Course Syllabus

CODE Number: CMM 331 G

Independent Study: International Journalism

**Number of ECTS:** 6

**Contact Details for Professor Kathleen Beckers**

Tel: 03-265 50 34  
E-mail: Kathleen.Beckers@vub.be  
Office hours: by request

**Course Prerequisites (if any):**

HUM 101G & CMM 102G

**Course Description**

This course focuses on understanding foreign correspondents’ and international news’ role in society. The course analyzes the direction, flow and pattern of foreign correspondents’ coverage, as well as the impact of new technologies on the quantity, frequency and speed of international news reporting. It also addresses the political, social and economic consequences of international journalism and the challenges related to it. The course takes an international approach, contrasting differences in journalistic cultures and approaches. Moreover, it discusses the impact of global trends on journalistic practices. Finally, the main challenges of communicating from abroad are candidly discussed with several guest speakers.

**Course Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students should have acquired the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

**Knowledge**

- Know and understand the main theories and concepts of international journalism;
- Understand the role of foreign correspondents in news production, and the political, social and economic consequences of international news coverage;

**Skills**

- Able to apply and contrast theories of international journalism on specific case studies;
**Attitudes**

- Have a critical attitude towards international news coverage, taking into account current theories of international journalism.

These course objectives relate to the following objectives of the Global Communications major:

- MLO 1: Have a thorough knowledge of scientific levels, types and components of (technologically mediated and not mediated) communication.
- MLO 2: To distinguish various media critically and thoughtfully, based on characteristics, audience, users, effects and applicability.
- MLO 3: Describing and comparing theories, concepts, authors and paradigms of the domains within the communication science.
- MLO 8: Reflect critically on the role of media and communication in social, cultural, economic, psychological, technological, political, legal and other contexts.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

**Week 1**

**CLASS MEETING**

Introduction: Journalism and globalization


Reading questions: What are the differences between the research paradigms of a 'global public sphere' and 'News Media as Emissaries of Global Dominance'? How has globalization influenced foreign correspondence? What is the CNN-effect?

**Week 2**

**INDEPENDENT READING**

Theoretical frameworks: News values, news flows, agenda setting and framing


Reading questions: What are international news flows and how are they related to gatekeeping? What is the concept of ‘core zones of the World’ Do the media influence government or vice versa? What is the influence of new media on agenda setting/ framing in terms of international journalism?

**Week 3**

**CLASS MEETING**

Discussion and explanation of news event analysis

Our news and their news? Foreign correspondents as gatekeeping mediators and translators between cultures


Reading questions: What is the role of foreign correspondents in diplomacy? How do cultural differences challenge the profession of foreign correspondents? What is the relationship between a journalist’s professional attitudes and his/her domestic-cultural attitudes?

**Week 4**

**INDEPENDENT READING**
The influence of new media on international journalism and foreign correspondents


Reading questions: How have social media changed the day-to-day work of journalists? What is network journalism? Do you think traditional journalism still has a role in today’s society and in gatekeeping the news?

**Week 5**

**CLASS MEETING**
Radio journalism: podcasts & interviews
Practical Module by Luke Calzonetti

The role of citizens in foreign news


**Guest lecture by foreign correspondent**

Reading questions: When and under what circumstances did citizen journalism emerge? What is the so-called “Convergence culture”?

**Week 6**

**INDEPENDENT READING**
The changing role of foreign news and its correspondents. Are foreign correspondents redundant?


**Week 7**

**Mid-Term Exam**

**Week 8**

**INDEPENDENT READING**
Freedom of the press & media regulation around the world

Reading questions: What are the four theories of the press as introduced by Siebert, Peterson & Schramm (1995)? What is the problem with the different press monitoring instances, i.e. why is it difficult to compare their findings?

**Week 9**

**CLASS MEETING**

Professional values, ethics and norms in a changing global context


Reading questions: Is it possible to construct a global ethical framework? How have new media changed journalism ethics? What are the challenges for the construction of *global journalism ethics*?

**Week 10**

**INDEPENDENT WORK ON RESEARCH PAPER**

**Week 11**

**CLASS MEETING**

War & peace journalism


Reading questions: What are the recent challenges for war journalists, despite their protection under international law?

