

Reporting II: Solutions Journalism

"Solutions journalism is rigorous and compelling reporting on solutions to social problems.

When done well, the stories provide valuable insights about how communities may more effectively tackle serious problems. We know from experience that solutions stories engage people differently. They can change the tone of public discourse, making it less divisive and more constructive. By revealing what has worked, they can also lead to meaningful change.

It's not about making people feel good or advocating for a certain policy or balancing out the 'doom-and-gloom.' Instead, solutions journalism is about what journalism has always been about: informing and empowering people. We're just asking journalists to do that in a more complete way, by investigating what has worked just as rigorously and relentlessly as what hasn't."

Course Details

What: J462/562

When: M/W 10-11:50 a.m

Where: Allen 306

Office Hours:

Mondays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.;

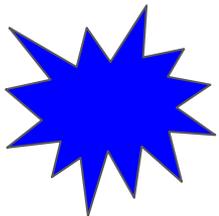
Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 in Allen 309C

Stay connected: Canvas is the place to turn in assignments, for updates, calendar info, assignments and rubrics, readings, and class delays or closures.



Welcome to this class, one of the few on SoJo in the country. I developed it because my experiences as a journalist led me to question how the stories we tell affect people and communities. Email me at kthier@uoregon.edu or find me @KathrynTRex or 541-346-2528.





Course Integrating Question: **What is the role of journalism and the journalist in a democratic society?**

Why is this course important? Two reasons.

- 1) Because you're going to be a professional journalist someday and you need to develop a sense of what mark you want to make.

Those ideas on the first page raise provocative questions about our field.

But how do you actually do SoJo? And with so many other journalistic practices out there, why choose this one?

In this class we're going to learn how to "do" Solutions Journalism (SoJo).

And we're going to explore its impact.

Underlying everything are **deeper questions** that we'll wrestle with all term: How does knowledge improve people's lives and communities, and what is the role of journalism in that? Should journalism evolve, and if so, how?

- 2) This course is a special section of Reporting II. All Reporting II classes deepen the skills you learned in

Reporting I and explore "journalism in the public interest," both worthwhile endeavors.

This course will be no different, except we'll approach these tasks with a solutions journalism lens.

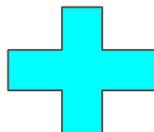
Please see next page for specific course objectives.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

Solutions journalism-inspired objectives

Identify what solutions journalism is - and isn't	(Foundational knowledge)
Discriminate between SoJo, advocacy and soft news	(Applying knowledge)
Value how SoJo can create impact and engage audiences	(Integrative and caring knowledge)
See themselves as contributing to the debate about the role of journalism and the journalist in a democratic society	(Integrative, human and metacognitive knowledge)
Create solutions journalism through appropriate structure, sources, frames and interview techniques	(Applying knowledge)



Traditional Reporting II-inspired objectives

Find and develop news stories in the public interest	(Foundational and applying knowledge)
Demonstrate familiarity with legal and ethical fundamentals of journalism	(Foundational and applying knowledge)
Evaluate how diversity—in sources, story ideas and journalists—makes a difference in news coverage	(Integrative, caring and applying knowledge)
Locate and use public records to give your stories greater authority	(Foundational and applying knowledge)
Gather and verify information through interviews, research and observation	(Foundational and applying knowledge)
Write clearly, correctly and concisely	(Applying knowledge)
Draft and revise for publication	(Applying knowledge)

In addition to course objectives...

ACEJMC PROFESSIONAL VALUES & COMPETENCIES

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and 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 they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Look for **yellow icons** for these values and competencies on assignments to see how learning in this course relates!

[Seeking Safety: Can preschool help fight crime?](#) ↗

Greg Barnes
Fayetteville Observer
27 July 2014

Text / Under 800 Words
Scope of Response: City
Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma, United States

Early education translates into higher graduation rates and lower probability for criminology, yet less than 30 percent of children in America go to preschool. Oklahoma is ensuring kids can attend preschool through universal early childhood education.

