

Online Journalism
MCOM 4635 - 3 Credit Hours
Spring 2016
Dan Rather Communications Building #205
Monday, 5-7:50 p.m.

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Course Description

“News is only the first rough draft of history.” – Alan Barth, 1943

“She’s just speaking her mind, and that’s what Twitter’s for - as well as ruining the ending of every show I haven’t seen yet.” – Stephen Colbert, 2014

Traditional journalism has a long and storied history. The World Wide Web, conversely, has had a short and dramatic tenure on the global stage. To use a metaphor, the modern journalist is like a citizen of a nation with vast, newly discovered petroleum reserves. The impromptu oil wealth sparks growth at an astonishing speed, and in turn the citizen must adjust her routines and perspectives to accommodate a rapidly changing government, infrastructure and society. Like the proverbial petrostate, media companies are seeing remarkable change and transformation in online and social media; like the citizen, individual journalists must adjust their routines to accommodate evolving media platforms, online news collection techniques, diversifying media audiences and fragmenting media corporations. This course teaches you to navigate that changing media ecosystem, both as a citizen and a journalist.

The class is devoted partly to discussion and consideration of journalism, and partly devoted to multimedia skills training and journalism practice. You will develop a WordPress website and publish your own news throughout the semester. You will develop podcasting skills and audio editing techniques, learn the do’s and do not’s of photography and image manipulation, cultivate a multi-platform social media presence and become an expert at online self-publishing. You also will learn resume writing techniques and construct a valuable portfolio to showcase to employers in any field.

Prerequisite: MCOM 2362 and Junior standing. Levels: Undergraduate. Schedule Types: Lecture.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide you with:

- Expertise in written online journalism
- Expertise in a variety of digital and multimedia platforms
- A self-made, professional website to showcase your digital portfolio

You will also learn the tricks of the trade for the following platforms:

- WordPress
- Adobe Photoshop
- Audacity

- Social Media -Facebook / Twitter / LinkedIn
- Graphing tools and data journalism

Required Textbooks

Journalism Next. Mark Briggs, 2013. Second edition.

Social Media Explained: Untangling the World's Most Misunderstood Business Trend. Mark W. Schaefer, 2014

How to Podcast 2015: 4 Simple Steps to Broadcast Your Message to the Entire Connected Planet Even If You Don't Really Know What Podcasting Is, by Paul Colligan. Colligan, Inc. 2015.

The Associated Press Stylebook, 2014 or 2015

Additional course readings will be posted to Blackboard periodically.

Recommended Textbooks

WordPress To Go: How To Build A WordPress Website On Your Own Domain, From Scratch, Even If You Are A Complete Beginner. Sarah McHarry, 2013.

WordPress Revealed: How to Build a Website, Get Visitors, and Make Money (Even for Beginners). Matt Wolfe, 2012.

Course Requirements

There will be a total of eight quizzes, 10 assignments, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a final project. Class participation will also be graded. Make up work will not be accepted, with the exception of work missed due to excused absences. Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the semester.

Grading rubrics for each assignment are included in this syllabus. Detailed instructions for WordPress, SoundCloud, Audacity, Twitter and other software and online programs are included as well.

Quizzes:	25%
Assignments:	35%
Midterm Exam:	10%
Final Exam:	10%
Final Project:	10%
Participation:	10%

Quizzes – 25% total, 3.13% each

The beginning of most class periods will include a quiz. The quizzes will be distributed upon entry between 5:00 and 5:05 p.m. and collected promptly at 5:20 pm. Students who arrive after 5:05 will not be allowed to take the quiz, and will receive a failing grade. Quizzes will not be held on Week 1 or Week 2 (no class), Week 7 (midterm), Week 8 (Spring Break), Week 9 (guest lecturer from Career Services), or Week 14 (discussion with working journalists).

Quizzes will focus on three items: Current events, headlines, and Associated Press style. Questions on current events will be drawn from news published on the homepages of CNN, *The Texas Tribune*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Huntsville Item*, and *The Houstonian*. Only major sports and entertainment news will be included; the majority of quiz content will relate to politics and so-called “hard news.” Questions on Associated Press style will reflect class lessons on AP style, and are open book – provided you have your own copy of the 2014 or 2015 Associated Press stylebook. Questions on headlines will reflect class instruction and discussion of headlines; headline questions will not appear on the first quiz, as they will be covered for the first time during the second class.

Assignments – 35% total, 3.5% each

Assignments will be due most weeks. There are six types of assignments: Transcribed interviews, podcasts, news articles, a “live Tweeting” assignment, a completed and posted resume and a multimedia assignment consisting of both a podcast and article. With the lone exception of A1, all assignments will be due on a WordPress website you will create for class. Instructions on how to upload every type of assignment will be covered in class; detailed instructions are also included in your syllabus.

Technical issues are **not** an acceptable excuse for late work. If an assignment is not properly posted by the deadline, 50% of the grade will be struck automatically. If the assignment is not properly posted within 24 hours of the deadline, it will receive a zero.

