NEW TEACHING FIELDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS

TEACHING GUIDE
STORYTELLING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Erasmus+

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About the Newsreel Project

An indispensable ability that journalists need to acquire is the creative and responsible use of digital tools. Journalists should be reliable and trustworthy sources of news amidst the digital din as they need to provide a counterpoint to the wealth of unverified information that affects the raw emotions and tempers of audiences around the world. The target audience of the EU-funded NEWSREEL2 - New Teaching Fields for the Next Generation of Journalists project is the millennial and post-millennial generations of journalists whose lifestyles are inherently linked to digital devices and social media. The primary aim of NEWSREEL2 is to improve their digital skills in a creative and responsible way to enhance the societal benefits of the digital era. To achieve these objectives, the NEWSREEL2 project team developed innovative teaching methods and materials for media and journalism students.

The project is the extension of NEWSREEL - New Skills for the Next Generation of Journalists, widening the scope of the original four journalistic fields covered (data journalism, collaborative journalism, new business models and ethical challenges) with nine new ones: (1) 'Storytelling in social media' enables students to learn how to present journalistic contents on social media networks. (2) 'Graphic journalism' helps students to get to know the basic tools and subgenres of comics journalism. (3) Improving students' 'democratic sensibility' enables them to be aware of their social role and responsibility in the democratic society of the digital age. (4) 'Covering migration' helps to improve their research and reporting skills and understanding migration in a global context. (5) 'Foreign coverage' enables students to contribute to a more balanced coverage of international topics. (6) 'Journalism for voice-activated assistants and devices' teaches students how to use them and see their potential in newsrooms. (7) 'AI and journalism, robot journalism and algorithms' teach their usage, and enables students to clearly see the potential benefits and risks. (8) 'Verifying and analysing fake news' teaches students to be able to identify information and opinion going viral and to verify information with the help of suitable tools and software. (9) 'Debunking disinformation' helps students to get solid knowledge about the mechanisms used for debunking fake news and disinformation. The project aims to facilitate efficient international cooperation between university-based journalistic ecosystems. All educational materials produced by the project partners are open free and accessible through open licenses via the NEWSREEL2 website (https://newsreel.pte.hu/).

The project partners are the University of Pécs, in Hungary; the Erich Brost Institute, from the Dortmund Technical University, in Germany; the University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE-IUL), in Portugal; the University of Bucharest, in Romania; the

Masaryk University, from Brno, in the Czech Republic; and Hostwriter, from Berlin, in Germany.

The Teaching Guides

There is a teaching guide for each field of the NEWSREEL2 project. The main goal of these teaching guides is to give some hints that can help teachers and trainers to implement the developed courses. The guides help understand how the courses are structured and showcase the complete courses and the e-learning or other teaching materials available for each course on the online platform. Through the guides you can have access to main goals of the course, for whom it was thought, bibliographical references and other contents that can help you get the most out of the contents the NEWSREEL2 team has prepared.

The structure

Besides the detailed syllabus, this course provides e-learning materials developed to support the teaching process. You can find these e-learning materials in the syllabus and in this teaching guide.

The teaching guides structure is the following:

- The professional field
- Target audience
- General objectives
- Specific objectives
- Professional competences to be enhanced
- Course
    - Complete course
        - Contents according to the Syllabus
        - Advised teaching methods
        - Evaluation suggestion
        - Bibliography suggestions
    - E- Learning or other teaching materials

- Notes to teachers
- General observations
- The team

Storytelling in Social Media

The professional field

The course is mainly part of the professional field of journalism studies, and the knowledge imparted is primarily aimed at enhancing journalists' professional skills. However, it is also relevant as part of the study of media, public relations and advertising, as the logic and techniques of disseminating news on social media are similar in these fields.

Target audience

University Students at Bachelor Level

General objective of the course

The course aims to provide students with a thorough understanding of the current digital transformation of journalism and the new opportunities for journalism in social media, as well as to improve their skills in journalism in digital and social media.

Specific objectives of the course

- to familiarise students with the main trends and aspects of the digital transformation of journalism
- to enable students to analyse recent social media trends and storytelling practices
- to familiarise them with methods of critical analysis of social media, with a particular focus on popular storytelling practices
- to enable future journalists to identify and apply good practices
- to develop their individual storytelling skills and their own journalistic storytelling techniques

Professional competences to be enhanced

As in the first part of the course, students will gain a theoretical insight into the digital transformation of journalism, and then explore existing digital and social media news formats and journalistic storytelling techniques in practice, they will learn how to translate theoretical insights into journalistic practice and vice versa. By examining theoretical and practical sources, they will be able to understand the key challenges facing journalism today. Processing the literature will help the students to understand and master (English) terminology at a skill level. They also acquire and develop their skills needed to plan and prepare case studies related to journalistic topics. Similarly,

the skills to design and create social media content for journalism will be improved. Their debating skills will be developed through participation in class discussions and debates, their presentation skills through giving classroom presentations, and their teamwork skills through the group tasks.

