

Science Communication 201D. Policy and Investigative Reporting

This class focuses on in-depth and investigative reporting, where science and technology meets public policy and society. We will cover essential skills of investigative reporting, including obtaining documents through Public Records Act requests, using online reporting resources, computer-assisted reporting, and ethical and legal issues. After 10 weeks, students will complete an article of ~2000 words, concentrating on an issue of societal/political importance.

Instructors:

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Peter's WEEK 1a: INTRODUCTION: USING DATA IN JOURNALISM

Tuesday, March 29, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: An introduction to data-driven journalism, with examples;

Basic online resources for science reporters: Getting the most out of databases of scientific literature, patents, grants, clinical trials etc.

Assignment: Select example of a published investigative report on a science, environment, medicine or technology-related topic. These will be shared for discussion in Week 2.

Due: Saturday April 2, 2016 at 8pm

Peter's WEEK 1b: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Thursday, March 31, 2016 – starting 7.30am

Five students assigned to Peter meet to discuss project idea and how to go about executing.

Martha's assignment: Read/watch <http://www.ap.org/explore/seafood-from-slaves/>

Due: Tuesday April 5, 2016 at 8 am

Martha's WEEK 2a: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Mon-Weds, April 4-6, 2016 Time flexible

Discussion: Five students assigned to Martha meet to discuss project idea and how to go about executing. These need to be arranged outside of class time via email with Martha.

Martha's WEEK 2b: HOW THE SAUSAGE IS MADE

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: How to write a reporting plan and turn it into action: This lesson uses real life examples to demo how to write a plan and execute it, revising as you go.

Assignment: Write a Reporting Plan: Identify topics for investigative report, including key questions to address, potential sources of information, and initial “to do” reporting agenda including any travel.

Due: Friday April 8 at 8pm (to Peter AND Martha). *Note: By this point, either Peter or Martha will have become your primary editor for your class project.*

Peter's WEEK 2: INVESTIGATIVE APPROACHES

Thursday, April 7, 2016 – 8am

Discussion: Discuss examples of investigative reports selected by students, studying methods employed.

Martha's WEEK 3: SOURCES, SOURCES AND SOURCES

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Click, click, click our way from home pages to data and resources to find revealing data, statistics and trends that will add important context and stories about **Food & Ag, Environment, Energy, Oil, Gas & Transportation**, for class projects and beyond.

Assignment: Finish in-class worksheet

Due: Wednesday, April 13 at 8 pm.

Peter's WEEK 3: ACQUIRING AND CLEANING DATA

Thursday, April 14, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Tips, tricks and tools for pulling unruly data down from the web: extracting data from web tables, automating bulk downloads of multiple files, and web scraping – without having to write any code. We'll then use Open Refine to clean and process data – and learn how to save the steps so in future it can be done with one click!

Assignment: Reporting on class project, file progress report

Due: Saturday, April 16 at 8pm (to Peter and Martha)

Martha's WEEK 4: SOURCES, SOURCES AND SOURCES (PART 2)

Tuesday, April 19, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Click, click, click our way from home pages to data and resources to find revealing data, statistics and trends that will add important context and stories about **Health & Medicine, Law Enforcement & Courts** for class projects and beyond.

Assignment: Finish in-class worksheet

Due: Wednesday, April 20 8 p.m.

Peter's WEEK 4: INTERVIEWING DATA: DATABASES AND SQL

Thursday, April 21, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Beyond the spreadsheet: Using databases and structured query language (SQL) to interrogate data and find the story.

Assignment: Reporting on class project, file progress report

Due: Saturday, April 23 at 8pm (to Peter and Martha)

Martha's WEEK 5: GOVERNMENT CENTER SCAVENGER HUNT

Tuesday, April 26, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: At the Santa Cruz Government Center, learn to look at property records, criminal records, environmental health records, board of supervisor dockets and courts.

Assignment: Public records vetting worksheet.

Due: By end of today's class.

Peter's WEEK 5: FINDING AND TELLING THE STORY BY VISUALIZING DATA

Thursday, April 28, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Data visualization in reporting and storytelling. After a discussion of basic principles, we will put them into practice using Tableau Public.

Assignment: Prepare initial draft of investigative report

Due: Saturday, April 30 at 8pm (file to Peter and Martha)

Martha's WEEK 6: FOLLOWING THE MONEY AND GOODS

Tuesday, May 3, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Financial disclosures, conflict of interest disclosures, campaign contributions, import/export data and other online reporting resources.

Assignment: Finish in-class worksheet

Due: Wednesday, May 4 at 8 p.m.

Peter's WEEK 6: BACKGROUNDING NON-PROFITS, COMPANIES, PEOPLE

Thursday, May 5, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Guidestar and CitizenAudit.org for researching non-profits; SEC filings and other tools for researching companies, and more.

Assignment: File revised draft of investigative report for discussion with Ben Welsh

Due: Saturday, May 7 at 8pm (file to Peter and Martha)

**Peter's WEEK 7: GUEST LECTURER BEN WELSH, LOS ANGELES TIMES
DATA DESK EDITOR**

Tuesday, May 10, 2016 – 8 am

8-10am: Ben will talk about how the LA Times integrates data journalism into the newsroom

12 noon–1 pm: lunch with Ben and Peter

IMPORTANT: Ben will also meet with each student individually, to discuss their projects, Monday and Tuesday pm

Martha's WEEK 7: WRITING WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 12, 2016 – 8am

Discussion: As we improve our class projects, we will have a workshop on writing. Sturdy walking shoes a must.

Assignment: Reporting on class project, file progress report and plan incorporating feedback from Ben Welsh

Due: Saturday, May 14 at 8pm (to Peter and Martha)

Martha's WEEK 8: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Tuesday, May 17, 2016 – starting 7.30am

Peter's WEEK 8: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

Thursday, May 19, 2016 – starting 7.30am

Discussion: After initial edits and Ben's feedback, a catch-up to make sure everything is on track to deliver the best article possible!

Assignment: Reporting and writing on class project. While we will not assign a required deadline for an additional draft, we strongly suggest filing a revision for additional edits before the final deadline!

Martha's WEEK 9: KEEPING IT LEGAL

Tuesday, May 24, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Guest lecturer provides a lesson on defamation, libel and other pitfalls to avoid in journalism.

Peter's WEEK 9: PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND E-SLEUTHING

Thursday, May 26, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Who sent that email? Who runs this website? Also: The tracks you leave, and how to cover them, if necessary. Setting up encryption, to protect yourself, and your sources, from prying eyes.

Assignment: Finalize investigative report.

Due: June 2 at 8pm (file to Peter and Martha)

Martha's WEEK 10: NEXT STEPS

Tuesday, May 31, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Take practice journalism job tests, look at good job hunting websites and have a highly competitive AP style competition complete with prizes.

Peter's WEEK 10: MISCONDUCT AND ETHICS IN SCIENCE AND JOURNALISM

Thursday, June 2, 2016 – 8am

Lesson: Reporting on scientific misconduct and research ethics.

Class exercise: Case studies in journalistic ethics. What would you have done?

Assignment: Go forth and communicate science!