All assignments will focus on local news. You are encouraged to develop a consistent niche – for example, covering the student government consistently, or reporting consistently on the football team or local fashion. However every story *must* focus on Sam Houston State or Huntsville. Do not report on non-local events.

You may make up missed or failed assignments at the end of the semester for partial credit.

- 1) **Interview I:** Transcribed news interview with at least eight questions, including a brief introduction and questions, due in hard copy.
- 2) **Interview II:** Post your Interview I assignment to your WordPress website. Include a headline and brief introduction.
- 3) **Interview III:** Transcribed news interview with at least 12 questions, including a headline, lede and questions, posted to your WordPress website and Twitter.
- 4) **Social Media I:** Live Tweet a news event. At least 15 Tweets, embedded and posted to WordPress.
- 5) **Podcast I:** Eight to 12 minute podcast discussion, including a headline and brief introduction, posted to your WordPress website via SoundCloud and Twitter.
- 6) **Resume:** A completed resume posted as a PDF to your WordPress website.
- 7) **Article I:** 250-350 word news article, including a headline and lede, posted to your WordPress website and Twitter.
- 8) **Podcast II:** Eight to 12 minute podcast discussion, including a headline and brief introduction, posted to your WordPress website via SoundCloud and Twitter.
- 9) **Article II:** 350-450 word news article, including a headline, lede and photograph, posted to your WordPress website and Twitter.
- 10) **Multimedia Package I:** 250-350 word news article, including a headline and lede, posted to your WordPress website and Twitter. Must include an embedded and related podcast of 8-12 minutes, posted to SoundCloud and WordPress.

Midterm Exam: 10%

The midterm exam will be a multiple choice test, administered via Scantron, which covers current events, Associated Press style, headlines, ledes, podcasts, WordPress and social media.

Final Exam: 10%

The final exam will be a multiple choice test, administered via Scantron, which covers current events, Associated Press style, headlines, ledes, podcasts, WordPress and social media.

Final Project: 10%

The final project will assess the entirety of your website. You will be graded on the professional look, feel and tone of your site, as well as widgets and links associated with social media and biographical information. It must also include a downloadable resume and contact information. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric are included in this syllabus.

Class Participation: 10%

Extra Credit – Occasional opportunities for extra credit may arise as the semester progresses, and will contribute an additional one percentage point to your final grade. Students may suggest opportunities for extra credit. Attendance at prominent seminars or events, including visiting speakers or events sponsored by the Global Center for Journalism and Democracy, potentially qualify.

Publishing your work elsewhere, including student media like *The Houstonian*, can also qualify for extra credit. You may earn extra credit for two articles published in any one media outlet, and you may publish in several media outlets. Posting up to three additional news work to your website, including videos or assignments from other classes, may also qualify for extra credit.

Course Guidelines

Deadlines – Deadlines are absolute in newsrooms and media corporations, and are largely inflexible elsewhere in the so-called “real world.” Course deadlines are strict to reflect those priorities. Missing a deadline by up to 24 hours will result in a 50 point penalty on the assignment. After 24 hours, the student will receive a zero on the assignment. Exceptions can be granted for reasonable absences or uncontrollable events, including illness or family emergencies.

Attendance Policy – SHSU Student Handbook of University Policies states that regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University and that it is expected that each faculty member will keep a record of student attendance. A student will not be penalized for three absences or six tardies (defined as entering class after roll has been taken) when examinations or other assigned work has not been missed.

The Department of Mass Communication has adopted the policy that every absence or two tardies over the allotted three absences or six tardies will result in the loss of one letter grade. For example, if your class grade is a B and you have five absences your final course grade will be a D.

Additionally:

- Exceptions are for documented illnesses or family emergencies or for students attending SHSU activities in an official capacity. Documentation for illness or emergency should be presented upon the student’s return to the classroom. Documentation for activities should be presented prior to the absence and contain the signature of the SHSU employee sponsor.
- Each semester hour of credit entails at least two additional hours of work outside the classroom per week: so for this 3 credit course, you should expect to do at least an additional 6 hours of work a week beyond class time. This is on average; some weeks may require more, others less.

Grading scale

A	90% and above
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% & below

E-mail – You must be able to receive e-mail via your “@shsu.edu” account. You will be responsible for any messages you miss if you do not use this university-assigned address. Class announcements may also be posted on Blackboard.

Academic Dishonesty – All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused

of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[Dean of Student's Office](#)

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy – Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

MCOM 4635 Online Journalism Course Schedule (Subject to change)

Week 1: January 11

No class. School begins on a Wednesday.

Week 2: January 18

No class. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Week 3: January 25

Topic: What is "News?" Introductions & Interviews I

Readings: None

Due: None

Assigned: Interview I

Return: None

Week 4: February 1

Topic: Headlines I & WordPress I & Niche Journalism

Readings: Briggs 2

Due: A1: Interview I

Assigned: A2: Interview II

Return: None

Week 5: February 8

Topic: Social Media I

Readings: Schaefer: Section 1

Due: A2: Interview II

Assigned: A3: Interview III, A4: Social Media I

Return: A1: Interview I

Week 6: February 15

Topic: Headlines II, Ledes I, Podcasting I

Readings: Colligan, pages 1 - 110

Due: A3: Interview III

Assigned: A5: Podcast I, Study for Midterm

Return: A2: Interview II

Week 7: February 29

Topic: Midterm

Readings: Study previous readings

Due: A5: Podcast I

Assigned: Study for midterm

Return: A3: Interview III

Week 8: March 7

No class. Spring Break. (Hooray!)

