Journalism for voice-activated assistants and devices

A syllabus for Journalism and Media Studies programmes

Erasmus+

1. Data on the programme

1.1 Field of study	Journalism and Media Studies
1.2 Recommended level [Bachelor/ Masters]	Bachelor/Masters
1.3 Recommended study programme/ qualification	Mass Communication

2. Data on the discipline

2.1 Name	Journalism for voice-activated assistants and devices
2.2 Recommended qualifications for the teacher [practitioner, theoretician, PhD holder in a certain field of study, etc.]	Theoretician; practitioner for seminars
2.3 Year of study [entry level/ advanced]	Advanced
2.4. Evaluation type [examination/ project/ portfolio/essay]	Project
2.5 Type of discipline [facultative, compulsory]	Facultative

3. Total time - estimated [hours per semester of student activity]

3.1 Number of hours per week	2	From which: 3.2 course [theory]	2 (7 weeks)	3.3 seminar [theory & practice]/laboratory [practice & laboratory]	2 (3 weeks)
3.4 Total number of hours [3.1 X number of weeks; 12-14 weeks per semester]	20	From which: 3.5 course [theory]	14	3.6 seminar [theory & practice]/ laboratory [practice & laboratory]	6
Time distribution					Hours
Individual study using a manual, course support, bibliography, notes from the course					80
Documentation online and/ or on the field					
Preparing homework: individual or teamwork, portfolios, essays, etc.					40

Tutoring	**0**
Examinations	**0**
Other activities	**10**
3.7 Total hour of individual study	**130**
3.8 Total hours per semester (3.4. + 3.7)	**150**
3.9 Number of ECTS	**6**

4. Preconditions (if applicable)

[Who are the intended students]

4.1 curriculum preconditions (recommended previous courses)	**No preconditions, but it is recommended for students that already completed some degree in journalism or communication fields**
4.2 competences preconditions	**...**

5. Infrastructure needed (if applicable)

5.1 for the course	**Laptop, Projector, Screen, Audio System, Microphone, editing sound software, Internet access**
5.2 for the seminar/laboratory	**Laptop or other computer, Internet access**

6. Specific abilities

[What do we want students to be able to do]

6.1. Professional competencies *[job skills to be developed]*	● **Collaboration skills** ● **Innovation skills in the field** ● **Problem solving skills** ● **Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa** ● **Skills to reflect and identify upon when is appropriate to deploy voice content production for voice-activated devices and assistants in a newsroom** ● **Being able to discuss appropriately the benefits and limitations of the journalistic content**

	production for voice-activated devices and assistants.
6.2. Transversal competencies *[team work, critical thinking, global citizenship, etc.]*	• **Critical and innovative thinking** • **Media and Information literacy** • **Interpersonal skills** • **Intrapersonal skills**

7. Discipline's objectives

[related to developing abilities & competencies]

7.1 General objective	This course is aimed at students who have interest in understanding the field of voice-activated and assistants, the production of journalistic content for these devices and the recent evolution of this area in the media, in general, and journalism, in particular. And it prepares students to have contact with innovative and new approaches in journalism.
7.2 Specific objectives *[Learning outcomes – observable, measurable]*	**Understand what voice-activated devices and assistants are and know their evolution throughout time** **Know how voice-activated devices and assistants are being used in the media, especially in journalism and discuss future uses for them in these areas** **Understand the specificity of journalistic contents for voice-activated devices and assistants** **Discuss the benefits and limitations of content production for voice-activated devices and assistants** **Understand the role of Natural Language Processing (NLP) in the field** **Understand the role of algorithms in the field** **Know when it's appropriate to deploy content production for voice-activated devices and assistants** **Knowing the importance of search in what regards these types of contents** **Understand how these types of contents are creating a new object for journalism and identify**

	the main audiences: How to prepare contents to be read and to be found **Produce samples of contents for voice-activated devices – looking at formats: the news brief.**	