**Week 12**

**CLASS MEETING**

*News event analysis due (21/11/2019, 23:59h)!*

Presentations and discussion of research papers

**Week 13**

**Newsroom visit to international news department VTM (Main Flemish commercial broadcaster); Optional**

Development journalism


Reading questions: What are the components of development journalism? How is development journalism ideologically related to the New World information Order (McBride Commission)?

**Week 14**

**CLASS MEETING**

Course wrap up: Summary and conclusions

**Week 15**

**Final Exam**
**Course Materials**

**Textbook**
A Reader provided by the instructor; Handouts

**Case Studies and Additional Sources:**
For the news event analysis, finding additional literature will help you achieve a higher grade, as this helps you bolster your argumentation. The following academic journals are relevant to this course:

*Journal of Communication:* Top tier journal for communication sciences. Includes many studies related to journalism and media analysis.

*Political Communication:* Probably the premier journal for the field of Political Communication, this journal publishes pieces aimed at a broad scholarly audience. Contains research focusing on agenda setting and framing, amongst other topics.

*International Journal of Press & Politics:* Aimed at studies investigating journalism, the relationship media-politics.

*Mass Communication Quarterly:* Focuses on research in journalism and mass communication

*Journalism Studies:* Focuses on journalism studies as well as journalism practice

*Journalism:* Publishes both theoretical and empirical work and contributes to the social, economic, political, cultural and practical understanding of journalism.

**Course Assessment**
The final grade will be based on the following:
- News Event Analysis 40% (35% paper, 5% class presentation)
- Mid-Term Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%

**Grading Scale of Vesalius College**
Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 20</th>
<th>Scale of 100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
<td>85-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
<td>81-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
<td>77-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
<td>69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
<td>66-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
<td>62-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
<td>58-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
<td>54-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
<td>50-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-9.9</td>
<td>0-49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Course Policies

Teaching and Learning Methods
Independent study supplemented with interactive class meetings, Class discussions, Expert Lectures from people from the journalistic field, Videos.

Class attendance
Participation in class meetings is mandatory, except in case of a medical emergency (e.g. sickness). Students will need to provide evidence for missing class (doctor’s note). If evidence is provided, the missed class is considered as an excused class. If no evidence is provided, the missed class is counted as an absence. If students miss two classes in a row, this is reported to their advisor.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism
Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course - or anywhere for that matter. Your written assignments will be checked for plagiarism on TurnItIn: don’t do it. If I find that a written assignment contains portions of text that have been lifted from another source without clear indications of this (e.g. italics) or referencing, this is considered plagiarism. This includes your own work (self-plagiarism). Such cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action. The same goes for cheating or any other breaches of academic integrity.

Description of Key Assignments and Activities

News Event Analysis Instructions
During this course students are asked to compare and contrast a news event covered by different media organizations, in light of relevant academic literature. The results of the analysis will be presented in class in week 12.

Requirements:
- Front page: including student name, student number, assignment title, and word count.
- Length: The extent of the paper should be minimum 3000 and maximum 4500 words (not including references).
- References: A minimum of 10 different academic peer-reviewed references, of which at least 5 are not part of the literature provided in the course.
- Referencing style: APA (American Psychological Association) style

Structure:
Typically, the research paper should have the following structure:
- Introduction: Outlines the news event that will be studied, its societal relevance and its relevance for international journalism; introduces a research question
- Method: Outlines which news outlets will be included in the analysis and why they were selected, which period of coverage will be investigated, and how news coverage was collected
- Analysis: Describes and analyzes news coverage, and links news coverage to theories of international journalism
- Conclusion: Provides a summary of the findings in the light of the literature. Links the coverage to concepts from international journalism and shortly discusses the limitations of the study.
- **Bibliography:** Mention *all* your sources here. Make sure to prevent plagiarism!
- **Annexes:** Please include the text of your article(s) and/or your image(s) in the annex.

**Grading:**
Assignments are graded according to the rubric “News Event Analysis” (see below). The class presentation is graded according to the rubric “Class Presentation” (see below).