Readings: None

Due: None

Assigned: Relax and stay safe. Don't drink and drive.

Return: None.

Week 9: March 14

Topic: Resumes with Career Services Counselor Michelle Meers

Readings: See BB

Due: None

Assigned: A6: Resume

Return: A5: Podcast I

Week 10: March 21

Topic: Articles I

Readings: See BB

Due: A6: Resume

Assigned: A7: Article I

Return: None

Week 11: March 28

Topic: Podcasts II

Readings: Briggs 7, Colligan, pages 111 - 199

Due: A7: Article I

Assigned: A8: Podcast II

Return: A6: Resume

Week 12: April 4

Topic: Articles II

Readings: Briggs 6 & 9

Due: A8: Podcast II

Assigned: A9: Article II

Return: A7: Article I

Week 13: April 11

Social Media II

Readings: Schaefer: Section 2

Due: A4: Social Media I, A9: Article II

Assigned: A10: Multimedia Package I

Return: A8: Podcast II

Week 14: April 18

Topic: Networking I: Class Visit with Working Journalists

Readings: See BB

Due: A10: Multimedia Package I

Assigned: None

Return: A4: Social Media I, A9: Article II

Week 15: April 25

Topic: Final Review / Extra Credit Competition

Readings: None

Due: None

Assigned: Final Project & Final Exam

Return: A10: Multimedia Package I

Week 16: May 2

Topic: None – Not actually a scheduled class day

Readings: None

Due: Final Project at 2 p.m.

Assigned: Study for final exam

Return: None

Finals Week: May 2 – May 5

Final Exam

Date TBD

MCOM 4635 Online Journalism Instruction Sheets

Instruction Sheet 1: How to Set Up WordPress

- 1) Go to www.wordpress.com
- 2) Click “Create Website”
- 3) The next page will ask you to “find a domain,” and will include a white bar. Click that bar and enter the name of your website. This should be your name. If your name isn’t available, try adding your middle name or middle initial. (For example, SammyBemarkat, SammyBBemarkat, or SammyBartholomewBemarkat.)
- 4) You’ll see several options for websitenames. I’d choose the first one, which includes .wordpress.com, because it’s free. You can always migrate your domain to a better server later and go straight to a .com address if you want, but other hosting sites like GoDaddy and Hostica are really better than WordPress anyway. I’d also discourage a .me or .co website, or anything other than .wordpress.com.
- 5) The next window asks you to “pick a plan that’s right for you.” I’d pick the free one on the left. You can upgrade later, especially if you migrate to a new hosting site. For right now, let’s use the free WordPress version.
- 6) The next window asks you to “Create your account.” Enter your email address, choose a username, and enter a password. Your username will be visible whenever you write an article, so it should also be your name or some variation of your name. If the username you pick already exists, then pick another one.
- 7) WRITE YOUR EMAIL, USERNAME AND PASSWORD DOWN IN HARD COPY. You can also enter it into your phone, but make sure a copy is handy in case you forget.
- 8) Click “Create My Account.”
- 9) It’ll take a moment for the website to process the information. Once another window pops up, you’ll see the words “Please verify your email address” at the top. Leave this window open.
- 10) Go to your email. You’ll have a new email from WordPress. Open it and click “Confirm Email Address.”
- 11) This will open a second window to your **DASHBOARD** with the words “Email verified!” in a green box at the top. Close this window and return to the last window, with the words “Thanks for signing up for WordPress.com” at the top. This is the same window that told you to verify your email address.
- 12) Refresh this page. That will make the note to verify your email address go away.
- 13) The simplest way to proceed is to click “Customize Your Site.” This will “Load the Customizer” and allow you to make changes and see how they look in real time. Click “Customize Your Site.”
- 14) Once the Customizer loads, you’ll see a series of menus on your left. You’ll see one which says “Active Theme” and a button to “change” it. Themes are the overall layout and feel of your site – the layout of the house, in a sense. Every change you make will be based upon your theme. So hit “change” and pick a theme you like. I’d recommend something that’s professional and not too busy, and also not too colorful. Less is more in this case. Remember, too, that some themes cost money – choose a free one. The

“twenty”s are all good – twentytwo, twentyten, twentyfourteen. There are other good choices too. Find one you like.