8. Content

[for 12 weeks]

8.1. Course	Teaching methods *[connected to professional & transversal competencies]*	Observations *[link among proposed teaching methods and intended competences]*
Course - week 1 Course introduction Syllabus Class presentation Brief history of voice-activate devices and assistants State of the art of voice-activated devices and assistants	Lecture	Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa Guided discussion about the state of the art
Course – week 2 Voice-activated devices and assistants and their use in media and journalism Discussion focused on present and future uses	Lecture, discussion, questions/answers	Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa
Course – week 3 Understand the specificity of journalistic contents for voice-activated devices and assistants Understand how these types of contents are creating a new object for journalism and identify the main audiences	Lecture, discussion, questions/answers	Innovation skills in the field Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa Being able to discuss appropriately the benefits and limitations of the journalistic content production for voice-activated devices and assistants
Course - week 5 Knowing the importance of search in what regards. contents for voice-	Lecture, discussion, questions/answers	Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into

activated assistants and devices Understand the role of algorithms in the field		journalistic practice and vice versa Being able to discuss appropriately the benefits and limitations of the journalistic content production for voice-activated devices and assistants
Course – week 8 Discussing the benefits and limitations of content. production for voice-activated devices and assistants Know when it's appropriate to deploy content production for voice-activated devices and assistants	Lecture, discussion, questions/answers	Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa Skills to reflect and identify upon when is appropriate to deploy voice content production for voice-activated devices and assistants in a newsroom Being able to discuss appropriately the benefits and limitations of the journalistic content production for voice-activated devices and assistants
Course – week 9 What is Natural Language Processing (NPL) and its role in the field Languages and limitations to produce and search contents for voice-activated devices and assistants	Lecture, discussion, questions/answer	Innovation skills in the field Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa Skills to reflect and identify upon when is appropriate to deploy voice content production for voice-activated devices and assistants in a newsroom Being able to discuss appropriately the benefits and limitations of the journalistic content production for voice-activated devices and assistants
Course – week 12 The growing importance of voice content: how to prepare a newsroom for this challenge	Lecture, discussion, questions/answer	Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa
8.2 Seminar/laboratory	Teaching methods *[connected to professional &*	Observations *[link among proposed teaching*

	transversal competencies]	methods and intended competences]
Seminar - week 4 Write do be spoken and to be found: the specificities of journalistic contents for voice-activated assistants and devices	Discussion, questions/answer, practice - hands-on	Collaboration skills Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa
Seminar - week 6 Produce samples of contents for voice-activated devices – looking at formats: the news brief	Discussion, questions/answer, practice - hands-on	Collaboration skills Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa
Seminar - week 10 Create and present a sketch for a starting strategy for implementing the production of voice content for voice-activated devices and assistants	Discussion, questions/answer, practice - hands-on	Collaboration skills Innovation skills in the field Problem solving skills Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa
Seminar - week 11 Presentation of the sketch for a starting strategy for implementing the production of a voice content for voice-activated devices and assistants	Discussion, questions/answer, practice - hands-on, group work	Collaboration skills. Innovation skills in the field. Problem solving skills. Translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa.

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10. How is the discipline connected to the expectations of the professional /epistemic community

Our previous research made clear that the voice market is growing, especially in what regards content production for voice-activated assistants and devices, most of the journalists that are working in the field were self-taught, they have been learning by doing and trying to get knowledge from several sources, in some cases not linked specifically with communication or journalism teaching. So, bearing in mind the growing importance of this field it is extremely necessary that we start to have an offer that is specifically thought for journalists.

11. How is the discipline connected to the rest of the journalistic / communication studies curriculum

Being able to offer our students state of the art disciplines that mirror the evolution of journalism and media is one of the goals of every educator, and since this as very important field it is crucial to offer our students the possibility to have contact with this field, in manner that it will help them be the most well prepared possible to do their job. Also it is important to stress out the role of academia in innovation.