**Assignments are due on: Week 12** *(21/11/2019, 23:59h)*

**Mid Term and Final Exams**
The mid-term and final exams will cover both lecture notes and assigned readings. The midterm exam will cover the required material from the first part of the semester, the final exam the material from the second part. Typically, the exams contain the following types of questions:
- 3 short questions (0.5 - 1 page long answer). Example: Compare two theories or describe a theory/concept using an example from international journalism.
- 1 long essay question (1.5 - 2 pages long answer).

The following criteria will be applied in assessing exam responses:
- Capacity to grasp and convey factual, conceptual and theoretical knowledge
- Capacity to synthesize and to apply concepts and theory to concrete cases
- Capacity to develop a systematic argument based on theory and practice

**Deadlines for Assignments**
The deadlines for all assignments are communicated at the beginning of the semester. It is students’ responsibility to make sure they are able to finish the assignments on time. Because you are able to plan ahead, late submissions receive a penalty on the overall score for the assignment:

- 0-24 hours after deadline: 10 point penalty (e.g. 80/100 becomes 70/100);
- 24-48 hours after deadline: 25 point penalty (e.g. 80/100 becomes 55/100);
- 48-72 hours after deadline: 50 point penalty (e.g. 80/100 becomes 30/100).

No submissions are accepted if they are submitted 72 hours beyond the deadline.
## Appendix: Grading Rubrics

### Grading Rubric News Event Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Insufficient (0.0-9.9)</th>
<th>Adequate (10.0-14.9)</th>
<th>Good (15.0-17.5)</th>
<th>Excellent (17.6-20.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction (15%)</strong></td>
<td>Introduction - does not clearly explain news event; - Societal Relevance of news event not mentioned; - Relationship to international journalism not mentioned.</td>
<td>Introduction adequately describes: - News event; - Societal relevance of event; - Relationship of event to international journalism.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate, but news event is clearly described and/or relevance is convincing.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate, but both relevance and event are clearly and convincingly described.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method (10%)</strong></td>
<td>The method does not clearly describe - Why news outlets were selected - How the news items were collected and analyzed.</td>
<td>Method section adequately describes: - Why news outlets were selected - How the news items were collected and analyzed.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate, but choices are well motivated and/or data analysis is clearly described.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate, but choices are well motivated and data analysis is described in a clear and complete manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis (40%)</strong></td>
<td>The analysis is not performed adequately. The results do not seem valid and reliable.</td>
<td>The analysis is carried out correctly. The results seem valid and reliable.</td>
<td>The analysis is of high quality. The clearly described results seem valid and reliable.</td>
<td>The analysis is of very high quality. The clearly described results seem valid and reliable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion (15%)</strong></td>
<td>The conclusions are insufficiently related to the research question and relevant literature. There is no critical examination of own research.</td>
<td>The results are related to the research question and adequately linked to relevant literature. There is sufficient critical examination of own research.</td>
<td>The results are related to the research question and linked to relevant literature. There is a critical examination of own research addressing the major limitations of the study.</td>
<td>The results are closely related to the research question and linked to relevant literature. There is a critical examination of own research addressing the major limitations of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References (10%)</strong></td>
<td>Several references have formatting errors. Less than 5 references beyond course material included.</td>
<td>5 non-course references are used, and almost all relevant course material is used.</td>
<td>Same as adequate + sources are well integrated into analysis.</td>
<td>Same as good + sources are well integrated into analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>More than one Spelling mistakes Requirement for</td>
<td>Requirement for</td>
<td>Requirement for</td>
<td>Requirement for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction**
- Introduction does not clearly explain news event;
- Societal relevance of news event not mentioned;
- Relationship to international journalism not mentioned.

**Method**
- The method does not clearly describe:
  - Why news outlets were selected
  - How the news items were collected and analyzed

**Analysis**
- The analysis is not performed adequately. The results do not seem valid and reliable.

**Conclusion**
- The conclusions are insufficiently related to the research question and relevant literature. There is no critical examination of own research.