COURSE

Contents

1. Introduction: Changing boundaries of journalism

As a general experience, the profound transformation of the journalistic praxis as a result of the digitalization and increasing convergence of the media environment is formulated. The ongoing modification of journalistic work (ways of gathering, editing and producing news), rearrangement of the relationships between journalists, their readers and their sources as well as transformation of the media organisations, the business practices and models are reported as parts of a high-impact paradigm shift. Media content and storytelling similarly have faced fundamental challenges. Approaches from different disciplinary backgrounds put emphasis on various components of this transition, but each underlines the current blurring of the boundaries of journalism. In this context, changes in journalism have recently been interpreted as boundary work or even boundary struggle. The above transformation has affected the external and internal boundaries of journalism as a profession and a practice: the ideologies and politics of journalism, the professional roles and norms, the ways of constructing news narratives, and – among others – the traditional hierarchy of journalistic genres. Further changes can be observed in newsroom structures insofar as new job profiles have emerged, and new types of legal and ethical issues also have arisen.

2. Participatory journalism, citizen journalism

One of the most significant fields this boundary work takes place in is the journalistic profession, closely related to the increasing participation of the audience. Though reader participation in journalism has a long history, in the digital media environment more opportunities are provided for audience members to participate in journalistic workflows than ever before. The notion of participatory journalism refers to various forms of reader input at all stages of news production. Current forms of audience contribution, such as citizen media, citizen blogs, citizen stories, journalist blogs, and social networking have become increasingly integrated into news production processes of online newspapers and websites in recent years. Highly rooted in the notions of democracy and public sphere, the concept of citizen journalism refers to the dramatical transformation in journalistic roles, norms and values caused by active participation of citizens in journalistic practice.

3. Digital and social media journalism

The concept of digital journalism refers to new genres and modes of journalistic storytelling by exploiting the interactive multimedia affordances of digital media technologies. Its tools and techniques – data driven digital storytelling, data visualization, digital video, and new digital ways of newsgathering, interviewing and documenting – have been used since the early 2010-s. While social media is becoming more and more integrated into media routines, news consumption is also increasingly taking place on social media. In the contemporary flow of media content, news can be found through third-party platforms but accessed on publishers own sites or both found and accessed on third-party platforms. The mobile, networked and portable media platforms offer a number of innovative communication capabilities. Following the standardization of mobile news consumption as well as the social media trends, media outlets make effort to adapt these news distribution routines, and also experiment with native formats adjusted both to the changing news consumption behaviour and to new functionalities of the social networking sites.

4. Newsrooms, jobs, duties, and strategies in social media journalism

With the digital transformation of journalism, traditional editorial duties and jobs have become outdated and disappeared, while new tasks have emerged. Newsrooms involved in digital content production now include graphic editors, visual editors, social media analysts and comment moderators, among others. Within the newsrooms, digital and social media departments are being set up to continuously monitor and analyse trends in media consumption and use, in particular social media. Based on this data, new journalistic formats are constantly being developed, and the form and style of communication with the audience are adapted to current media trends.

5. Branding in social media journalism

With the emergence of social networks and the rise of digital and social media journalism, journalists have a special relationship with social media. They need to use social media to gather information, produce and distribute news and connect with potential sources. At the same time, there is increasing pressure on them to use social media functions for branding. With their increased visibility, journalists are forced to become professional (media) brands in order to attract public attention in a market where there is strong competition for attention and, indirectly, jobs. On the other hand, the interactive and conversational features of social media platforms also

offer journalists fruitful opportunities to share and promote their work and engage directly with the public.

6. Affordances of Instagram

Specific properties or characteristics of the online environment can be interpreted as affordances. They enable (or are used to encourage) certain types of practices, even if they do not determine which practices will unfold. The affordances of networked publics do not predict the behaviour of participants, but they shape the environment in a way that influences the engagement of participants. With 1 300 million users, Instagram is the fourth most popular social network worldwide and is particularly liked by young adults. Originally created to share photos, the app now also allows users to post videos in multiple formats and also offers ways to connect and communicate with others. The primarily audio-visual nature of the app makes it a particularly suitable tool for social media storytelling. The aesthetics of Instagram can be characterized by an artistic and expressive tonality of the construction of scenes and images. Understanding Instagram's features (characteristics of each account type, allowed activities, content type, visual culture) is a requirement for effective journalistic use of the app.

7. Case studies

Digital transformation has essentially modified journalistic practice, with social media platforms having an immense effect on journalistic work.
If it is a classroom course, students work in groups to observe and analyse the news production and dissemination strategy of a selected social media news outlet and then share their findings in presentations. The main goal of the exercise is to identify and understand good practices.

When working independently and standalone, students will learn about the successful digital transformation and social media strategy of "tagesschau", the news magazine of ARD, a German public service broadcaster, through the e-learning material. In doing so, they will learn about the potential of public media services to fulfil their commitment to provide citizens, including young people, with credible and objective information on public affairs.