12. Evaluation

[How to measure students' acquired abilities, through different instruments, such as: tests; analyses of existing journalistic examples; essays; suggested portfolio]

Type of activity	12.1 Evaluation criteria	12.2 Evaluation methods
Course	Class participation (10 %)	Knowledge of the compulsory reading, ability to answer questions during the lecture or/and discuss topics.
Course	Individual assignment (60%)	Written academic essay (max. 10 pages) focused on one of the topics of the course.
Seminar/laboratory	Group assignments (30%)	In each seminar there will a different group assignment that will represent 10% of the overall score
12.3 Minimum performance standard *[linked to specific objectives/ learning outcomes]* 60 % of the overall score; all tasks must be finished and submitted/performed		

13. Rationale

This course is structured bearing in mind the role of academia in innovation, hence voice-activated devices and assistants are more and more part of our daily lives and they represent an interesting way for journalism to be consumed, it is important for students to have contact with this new field and be able to take innovation, or at least discuss be positioned to discuss this when in the work market.
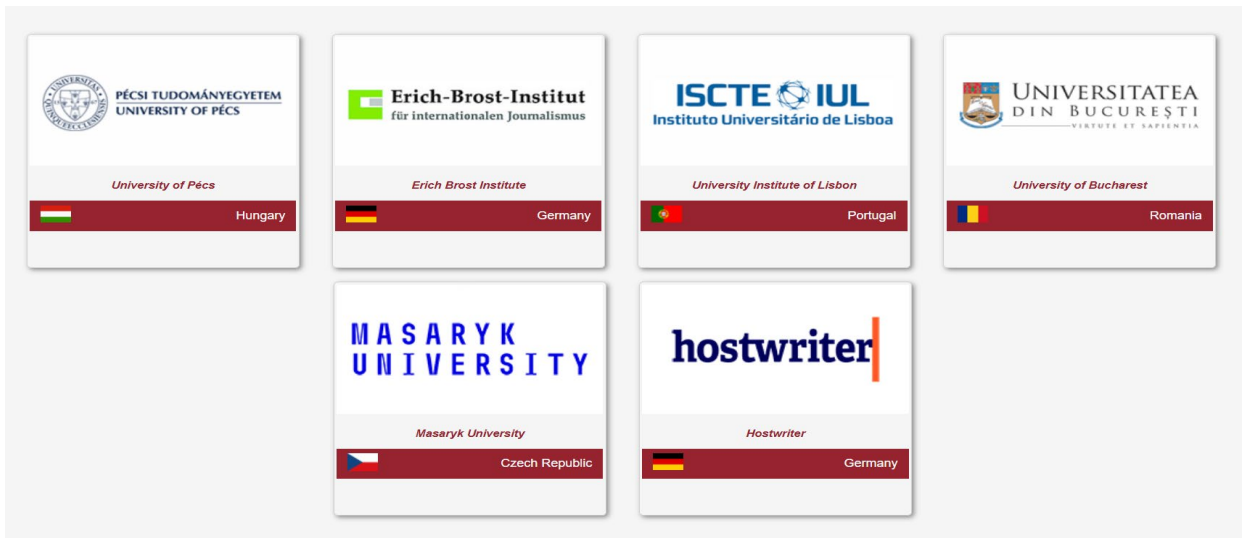
Benchmarking courses

We found no specific courses on this subject. But we were inspired in courses from several other areas, hence this is a multidisciplinary area.

Audio Storytelling for Journalists: How to tell stories on podcasts, voice assistants, social audio, and beyond.

https://latamjournalismreview.org/pt-br/articles/aprenda-a-contar-historias-em-podcasts-assistentes-de-voz-audio-social-e-muito-mais-inscreva-se-no-curso-de-storytelling-em-audio-para-jornalistas/

| University of Pécs | Erich Brost Institute | University Institute of Lisbon | University of Bucharest |
| Hungary | Germany | Portugal | Romania |

| Masaryk University | Hostwriter |
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