[A Prescription for More Black Doctors](#) ↗

Nikole Hannah-Jones
The New York Times
9 September 2015

Text / Over 3000 Words
Scope of Response: City
Location: New Orleans, Louisiana, United States

On average, black students in public schools receive fewer resources giving them a late start. A mostly black university in New Orleans has increased overall achievement by developing students' shared responsibility for one another's success.

[Unequal Treatment: Hawaii's trailblazing healthcare underscores disparity](#) ↗

Noam N. Levey
Los Angeles Times
5 April 2014

Text / 1500-3000 Words
Scope of Response: State/Province
Location: Honolulu, Hawaii, United States

Though in the past Hawaiians were dying fast from infectious diseases, today they are among the healthiest people in the world due to universal health care for all.



Readings and Student Engagement Hours

There is no textbook for this class, although you will need a recent **AP Stylebook**. I suggest signing up for the **Solutions StoryTracker** (solutionsjournalism.org) and a **NYT online subscription** (nytimes.com/passe9) to read weekly Fixes columns. The majority of readings will be solutions journalism articles to help you complete the Class Journal or prepare for class discussions. Page counts are not uniform and vary because they're Web articles. Sometimes the readings will be short book chapters. Expect to spend **1-2 hours a week reading**. All readings are on **Canvas** under **Modules**. Expect to spend **4-6 hours outside of class** on assignments.

Final Reporting Project

A major focus of this class is creating an in-depth final solutions journalism story. We'll decide on story ideas in **Week Four**. In **Week Five**, you'll turn in an extensive Story Pitch and meet with me to discuss it. Your first draft is due **Week Nine**. The final story is due **Monday of Finals Week**.

Assignments and class exercises throughout the term will prepare you to complete this story so give each assignment your all. This is your "final" for the class and is worth **30 percent** of your grade.

Grading

I believe grades should accurately reflect a student's level of achievement for key course objectives. And I believe that everything we do in this class should prepare you to meet the learning goals. That means for each learning objective I'll show you through in-class and out-of-class work whether you are *beginning/emerging, developing, capable, experienced* or *exceptional* on a 4-point scale. You should use these building block assessments to see how you can work toward the *experienced* or *exceptional* levels by the end of the term.

Not every assignment will count toward the final grade, but each will help you improve your journalism. Your final grade will reflect where you are on key assignments. But all assignments must be completed to pass the class.

You can earn up to 1,000 points in this class. To the right is how I convert points to letter grades at the end of the term.

**Final grades for the course
will follow this scale:**

Grade	Points
A+	970-1,000
A	930-969
A-	900-929
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	600-629
F	599 or lower

Graded Assessments . . .

1 | Class Journal (100 points)

Weekly, short reflections posted to Canvas about readings, class visitors and activities to extend your learning.

2 | Paper Chase (200 points)

This assignment teaches you how to find and assess public documents. It includes a courthouse visit on Oct. 31.

3 | Professional Prep (100 points)

You'll include your Bio and Resumé (50 points) in your e-portfolio (50 points). The Bio is ungraded, but has a mandatory rewrite.

**You may rewrite the Resumé and Story Pitch based on my edits. If you do, I will average the two scores for your final grade on those assignments.*

4

Story Pitch
(200 points)

The more you put into this assignment the better off you'll be. Good reporters pre-report.

5

First Draft of
Final Story
(100 points)

Real writers draft and rewrite. It takes time to get the story right and written well.

6

Final Story
(300 points)

It's worth a lot, but along the way are building block assignments (Story Pitch, Final Story Draft) to prepare you to succeed.