- 15) When you click “change” a series of new templates will open to the left. You can hover your mouse over one and see a “preview” tab; if you click it, you’ll preview that theme to the right. If you like the theme, move on to the next step. If not, hit back in your browser.
- 16) Below the theme option, on the left, will be other menus. These will vary a bit depending on your theme, but they should be available in one sequence or another for most themes. Click “Site Title & Tagline” to customize your title and tagline. Make sure your name is spelled out in two or three words – the default is to use your url, which is your whole name mashed into one word. You can see the changes you make on your site to the right. When you’re done, hit the < arrow to the left of “Customizing Site Title & Tagline.”
- 17) You can click “Colors & Backgrounds” to experiment with different color schemes. I would highly recommend a white background, however. Remember, less is more when it comes to basic web design.
- 18) Some templates grant a “fonts” option where you can change fonts. Others don’t. Some fonts require purchase, and others do not. Pick a font you like, or use the default.
- 19) Some will have a “Header Image” that you can tinker with, while others will not. I would highly discourage elaborate header images – they’re loud and distracting, and often have little to do with your news content. My recommendation for many themes would be a blank image, so I would remove the image outright. If you’d like to use an image, make sure to use something extremely professional.
- 20) There may be a “Widgets” tab. Don’t worry about Widgets right now. We’ll get to those later.
- 21) There should also be a “Static Front Page” tab. We will not be using static front pages in this class. Click that tab, make sure “Front page displays your latest posts” is selected, and then hit the < arrow again.
- 22) You can experiment with some of the other tabs too. When you’re done, hit the blue “Save and Activate” button in the top left corner of your screen.
- 23) You’ll now find yourself in your website. The colorful post and photo have disappeared, leaving you with a big “Nothing Found” box on your page. In the top left corner you’ll see a big “W My Site” button. Hover your mouse over it. Look down until you see “W WP Admin” in the menu; it’s the second option. Right click “W WP Admin” and click “Open in New Tab.”
- 24) Congratulations! You’re in the **DASHBOARD**. This is where you’ll be doing the vast majority of your web design. You’ll see a black menu spanning the left side of your screen.
- 25) Click **POSTS**
- 26) **POSTS** are essentially blog postings. For this class, they’ll serve as news articles. They’re content that appears on the homepage of your site. This is where you’ll post your articles, podcasts, photos, graphs, twitter posts and such. For now, let’s make an example.
- 27) Click “ADD NEW” in the top left corner of your screen, beside **POSTS**.
- 28) This is a posts page. Enter a title for your post – this is where you’ll put **HEADLINES** later, but for now, title it whatever you’d like. Then click the big white space in the middle of the page that looks like a Microsoft Word document. Here’s where you’ll write your text and articles. Type in anything you’d like as an example for now.

- 29) When you're done, look to the right. You'll see buttons for PREVIEW and PUBLISH. You can preview your work with PREVIEW and when you're ready you can publish it with PUBLISH. Once you've clicked the blue publish button, return to the tab with your website and hit refresh. Your new post should appear. Having your website in a second tab is a convenient way to check your content at any moment.
- 30) If the dashboard disappears, repeat Step 23.
- 31) Now, go back and delete your example post. Write a new post. In this post, paste your entire **A1: Interview I** assignment. Include a headline. Publish this post. This process counts as **A3: Interview II**.
- 32) Congrats! You've got a website!

Instruction Sheet 2: How to Set Up An About Me Page or Widget

You need to include introductory information on your website. There are two ways to do this, depending on the theme you've chosen. One is to use an **ABOUT ME PAGE**. The other is to have an **ABOUT ME TEXT WIDGET**. Both will ultimately include a brief introduction, contact information, and a photograph.

- 1) Some themes have **PAGES** that are plainly visible. Others do not. Either is fine. Look on your website for an **ABOUT**. If you can find it, proceed to step 2. If not, flag me down and I'll help look for it. If we both can't find it, or if you'd just prefer to use text widgets, proceed to Step 10.
- 2) Now look for **PAGES** in the left hand menu. Click it.
- 3) Pages are similar to posts, but there's an important difference. Posts appear on your homepage; pages are separate pages that offer different information. They appear as a separate tab on your homepage. We'll be using one page for this class.
- 4) There's a default page already written called **ABOUT**. Click it.
- 5) This page editing window closely resembles the post editing window. Change the title from "About" to "About Me."
- 6) In the body, delete the paragraph of text which begins with "This is an example of a page."
- 7) Write a short paragraph about yourself, your career interests, and the purpose of this website. Include an email address – preferably NOT a student email address, but if that's all you have, that will do for now. We'll talk more about emails and professional networking with Career Services on Week 8.
- 8) Hit the blue **UPDATE** button to the right to publish the page, or the white **PREVIEW** button to preview it.
- 9) Congrats! You have a page! This **ABOUT ME** page is the only page we'll be using for this course.
- 10) Some themes don't have pages plainly visible. That's fine. You may also simply prefer to keep everything on one page. That's fine too. If so, we'll be using a **TEXT WIDGET** to communicate the same information.
- 11) On the menu on the left side of your dashboard, scroll down until you see **APPEARANCE** with a little paintbrush next to it. Hover your mouse over it. You'll see a secondary menu appear that has options to change Themes, Customize, and a few other features you can tinker with. The third option, **WIDGETS**, is what you'll use here.
- 12) The location of your widgets varies depending on your theme. Some are off to the left side, others the right, and others at the bottom. I'd encourage you to select a theme with widgets on a side, and not the bottom, but it can be hard to tell where widget locations are from the theme selection menu. Some themes have several places to put widgets; others have only one. Either is fine.
- 13) You'll see a series of boxes with words like "BandPage" and "Archives" on the left. On the right you'll see either one or several larger white boxes, possibly as minimized menus, with titles like "SIDEBAR." You can drag the widgets from their place on the left to the box(es) on the right. First, delete the default widgets that are already there – Search, Recent Posts, Recent Comments, Archives, Categories, and Meta. You can add them back later if you want.