**References**
- Several references have formatting errors. Less than 5 references beyond course material included.

**Writing**
- More than one Spelling mistakes
Grading rubric class presentation of news event analysis (5%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Insufficient (0.0-9.9)</th>
<th>Adequate (10.0-14.9)</th>
<th>Good (15.0-17.5)</th>
<th>Excellent (17.6-20.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content (80%)</strong></td>
<td>The presentation does not provide an adequate overview of the relevance and method, results and conclusions of the news event analysis.</td>
<td>The presentation provides an overview of the relevance, method, analysis and conclusions of the news event analysis.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + max of two sentences that are unclear or difficult to understand. The text is well-structured.</td>
<td>Requirement for good but the presentation is compelling &amp; creative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No discussion question is added at the end.</td>
<td>The discussion question is relevant to the presentation.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + max of two sentences that are unclear or difficult to understand. The text is well-structured.</td>
<td>The discussion question is original and well-chosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation style (20%)</strong></td>
<td>Structure of the presentation is unclear. Slides are unclear. Errors in presentation</td>
<td>Basic structure present. Slides are clear, but not very creative. Almost no errors</td>
<td>Structure is clear and logical. Slides are clear and creatively designed. No errors</td>
<td>Requirements for good, but the layout and content of the slides is compelling, and the presentation of the content was excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The text is well-structured. More than one half-finished sentence. The text is not well-structured. Spelling mistake that could be avoided using spell checker.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Insufficient (0.0-9.9)</th>
<th>Adequate (10.0-14.9)</th>
<th>Good (15.0-17.5)</th>
<th>Excellent (17.6-20.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy (50%)</strong></td>
<td>The answer sheet is left blank or the answer fails to address the question.</td>
<td>The answer correctly reflects the basic tenets of the concepts or theories as discussed in class or readings.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + the answer almost completely covers the concepts or theories and contains no major errors.</td>
<td>Requirement for Good, but the answer contains no errors whatsoever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparison/ application (50%)</strong></td>
<td>No link between theories/concepts and examples or comparison of theories.</td>
<td>The answer compares the theory/concepts in a sufficient manner. If an example is needed, it is adequate.</td>
<td>The answer correctly addresses most aspects and angles of the question (e.g. good example is provided, linked to the theory, explains all theories/concepts and compares them in a convincing manner)</td>
<td>The answer correctly addresses all aspects and angles of the question and provides an answer with an excellent level of detail (e.g. good example is provided, linked to the theory, explains all theories/concepts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Grading rubric essay question (1.5 – 2 pages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Insufficient (0.0-9.9)</th>
<th>Adequate (10.0-14.9)</th>
<th>Good (15.0-17.5)</th>
<th>Excellent (17.6-20.0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Contains no position of author</td>
<td>Introduction mentions Position of author</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + Relevance and example are compelling &amp; creative.</td>
<td>Requirement for good + all information is exceptionally compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15%)</td>
<td>No discussion of Relevance or placement in the broader context.</td>
<td>-Position of author -Relevance -Broader context -Specific example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of reading</td>
<td>The answer lacks any adequate reference to course material</td>
<td>Average reference to and application of course material</td>
<td>Good reference to and application of course material</td>
<td>Excellent reference to and application of course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentation</td>
<td>The answer lacks any critical reflection</td>
<td>The answer shows some evidence of critical thinking</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + At least one convincing counter argument that is refuted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40%)</td>
<td>Fewer than two well-argued arguments. Clear logical gaps are present. The argumentation is not convincing</td>
<td>At least 2 well-argued arguments are present. No clear logical gaps or misrepresentations present.</td>
<td>Logical flow of arguments and the argumentation is convincing</td>
<td>Requirement for good + More than three convincing arguments + multiple counter arguments (that are refuted).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Conclusion does not mention statement, position or a short recap of the key arguments</td>
<td>Conclusion mentions statement, position and briefly describes the key arguments.</td>
<td>Requirement for adequate + Conclusion addresses broader relevance of statement</td>
<td>Requirement for good + relevance and summary of arguments is compelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure / Language</td>
<td>The structure is confusing and makes it hard to make out the key points. Use of language is poor, and contains several errors.</td>
<td>Overall structure is clear, with maximum two unclear sentences. Use of language is ok, with few errors.</td>
<td>Structure is clear throughout, with no unclear sentences. Good use of language, with no errors.</td>
<td>Requirement for good, plus the structure and use of language are exceptionally clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>