How You Will Meet SoJo Course Objectives

Identify What SoJo
Is - And Isn't

In-class activities and
Class Journal

Value how SoJo can
create impact and
engage audiences

In-class activities and
Class Journal

Create SoJo through
appropriate
structure, sources
frames and
interview
techniques

In-class activities

Finding
the Four
Qualities

Uncovering
the
Impostors

Uncovering
the
Impostors

Guest
speakers

Story
Pitch

Final
Story
(first
draft and
final
version)

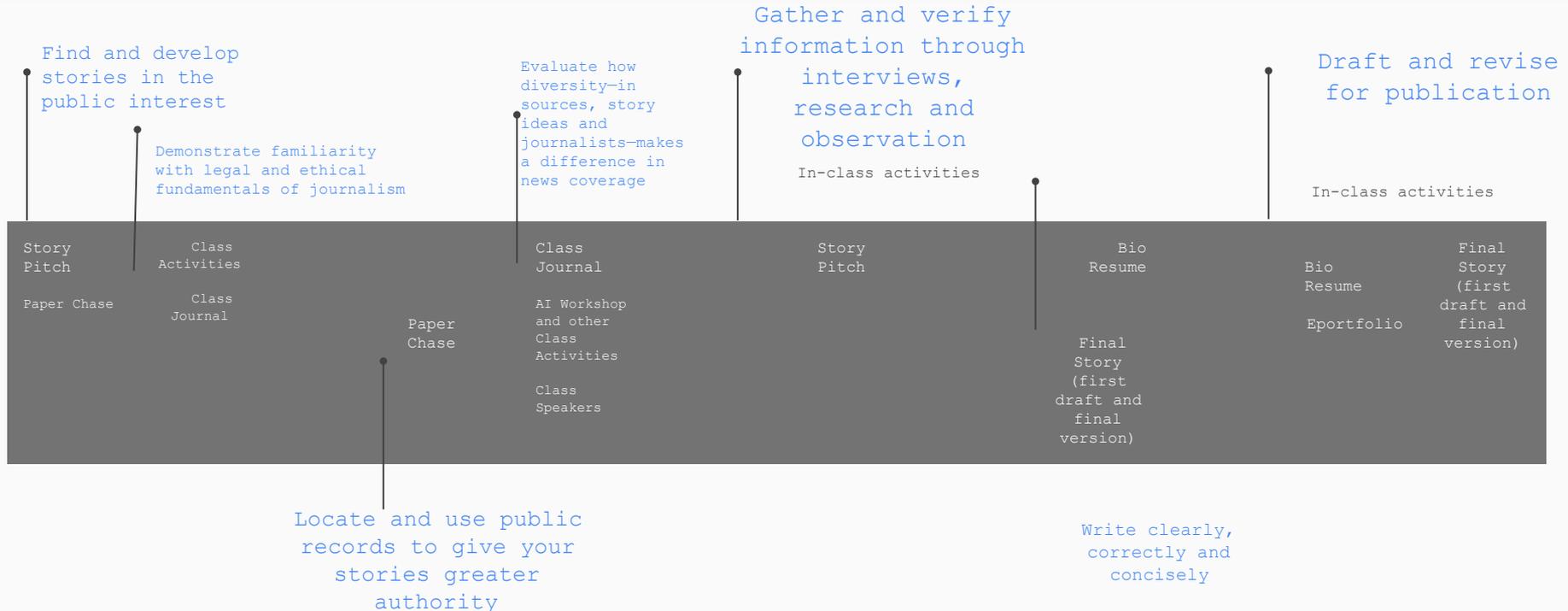
Discriminate between
SoJo, advocacy and
soft news

In-class activities and
Class Journal

See yourself as
contributing to the debate
about the role of the
journalist and journalism
in society

In-class activities and
Class Journal

How You Will Meet R2 Course Objectives



A "Typical" Week in This Class

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graph LR; A((Direct instruction and guided learning on SoJo, reporting and writing concepts and activities to solidify learning)) --- B((Often an "exit slip" tweet for lede-writing practice and comprehension check)); B --- C((Written take-home assignments to reinforce your understanding of key concepts and to provide the building blocks for your final story)); C --- D((Weekly "Class Journal" entries to encourage your reflection about your learning and to provide feedback to me about your learning));
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Direct instruction and guided learning on SoJo, reporting and writing concepts and activities to solidify learning