- 14) Scroll down until you see **TEXT – Arbitrary text or HTML**. Grab that TEXT widget and drag it up into the white box of your choice.
- 15) After you've dragged and placed the widget, you'll see it opens into a menu with blanks for TITLE and CONTENT. Write "About Me" in the TITLE. In content, write a short paragraph about yourself, your career interests, and the purpose of this website. Include an email address – preferably NOT a student email address, but if that's all you have, that will do for now. We'll talk more about emails and professional networking with Career Services on Week 8.
- 16) When you're done, hit the blue SAVE button and check your website. Your Widget should appear. If you don't like where it's placed and your theme has other choices for widget locations, you can simply drag the completed widget into another white box. If not, you can always change themes.
- 17) Congrats! You've got an ABOUT ME widget! This is *not* the only Widget we'll be using for this course.

Instruction Sheet 3: How to Post Podcasts via SoundCloud

SoundCloud is an online audio hosting site that's great for podcasting. They do get a little picky about copyrighted material, though, so be sure you're not lifting any songs or audio from other sources. Once you've recorded and edited a Podcast, start this uploading process.

- 1) Go to www.soundcloud.com
- 2) Create an account. (If you do not have one already.) You will likely need to verify your email address.
- 3) Once you're logged in to SoundCloud, you'll find a button which says "Upload" in the top right corner. Click it and upload a podcast.
- 4) Once it uploads, test it to make sure it worked.
- 5) Once it's uploaded to SoundCloud, you'll notice a button entitled SHARE beneath the file. Click it.
- 6) A second window will pop up. At the top, you'll see three options: SHARE, EMBED, and MESSAGE. Click EMBED.
- 7) You'll see two options for size and shape of the embedded file. I prefer the smaller shape, but it's up to you.
- 8) DO NOT CLICK the button that says WORDPRESS CODE. Leave this window open.
- 9) In another window, open your WordPress account. Create a new post for your Podcast.
- 10) Write a headline and short paragraph outlining the podcast.
- 11) In the top right corner of the text box, you'll see two tabs: VISUAL and TEXT. Make sure TEXT is clicked.
- 12) Go back to the SoundCloud. Copy the file URL for your podcast.
- 13) Go back to WordPress. Copy the URL directly into your post, beneath your text.
- 14) Hit PUBLISH.
- 15) Go to your website and check. The podcast should be plainly visible and clickable.
- 16) For assignments like **A13** and **A15**, which pair podcasts with other media like articles and tweets, create a single post for all media. Instead of a headline and short paragraph described in Step 10, follow instructions for posting articles or social media and embed the SoundCloud podcast at the end of your post. Put another way: Your podcast will be at the bottom of your article or tweets, and at the bottom of the post.

Instruction Sheet 4: How to Post a Picture

First, touch up a professional photograph in Photoshop, if necessary. You should be wearing **BUSINESS ATTIRE** and look professional. This should be a photo you'd be comfortable including on a resume, on LinkedIn, or putting on your grandmother's mantle. I'd recommend using the Oh Snaps! Photograph, but if not, you'll be responsible for securing a professional photograph of your own. Once you're done editing your photo, follow these steps.

You've got two options for uploading photographs – either in your ABOUT ME PAGE or beside your ABOUT ME TEXT WIDGET. That information, wherever it is, should also contain a photograph. Both options have the same first steps.

- 1) Open your dashboard
- 2) On the left side menu, find the option for MEDIA with a camera and musical note beside it. Click it.
- 3) Click the “Add New” button beside “Media Library” in the top left corner of your screen.
- 4) A new box will appear with the words “Drop files anywhere to upload.” You can drag your photograph into this box, or you can click SELECT FILES and upload your photo directly.
- 5) Your photo will appear beneath the upload box.
- 6) If you're using a page, continue to Step 8. If you're using a widget, skip to Step 11.
- 7) Click the PAGES button on the left side menu. Click on your About Me page.
- 8) Between your headline and text is a button for ADD MEDIA. Click it.
- 9) There will be two tabs – Upload Files and Media Library. You can upload your photo directly here, but I find it safer to upload it to media first. Click the other tab, Media Library, and select your photo. Then click the blue INSERT INTO PAGE button in the bottom right corner.
- 10) I would put your photo beneath your text. You may need to rearrange that text, or even copy/paste it into a new position above your photograph. When you're done, hit the blue UPDATE button.
- 11) If you're using a widget, then open your MEDIA and WIDGETS menus in separate tabs. You'll need to copy information from your media into your widgets, so it's helpful to have both accessible at the same time.
- 12) Scroll down in the WIDGETS menu until you encounter an IMAGE widget. Drag the image widget into the white box with your About Me text widget, or into another box.
- 13) When you place the image widget, a new menu appears. You may enter a widget title like “My Mugshot” if you'd like, or you can leave it blank. The second blank, IMAGE URL, is important.
- 14) Return to your MEDIA page. Click your photograph.