8. Storytelling techniques in social media

Storytelling as a practice has always been an integral part of journalistic work. In previous centuries, journalists often used literary elements in their writings, but because of the professionalization of journalism, the narrative style of news articles was replaced with a neutral and objective style. Under the influence of New Journalism, storytelling returned to newsrooms in the 1960s and 1970s by applying literary techniques, such as point-of-view writing and scene-by-scene reconstructions. These techniques encourage immersive reading experiences involving the audience in the described scenes. While in print journalism the immersive reading experience is facilitated by text-linguistic narrative techniques, journalistic multimedia stories are also able to immerse the audience in distant news events by combining text, image, video, audio, and graphic animations. Combining multiple media formats is not a new development, either, but the rise of new media technologies has created new opportunities for journalists to create engaging stories, for example by producing multimedia stories. Multimedia stories, especially when they include interactive elements, have the potential to immerse audiences by offering an encompassing, distraction-free environment.

9. Journalistic micro-formats: picture and texts

For news produced for social media platforms, the classic genres of traditional journalism are not appropriate. These channels require the continuous development of formats that can ensure that news is presented and delivered to the audience in the most immersive way possible. Image editing and the effective combination of image and text are crucial tools for social media journalism and journalistic storytelling. In a workshop, students will learn about and try out different image editing solutions for the Instagram platform.

10. Journalistic micro-formats: video and infographics

For news produced for social media platforms, the classic genres of traditional journalism are not appropriate. These channels require the continuous development of formats that can ensure that news is presented and delivered to the audience in the most immersive way possible. In a workshop, students will explore the possibilities offered by different video formats and the infographics genre to develop news formats that fit the Instagram social networking site.

11-12. Presentation of individual portfolios

In the first lessons of the course, students were introduced to the broader context and main trends of the digital transformation of journalism. Later, they observed and analysed good practices, effective techniques and (micro)formats of social media journalism. Based on the above inputs, students are able to create journalistic content in different formats (sub-genres of social media journalism) based on their own ideas. As a final output of the course, they are required to produce a portfolio of five items on social media news (for Instagram) in different formats.

Teaching methods

The e-learnings allow students to work standalone and independently on the course topics. If the course takes place in a classroom setting, lessons need to be organized on the below ways:

- Lecture and discussion (lessons 1-6, and 8)
- Group presentation and discussion (case studies, lesson 7)
- Workshop (about journalistic micro-formats, lessons 9-10)
- Individual presentation and discussion (individual portfolios, lessons 11-12)

Evaluation

Evaluation criteria:

- Class participation (5 %) - Knowledge of compulsory reading, ability to answer questions during the lecture or/and discuss topics. Students can get 5 points.

- Group assignments – case study (45 %) - Presentation (8-10 slides) focused on the journalistic practices of a selected media outlet on Instagram. Students can get 45 points.

- Individual assignments – portfolio (50 %) - Portfolio of 5 different self-made journalistic micro-formats (50 points, max. 10 for each).

Minimum performance standard [linked to specific objectives/ learning outcomes] 60 % of the overall score; all tasks must be finished and submitted/performed.

Short Bibliography

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E-Learning contents

You can find the following classes on the e-learning platform: https://newsreel.pte.hu/storytelling_social_media

- Participatory Journalism, Citizen Journalism
- Digital and Social Media Journalism
- Branding in Social Media Journalism
- Affordances of Instagram
- Case studies

Notes to the teachers

The course concept is largely based on students' own experiences and usage of social media. These can provide a useful basis for developing content creation skills, but there is also some risk as students may find popular (even commercial) content creation strategies appropriate for journalism.

It is therefore particularly important to highlight the differences between professional journalistic content and popular commercial or influencer content on social media, especially on Instagram. Similarly, the awareness of future journalists about traditional journalistic ethics and professional rules should be developed during the course. Lecture discussions provide a great opportunity for such conversations.

General observations

This course is important for journalists and future journalists alike, as journalism education often lacks up-to-date practical knowledge on how to manage the current digital transformation of journalism, how to create and distribute successful and valuable news content on social media, how to build and develop both a personal professional brand and an editorial brand when communicating on social media.

The course will develop journalistic skills on social media. Journalists can then use their smartphones to produce social media news stories and publish them on social media as easily as possible. They will also receive guidance on how to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Indirectly, the course will also develop journalists' critical analysis and creative skills, which are essential to keep up with media developments.

The team

Dr. Rita Glózer works for University of Pécs, Institute for Communication and Media Studies as associate professor. She is also visiting professor at the Babes-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania) and chair of the Médianegyed Egyesület (a civil association for supporting media education and research). Her educational background includes literature and linguistics as well as communication and media studies. She received her PhD in Linguistics in 2007 and obtained habilitation in Literature in 2019. She teaches and does research in the field of public discourses and discourse theory, youth and media, social media, participatory culture. Her last books are: Részvétel, media, kultúra. Videoblogok a részvételi kultúrában (Participation, media, culture. Video blogs in participatory culture) Gondolat Kiadó, 2022; and Diskurzusok a civil társadalomról (Discourses on Civil Society) L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2008; as co-author with Margit Feischmidt, Zoltán Ilyés, Veronika Kasznár and Ildikó Zakariás: Nemzet a mindennapokban. Az újnacionalizmus populáris kultúrája. (Nation in Everyday Life: Popular Culture of Neo-nationalism) L'Harmattan, Budapest, 2014.