Often an "exit slip" tweet for lede-writing practice and comprehension check

Written take-home assignments to reinforce your understanding of key concepts and to provide the building blocks for your final story

Weekly "Class Journal" entries to encourage your reflection about your learning and to provide feedback to me about your learning

**As we move toward the end of the term, more time will be spent in class on developing your final stories. But please be flexible! As you know, the reporting process is never cut and dry. Because of that and other factors, we may also need to adjust the course schedule sometimes. But I promise to be fair if changes are needed. And please keep in mind that some days we will have in-person or virtual guest instructors or speakers, so there is no "typical"*

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Week One	Mon (Sept. 24)	Wed (Sept. 26)	Readings
WHAT?	-What is the role of the journalist in society? -Introduction of the Four Qualities	-Four Qualities review -Portfolio (personal bio)	One EdLab story for the Four Qualities assignment; one-hour video for Class Journal
DUE: Four Qualities on Sept. 26; Personal Bio on Sept. 27			
Week Two	Mon (Oct. 1)	Wed (Oct. 3)	Readings
HOW?	-Writer's fingerprint and self-editing -AP Style	-Review of nut grafs & soft ledes	Frame theory for Class Journal; read Santa Fe opioids and re-read Hawaii health care for Monday's class
Week Three	Mon (Oct. 8)	Wed (Oct. 10)	Readings
WHAT? HOW?	Reporting and sourcing SoJo stories	SoJo Impostors	Doubt/Believe article for Class Journal and Oct. 17 class
DUE: Resume' on Oct. 15; bring initial story idea to Oct. 15 class			
Week Four	Mon (Oct. 15)	Wed (Oct. 17)	Readings
HOW?	Source & Story Storming	Story Rigor	Appreciative Inquiry article for Class Journal this week; re-read Santa Fe opioids for Oct. 25 class
DUE: Story Pitch on Oct. 22			

In addition to other assignments, **Class Journal** entries are **due by noon Thursday** each week unless otherwise notes on Canvas.

Readings are related to assignments, for the Class Journal, or related to a class speaker.

*The class and reading schedule and *may change* due to class speakers' schedules or to assist your learning, but I promise to communicate any changes clearly.

Week Five	Mon (Oct. 22)	Wed (Oct. 25)	Readings
HOW?	Appreciative Inquiry to address community needs	Story Structure	
FYI: Story conferences this week.			
Week Six	Mon (Oct. 29)	Wed (Oct. 31)	Readings
HOW? WHY?	Investigations and SoJo (tentative) Guest Instructor Asst. Professor Brent Walth	Using public records: courthouse visit	The Journalism of Outrage
DUE: Bring existing resumé to Nov. 7 class.			
Week Seven	Mon (Nov. 5)	Wed (Nov. 7)	Readings
HOW?	Guest Speaker Sami Edge (reporter, Santa Fe New Mexican, and SOJC alum)	E-portfolios; resumé	Engaging News Project, ivoh memorial, Nieman Lab
Due: Resume on Nov. 12; prepare for Pro-Action Café and work on First Draft Final Story			
Week Eight	Mon (Nov. 12)	Wed (Nov. 14)	Readings
How? Why?	Pro-action Café of reporting project	How does SoJo engage differently than traditional journalism?	
DUE: First Draft Final Story on Nov. 19			

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Week Nine	Mon (Nov. 19)	Wed (Nov. 21)	Readings
WHY?	Peer editing	<i>NO CLASS - HAPPY THANKSGIVING!</i>	
DUE: Paper Chase on Nov. 26			
Week Ten	Mon (NOV. 26)	Wed (NOV. 28)	Readings
HOW? WHY?	Story coaching	Story coaching; class wrap-up	
DUE: E-portfolio and final story at noon, Dec, 3			
Finals Week	Mon (Dec. 3)		
HOW?	FINAL STORY DUE AT NOON		
Enjoy Winter Break!			

