINGS

The majority of the work for this course will be done out in the field, however we will meet regularly as a class to critique and follow up on deadlines and progress. Some students will do more field work and reporting and others may do more editing and producing, but all students will spend a considerable amount of time in the field. If you have to miss any class times for field reporting you will be expected to check in with me ahead of time to discuss when we can catch up.

CRITIQUES

Because this is a collaborative team project we will need involvement from everyone. The critiques need to be honest and constructive. You can be tough without tearing people apart. A thin line often separates what is perceived to be constructive versus destructive feedback. Find the balance, and when in doubt, take the higher road. Your level of involvement in class discussions will count towards your final grade. When your work is being critiqued, it's important to be a good listener to your classmates. Don't be overly defensive, but instead use the opportunity to make your project even better. We're going to be producing stories that we want a large sector of the public to receive in a powerful way, and our first line of defense against poor quality or boring work is within this class. You will be also working in mediums in which you have little or no experience, but do not let that get in the way of feeling free to speak your mind. We all use the web and we all know a good story when we see and hear one.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

We will discuss in greater details the equipment needs based on several factors during the Spring Semester, but plan to have the following. If you have trouble getting any of these please see me about other options.

- Digital Camera(s) (with video capability) lenses, shotgun microphone
- At least two 16GB or higher memory cards
- Portable external hard drive (500GB minimum)
- Spanish-English dictionary (an old school paper one you can use anywhere, in addition to a digital one you may have)

PLAGARISM

All work should be yours and completed within the time frame of each assignment. Plagiarism will result in an Zero grade in the class and other possible action according to university policy.

DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, GCC Room 101. The OFSDS telephone number is (270)745-5004 V / TDD. Per university policy, please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

ACEJMC

This class will cover in part the values and competencies outlined in the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications accreditation guidelines. They are: understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law appropriate to professional practice; demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications; demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications; understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; think critically, creatively and independently; conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which you work; write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes you serve; critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which you work.