- 15) This will expand your photograph and give you more information. To the right of the photograph will be a tab for URL, followed by a long string of letters. Click inside the box to access those letters, AKA the URL.
- 16) Hit Control and A to select the entire URL, then hit Control and C to copy it.
- 17) Return to your WIDGETS page.
- 18) Paste the URL you just copied into the IMAGE URL blank on your image widget. You can paste by hitting Control and V.
- 19) Hit the blue SAVE button in the bottom left corner. This will publish your widget. Check your website to see how it looks.
- 20) If the photo is ENOURMOUS, which it might be, you'll need to resize it. Go back to your image widget.
- 21) Near the bottom of the menu you'll see WIDTH and HEIGHT, followed by numbers. Click the WIDTH numbers and enter a smaller number – I'd start by half, and then half again, and so on. Continue until the photograph is sized appropriately. Make sure you cut both numbers consistently, though, so the photo doesn't become distorted. Around 200 pixels or so is usually a good height.

Instruction Sheet 5: How to Post Your Resume

Your website must include a resume in PDF form. First, save your resume as a PDF. Then follow these instructions. Like photographs, your resume will appear either in a page or a widget.

- 1) Open your dashboard.
- 2) On the left side menu, find the option for MEDIA with a camera and musical note beside it. Click it.
- 3) Click the “Add New” button beside “Media Library” in the top left corner of your screen.
- 4) A new box will appear with the words “Drop files anywhere to upload.” You can drag your photograph into this box, or you can click SELECT FILES and upload your resume directly.
- 5) Your resume will appear beneath the upload box.
- 6) If you’re using a widget, upload the PDF photograph I emailed to the class. If you’re using a page, don’t worry about the PDF photograph.
- 7) If you’re using a page, proceed to Step 8. If you’re using a widget, skip to Step 18.
- 8) Leave your MEDIA page open. In a new tab, open your PAGE menu and click your ABOUT ME page.
- 9) Between your photograph and introductory paragraph, type the words “Click here for my resume.”
- 10) Return to your MEDIA page. Click your PDF’d resume.
- 11) Find the URL information on the right side. Hit Control and A to select the entire URL and then Control and C to copy the entire URL.
- 12) Return to your ABOUT ME PAGE.
- 13) Highlight the words “Click here for my resume.”
- 14) In the text editing toolbar, beneath the button for “Add Contract Form,” you’ll see a button that looks like a link from a chain. It’s called “Insert/Edit link.” Click it.
- 15) A new menu will open with a blank for a URL. Click inside the blank for a URL.
- 16) Hit Control and V to paste your resume URL into the link. Then hit the blue Add Link button.
- 17) Hit the blue UPDATE button to update your post. Check your website to make sure it worked. You should be able to click the words “Click here for my resume” and have your PDF’d resume appear.
- 18) To add your resume to a widget, begin here. Leave your MEDIA page open. In a new tab, open your WIDGET menu.
- 19) Scroll down and locate the IMAGE widget. Drag it up to the white box with your widgets. When you place it in the box, a new drop down menu will appear.
- 20) Type the words “My Resume” into the WIDGET TITLE blank.
- 21) Return to your MEDIA page. Click the PDF photograph.

- 22) This will expand your photograph and give you more information. To the right of the photograph will be a tab for URL, followed by a long string of letters. Click inside the box to access those letters, AKA the URL.
- 23) Hit Control and A to select the entire URL, then hit Control and C to copy it.
- 24) Return to your WIDGETS page.
- 25) Paste the URL you just copied into the IMAGE URL blank on your image widget. You can paste by hitting Control and V.
- 26) Return to your MEDIA page. Click your resume.
- 27) This will expand your resume and give you more information. To the right of the photograph will be a tab for URL, followed by a long string of letters. Click inside the box to access those letters, AKA the URL.
- 28) Hit Control and A to select the entire URL, then hit Control and C to copy it.
- 29) Return to your WIDGETS page.
- 30) Paste the URL you just copied into the LINK URL blank on your image widget. This is at the bottom of the menu, near the blue SAVE button. You can paste by hitting Control and V.
- 31) Hit the blue SAVE button. This should publish the PDF icon as an image, and when you click it, your resume should appear.

Instruction Sheet 6: How to Create a Twitter Widget

The last widget you'll need for this class is a live feed from your Twitter page. Journalists use Twitter extensively – much more than the general public, according to some recent scholarship – and it's simply a must for anyone working in a media field. You'll demonstrate that by displaying your Twitter feed on your website.