Our Classroom Environment

All viewpoints expressed through respectful commentary are welcome.

Journalism operates in diverse environments globally and requires maintaining the trust of the public. Growing as a writer requires learning from others. Therefore, respecting diversity of all kinds is an intrinsic part of this course.

This class involves heavy doses of inquiry and collaboration. That can't succeed unless everyone participates every day. But **there's no grade for "participation."** It takes extroverts, introverts and ambiverts for creativity to flourish.

I'm counting on each of you to contribute to our class community in your own style. We are all responsible for our individual and group learning this quarter.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory on the first day. Students who do not attend will be dropped from class, barring exceptional circumstances.

Throughout the term, if something comes up and you will have to miss a class (illness, accident, etc.), contact me by email before class to arrange for an excused absence. We have a lot to accomplish this quarter and your classmates are depending on you to co-create our class community. An *unexcused absence = a half grade off* your final grade. If something is keeping you from participating fully in this course, let's talk. I can't help you if I don't know what's going on.

DEADLINES

Assignments are due at the START of class in the format requested. (Late assignments will be penalized at 1/2 of a grade for each day, except in documented, extraordinary hardship circumstances.) Assignments will **NOT** be accepted more than two days after deadline.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

You are entrusted with protecting the pact that journalists have made with the public. For this reason, plagiarism or fabrication of any kind will result in penalties that may include failing the course. If you're not sure how to attribute information you've gathered, please ask me. All work submitted must be original to this course.

If you need additional resources...

ACCESSIBILITY

Please notify me if there are any aspects of this class that are raising barriers to your participation. If you have a documented disability or medical condition that might affect your work or require special arrangements in the event of an evacuation, please make an appointment to speak with me no later than the end of the first week of the term.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT SERVICES

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you would like to share information about harassment of any form, here is a list of resources: <https://safe.uoregon.edu/services>.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Several options are available to you to resolve conflict. First, follow the chain of command: (1) the instructor, (2) Sr. Associate Dean Leslie Steeves, (3) Dean Juan-Carlos Molleda. Outside the School, you can contact the UO Bias Response Team (346-1139), Conflict Resolutions Services (346-0617), or Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity office (346-3123).

BASIC NEEDS

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please let me know about your situation so I can help point you in the right direction for assistance.

And don't forget about Writing Central, where trained student coaches, coffee and cookies can help you with assignments. Details/schedule an appointment: <http://sojc.co/Writing-Central>

"I've thought long and hard in recent years about why we do journalism, and why many journalistic institutions have imploded. In short, I think the long-held attitude of many – that journalism should simply inform the public – is wrong, or outdated at best. Good journalism, especially in the 21st century, doesn't have to stop there – at a time when people feel their government (is) so out-of-reach, journalism can also engage people in a conversation about the information they're getting and help plug them into a larger discussion about where society is heading.

Integral to that is seeking solutions. When journalists simply tear down systems, they're usually deconstructing systems that people on the ground already know suck – so they're doing journalism essentially for the elite class that may not experience problems the way most Americans do. A big investigative report that reveals problems in VA care, for example, lands as a "Duh" to anyone I know who has sought care from the VA or has a relative who has...

Journalism should also be on the ground, tapping into the experiences and wisdom of people who interact with systems firsthand, and exploring not only how to deconstruct the bad ones, but how to replace them with better systems.

Investigative reporting that doesn't explore how to improve systems becomes just one more scream in the information overload of the 21st century about how everything sucks... Journalism has to figure out how to distinguish itself from politics to earn back credibility, to stand out among the various voices – and to actually fill our societal role as prophets who help bring about change."

-Heath Haussamen, editor at NMPolitics.net, on poynter.org