We'll cover this in class as well, but it is **absolutely essential** that you have a **professional** Twitter page. It's okay if you have a separate personal one – that's great if you do – but this Twitter page will be used exclusively for journalism. No personal opinions, no retweeting your grandmother, and no photos of frat parties or shirtless keg stands. If you wouldn't be comfortable saying it in a job interview, don't put it on this twitter page. Preferably, don't put it on the internet ever.

I'm not going to walk you through creating a Twitter page. Y'all are college students and that's really easy. Make sure the name and photograph on your professional Twitter matches the name and photograph on your website, and that you write a brief note about yourself in the About Me page on Twitter – along with a link to your website and an email address. Once you've done that, follow these steps to import your Twitter feed onto a widget.

- 1) Open your Twitter account.
- 2) Click your image in the top right hand corner, which will pull down a menu.
- 3) Hit SETTINGS. This will open a new window with a list of options on the left.
- 4) Go to WIDGETS, near the bottom, and click it.
- 5) This will open a menu which reads "You currently have no widgets," along with an option to CREATE NEW. Click CREATE NEW.
- 6) This will pull up a new window with a few customizable options; ignore them. Hit CREATE WIDGET.
- 7) Beneath the list of tweets in the center, a new line of code will open with a URL, along with instructions to copy/paste that code.
- 8) In a new window, open your WordPress dashboard.
- 9) Go to APPEARANCE > WIDGETS.
- 10) Scroll down until you find a TWITTER TIMELINE widget.
- 11) Grab it and drag it up to the white box with your other widgets; or, another white box. The location is customizable and up to you. I wouldn't put it below your about me / photo / resume widgets, though. I'd put it above or beside them.
- 12) Once you place the widget, you'll see a menu drop down. Title your Twitter widget as you wish, as long as it's professional. "Follow me on Twitter" works, as does "My Twitter Feed," or something similar. Leave the height at 400.
- 13) For "# of Tweets shown, I'd consider 3-5. Enter your preferred number.
- 14) Widget ID is the most important blank, and it's a bit tricky. Return to your Twitter page.
- 15) Copy the URL you created in Step 7. You can copy the entire URL by clicking inside the URL, hitting Control and A to select the entire URL, and then Control and C to copy the entire URL.

- 16) Return to your Twitter Timeline widget. Click inside the Widget ID box. Hit Control and V to paste the entire URL in the box.
- 17) Here's where it gets tricky: You don't want the *entire* URL. There's a series of 18 sequential numbers about a quarter of the way (ish) through the URL surrounded by quotation marks. That's what you want. Delete everything else, including the quotation marks, leaving only the numbers. Then hit the blue SAVE button.
- 18) That's it. Check your website to make sure it worked.

Instruction Sheet 7: How to Embed a Tweet in a Post

For your live tweeting assignments, you'll need to embed tweets into WordPress posts. This is really easy.

- 1) Select a tweet. Click it.
- 2) A few options will appear beneath the tweet, including buttons for REPLY, RETWEET, and FAVORITE. To the right of those are an ellipses, or three periods like ...
- 3) Click the ellipses. This will pull down a new menu.
- 4) Click EMBED TWEET.
- 5) This will open a new window with a pile of code.
- 6) In a separate window, open your WordPress dashboard. Go to POSTS.
- 7) Write the post you'd like.
- 8) Click ADD MEDIA.
- 9) On the left side is a menu. There's an INSERT TWEET option, but it's a bit cumbersome. Instead I prefer INSERT FROM URL. Click INSERT FROM URL.
- 10) Return to your Twitter page. Copy the entire URL you created in Step 5.
- 11) Return to your WordPress post. Delete the http:// that's already there.
- 12) Paste the entire URL into the URL blank, then click the blue INSERT INTO POST button.
- 13) Hit the blue UPDATE button. Then check your website to ensure the tweet embedded properly.

Grading Rubric: Interview Assignments
Online Journalism Spring 2016

Deadlines

Was the interview posted on time and properly?	Yes / No
If no, was it less than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 50
If no, was it more than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 100

Major Details

Were any names misspelled?	No / Yes: - 50
Were there any major factual errors? (Misidentified political party, wrong job title, etc)	No / Yes: - 50

Source Selection / 30

Did the source offer clear conflict and/or celebrity?	/ 20
Was the source local, or clearly tied to SHSU or Huntsville?	/ 10
Did the source present an obvious conflict of interest? (A relative, employee, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc)	No / Yes: - 30

Question Selection / 30

Did the interview focus on open-ended questions, particularly <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> questions?	/ 10
Did the questions focus on intriguing ideas and / or compelling emotions?	/ 10
Did the interviewer allow the source to tell their own story? (ie, no leading questions, let the source talk, asked follow-up questions)	/ 10

Online Publication / 30

Did the headline have ...	
A specific subject?	/ 4
A strong verb?	/ 3
Short everything else?	/ 3
Did the interview include a brief, detailed introduction?	/ 10
Did the interview include full questions and an easy-to-follow transcription?	/ 10

Writing / 10

Did the interview utilize proper grammar & AP style?	/ 5
Was the interview free of misspellings and typos?	/ 5

Total / 100

Comments:

Grading Rubric: Podcasts
Online Journalism Spring 2016

Deadlines

Was the podcast posted on time and properly?	Yes / No
If no, was it less than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 50
If no, was it more than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 100

Major Details

Were any names misspelled?	No / Yes: - 50
Were there any major factual errors? (Misidentified political party, wrong job title, etc)	No / Yes: - 50
Was the podcast the appropriate length?	Yes / No: - 50
Were there major audio quality errors? (Drastic skips, clear repetition, obvious editing errors, etc)	No / Yes: - 50
Was there an accompanying tweet?	Yes / No: - 50

Partner Selection / 20

Does your partner have similar news to discuss?	/ 10
Does your partner's website focus on a similar niche?	/ 10
Did your partner present an obvious conflict of interest? (A relative, employee, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc)	No / Yes: - 20

Discussion / 35

Does the discussion focus on local news that fits your niche?	/ 10
Does the discussion include more detail or backstory than a conventional article?	/ 10
Does the discussion stay focused and professional?	/ 15

Online Publication / 20

Did the headline have ...	
A specific subject?	/ 4
A strong verb?	/ 3
Short everything else?	/ 3
Did the interview include a brief, detailed introduction?	/ 10

Audio Editing / 25

Does the podcast have clear, easily heard audio?	/ 10
Is the volume level appropriate and easy to hear?	/ 5
Are audio edits crisp and hard to notice?	/ 10

Total / 100

Comments:

Grading Rubric: Articles
Online Journalism Spring 2016

Deadlines

Was the article posted on time and properly?	Yes / No
If no, was it less than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 50
If no, was it more than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 100

Major Details

Were any names misspelled?	No / Yes: - 50
Were there any major factual errors? (Misidentified political party, wrong job title, etc)	No / Yes: - 50
Was the article the appropriate length?	Yes / No: - 50
Was there an accompanying tweet?	Yes / No: - 50

Source Selection **/ 30**

Do the sources offer clear conflict and/or celebrity?	/ 20
Were the sources local, or clearly tied to SHSU or Huntsville?	/ 10
Were there at least two quoted sources?	Yes / No: - 30
Did the sources present an obvious conflict of interest? (A relative, employee, roommate, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc)	No / Yes: - 30

Topic Selection **/ 30**

Does the topic focus on a clear conflict?	/ 10
Does the news, and the conflict, effect or interest a wide audience?	/ 10
Is the topic clearly local and focused on SHSU or Huntsville?	/ 10

Online Publication **/ 30**

Did the headline have ...	
A specific subject?	/ 8
A strong verb?	/ 6
Short everything else?	/ 6
Does the lede ...	
Have fewer than 35 words?	/ 5
Clearly summarize the central conflict?	/ 5
Contain the most critical information in the article?	/ 10

Writing **/ 10**

Did the article utilize proper grammar & AP style?	/ 5
Was the article free of misspellings and typos?	/ 5

Total **/ 100**

Comments:

Grading Rubric: Social Media Assignments
Online Journalism Spring 2016

Deadlines

Was the assignment posted on time and properly?	Yes / No
If no, was it less than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 50
If no, was it more than 24 hours late?	Yes: - 100

Major Details

Were any names misspelled?	No / Yes: - 50
Were there any major factual errors? (Misidentified political party, wrong job title, etc)	No / Yes: - 50
Did the article include the appropriate number of tweets?	Yes / No: - 50

Topic Selection / 30

Does the topic focus on a clear conflict?	/ 10
Does the news, and the conflict, effect or interest a wide audience?	/ 10
Is the topic clearly local and focused on SHSU or Huntsville?	/ 10

Online Publication / 40

Did the headline have ...	
A specific subject?	/ 8
A strong verb?	/ 6
Short everything else?	/ 6
Does the lede ...	
Have fewer than 35 words?	/ 5
Clearly summarize the central conflict?	/ 5
Contain the most critical information in the article?	/ 10

Tweets / 30

Are the tweets easy to follow, clear, and well written?	/ 10
Are the tweets conversational, but informative?	/ 10
Do the tweets make frequent use of @tags, #hashtags, and hyperlinks?	/ 10

Total / 100

Comments:

Grading Rubric: Final Project
Online Journalism Spring 2016

Deadlines

Was the assignment posted on time and properly? Yes / No - 100

Website Content

Are the following extant? Yes / No - 100

- A professional layout
- An about me page or widget with ...
 - Email address
 - A short biographical paragraph
 - A professional photograph
 - A downloadable, PDF'd resume
 - A link to your LinkedIn page
- A LinkedIn page with ...
 - A short biographical paragraph
 - A professional photograph
 - A downloadable, PDF'd resume
 - Email address
 - A link to your website
- A Twitter account with ...
 - Email address
 - A short biographical paragraph
 - A professional photograph
 - A link to your website
- A Twitter widget linked to your Twitter account
- A final post with an article, podcast, photo or info graphic, and embedded tweets

Total **/ 100**

Comments: