

NEWSREEL 2

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NEW TEACHING FIELDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS

TEACHING GUIDE FOREIGN COVERAGE



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 analyzing 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 Newsreel 2 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 eLearning 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 NEWSREEL 2 team has prepared.

The structure

Besides the detailed syllabus, this course provides eLearning materials developed to support the teaching process. You find the mention to the eLearning materials on the syllabus and at 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
 - o Complete course
 - Contents according to the Syllabus
 - Advised teaching methods
 - Evaluation suggestion
 - Bibliography suggestions
 - o E- Learning materials
 - Contents of the E-Learning materials
 - Interactive tasks for students that can be carried out as part of the teaching
- Notes to teachers
- General observations
- The team

Introduction to International Reporting

The professional field

Becoming a foreign correspondent still seems to be appealing to many students in beginners in the field of journalism, but foreign reporting as a field of journalistic work has changed dramatically in recent years. Permanent correspondents have been made redundant or have to cover larger areas. They are increasingly replaced by "parachutists" who are sent to international hotspots for a short time. At the same time, digital technologies arguably made the sharing of news across the globe easier than ever before.

While foreign coverage is a rather classic field of journalism, much older than digitization, it has faced several challenges and shortcomings in recent times. Nevertheless, international reporting – a term often used interchangeably – has not experienced less opportunities and innovations. As the world has become more intertwined yet more complex due to not only technology but also globalization effects, the lines between national and international news blur, challenging long-standing assumptions in both journalism research and practice.

Journalists working in international coverage see themselves confronted with vivid debates about crediting their local aides, the so-called fixers or stringers. The field has also seen discussions on unequal news flows, Western centrism in international news, or the influence of colonial heritage. Foreign coverage is typically criticized as too 'domesticated' (i.e., covering each event or development happening abroad through an overly domestic lens) or too conflict-oriented (i.e., over-emphasizing negative developments abroad, and more so as in the case of domestic news).

At the same time, collaborations between journalists and news organisations from different countries are gaining importance, especially for those concerned with investigative journalism. Foreign correspondents have not become an outdated model, but cross-border collaborative journalism underpins the growing importance of glocalization. Severe global crises such as climate change or the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate both the need for global coordination and the striking consequences of its absence. Yet, newsrooms in many countries see their budgets for international reporting and overseas bureaus being cut.

This course aims at providing students with an introduction to the field, summarizing the challenges while showing ways for its solution. It builds on existing courses in journalistic practice and journalistic research. It does aim to convey basic knowledge, but also intends to motivate students to challenge common assumptions about the

field of foreign coverage, as well as to thoroughly reflect on its difficulties and challenges.

Target audience

While providing basic knowledge in the field of international reporting, the course is directed to advanced students (e.g., undergraduates in their second or third year, or graduate students within a specialized master's degree on international issues or international reporting). of academic programs such as Journalism or Media and Communication Science. Students should have knowledge of the basics of journalism and media structures. The e-learning material has been developed to accompany a semester-long course, but single sessions might be used independently for related courses. As such, the learning material is also suitable for journalists who wish to educate themselves as well as for newsroom managers who wish to support their team when covering international issues, either from the domestic headquarters or when being sent abroad.

General objective of the course

The overall objective is that students gain knowledge and can reflect and discuss the contents, contexts, structures, and challenges of foreign coverage. They should also be aware of more innovative forms of international reporting such as cross-border collaborative journalism.

To reach this goal, they will first gain knowledge about the basic concepts, definitions, vocabulary, and challenges of the course subject, with a particular focus on the perspective of their respective home country. In a second step, students will learn about main terms of, issues and challenges in contemporary geopolitics and international relations from a globally minded perspective. This will include an overview of some of the most important organizations of international co-ordination. Students will further on learn about the main structures of foreign reporting and the different roles (= job descriptions) it comprises, as well as the historical development and current state of transnational news flows. Further on, they will delve into findings from research on the contents of foreign reporting (including a particular focus on the coverage of war and conflict) and delve into concepts such as “global journalism” that aim to overcome a purely domestic perspective in foreign reporting. The course can be complimented by a workshop with practitioners on how to develop a cross-border collaborative mindset. In the end, students will organize a panel discussion with

representatives of different roles in foreign reporting (e.g., permanent correspondent, cross-border collaborative reporter, “parachutist”).

Specific objectives of the course

By the end of the course, students will:

- Know the key concepts and vocabulary of the subject
- Understand the key features and challenges of transnational news flows
- Understand the functions and structures of international reporting
- Be aware of key academic findings & concepts on the topic and their potential transfer to journalism practice
- Be aware of concepts such as global journalism and collaborative cross-border journalism
- Be sensitive to cultural or national bias and stereotypes when approaching international/global topics
- Be sensitive towards a potential negativity bias and focus on war and conflict in foreign coverage/international reporting
- Be able to identify and discuss good practices of foreign coverage/international reporting

Professional competences to be enhanced

Through participating in the class, students should acquire basic knowledge and first skills for a potential career in foreign correspondence and international reporting. Further, they will understand key problems and challenges of contemporary international reporting, alongside the main structural features of foreign coverage. They will become aware of the influence of (national and/or cultural) bias and stereotypes in international news. The course will further allow them to train their skills to review academic literature. Preparing sessions with guests and the panel discussion with practitioners will train interview and research skills of the students involved. They will further train their essay writing skills.

COURSE

Contents

The course consists of twelve consecutive sessions:

- 1) Introduction to course subject & course organization
This session will introduce basic concepts, definitions, vocabulary, and key challenges of the course subject. It will further be used to introduce the e-learning modules and organize the blended learning approach.
- 2) Introduction to Contemporary Geopolitics & International Relations (E-Learning available)
This e-learning session makes students familiar with key definitions, developments, actors, terms, and concepts in the field of international relations, alongside an introduction to concepts of globalization.
- 3) Structures of Foreign Reporting (E-Learning available)
This e-learning session presents key terms and concepts of foreign reporting, alongside a typology of roles and job descriptions, as well as main criticism and challenges. It is dedicated to introducing students to the field.
- 4) Geographies of News (E-Learning available)
This e-learning session introduces the concepts of geographies of news and global news flows. It is thus dedicated to the question of why some world regions and countries attract more attention from domestic media than others. Students will familiarize themselves with the academic and political debate on the issue and discuss findings from empirical studies.
- 5) Wrapping up: Flashlight presentations by students on a topic from the aforementioned sessions
During this session, students will reflect and discuss the contents of the previous e-learnings against the background of professional values and ethics of journalism. Students will be asked to prepare short flashlight presentations on selected aspects of the e-learnings, summarizing and discussing what they have learned. They will receive feedback from the teacher and their peers.
- 6) Contents of Foreign Reporting (E-Learning available)
This e-learning session introduces academic findings on the contents of foreign news coverage, including common criticism such as a focus on negativity and a domestic angle. It further includes a focus on bias and stereotypes, as well as a larger part on reporting war and conflict as one particularly crucial field of foreign reporting.

- 7) Reporting War and Conflict: A closer look (e-learning material available in E-Learning for previous session)

Following up on the previous e-learning, this session will be used to have a closer look at both academic literature and professional practice in reporting war and conflict. Students will be able to discuss lessons learned from the e-learning session in class.

- 8) Towards Global Journalism? Challenges and Innovations in International Reporting (E-Learning available)

This e-learning session sets focus on potential innovations for the challenges discussed in the previous e-learnings. It introduces the concepts of cross-border collaborative journalism, global journalism and transnational media as potential means to tackle these shortcomings.

- 9) Wrapping up of Course Contents & Preparation of Panel Discussion in session 11

This session provides another opportunity for the teacher to check on students' progress regarding the e-learnings and for students to provide feedback. The session may consist of a short summary of the main course content by the teacher, before turning to a preparation for the panel discussion in session 11. Students will be divided to take over tasks concerning the panel discussion (i.e., moderation, preparing fact sheets about the guests, etc.)

- 10) Workshop with practitioners: Challenging Bias & Stereotypes & Developing a Cross-Border Collaborative Mindset

A practitioner from the field of cross-border collaborative journalism (for example, a journalist who has previously participated in cross-border collaborative investigations) will be invited to the class not only to share their experiences, but also to give a rather hands-on workshop on how to tackle bias & stereotypes and to develop the cross-border mindset needed during such collaborations.

- 11) Panel discussion with journalists representing different roles in international reporting

Together with their teacher, students will organize a panel discussion with 3–4 journalists who represent different roles in foreign coverage, such as permanent correspondents, parachutists, or cross-border journalists. The panel discussion may be opened to a wider audience, such as university staff and students that do not participate in the class. It may be dedicated to current challenges of foreign reporting, or a more precise aspect of the issue to be developed in advance together with the students of the course. Students will take the lead in hosting the panel discussion in different roles (moderator, social media editor, timekeeper, etc.)

12) Evaluation & Wrap-Up of Panel Discussion and Course

The final session will contain a thorough evaluation of the course contents, both concerning the e-learnings and the in-class sessions, as well as the workshop and panel discussion. Students will be engaged in a final discussion about the course content to reflect on what they have learned. This session may also serve as an opportunity to discuss the final assignment (term paper) of the students.

The course design allows for a certain degree of flexibility, for example to reduce the number of courses in case of shorter semesters, or for a clearer focus on only some aspects. Teachers may decide to organize the course without the panel discussion or the workshop on developing a cross-border collaborative mindset.

Teaching methods

This course is suitable for a blended learning approach. Ideally, the e-learning materials are used for a flipped classroom set-up, i.e. students work through the sessions and hand in their answers to the deepening “food for thought questions” before class. In class, students are encouraged to participate actively in discussion rounds and group works. An important component of the course is the involvement of practitioners who are experienced in different fields of international reporting and are willing to share their experiences.

The panel discussion to be organized and conducted by the student group – with the support of the teacher – allows students to jointly work on a project, researching and inviting experienced practitioners, preparing questions and hosting the discussion. This method will help to commit students to a joint goal and to reflect the contents of the course by summing these up for the panel discussion. At the same time, it will provide them with an opportunity to gain insights from and ask questions to practitioners from the field.

Selected recommendations for interactive in-class teaching

Introduction session: reveal prior knowledge through a “silent discussion”

- Students answer in writing on different posters (guiding questions: Which words come to your mind when thinking about foreign coverage? Have you

ever worked abroad as a journalist? Which skills do journalists need to cover events abroad? Which problems can arise when journalists report about a country that is foreign to them?)

- Students should not talk to each other, but should silently comment written answers of their peers.
- After ten to fifteen minutes, students return to their desks and discuss interesting points on the posters; teacher might point out some obvious misconceptions.

Panel discussion: Moderating & preparation

- Two students volunteer to moderate the discussion
- All students help the moderators with preparations (background on/bios of preparing guests, questions, preparing short inputs/keynotes on selected aspects of the seminar, timekeeper, photographer, social media editor, ...), work distribution according to the number of guests and students.
- The rules of moderation need to be clarified beforehand (work sheet, verbal instruction)

Role play: Challenging bias & stereotypes & developing a cross-border collaborative mindset:

- Students collect information from media coverage on a certain country in groups before class
- Students present the results and discuss these with journalists from the countries covered, reflecting upon the degree of (negativity) bias & stereotypes within the coverage
- Potentially, this session could also be organized as a virtual session together with a class from another country, with students presenting the coverage about the respective other country, and then jointly reflect on negative images and stereotypes in it

Evaluation

Each e-learning session includes interactive tests which enable students to survey their learning progress. Sessions also include “food for thoughts” questions aiming at processes of more profound learning and developing solutions. Answers should be handed in before the next class for the purposes of feedback, potentially grading, and as a starting point of discussion in class.

All students

- Actively participate in class activities such as discussions
- hand in answers to the “food for thought”-questions of the e-learning materials (written assignments)
- give a flashlight presentation on a selected issue from the e-learning materials
- participate in preparing the panel presentation in different roles
- Hand in a 20-pages term paper on a self-selected topic (to be discussed with the teacher) from the field of foreign/international reporting, drawing on insights from academia and the knowledge acquired during the course

Students will also be asked to provide a short evaluation/reflection report on the e-learning materials. All tasks should be accompanied by work sheets that explain the aim of the task and guide students through the process.

Depending on the workload foreseen for the course at individual universities, students could be asked to hand in their replies to “food for thought”-questions only, instead of an additional individual term paper.

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E-Learning contents

You can find the following classes on the E-Learning platform:

- Introduction to Geopolitics & International Relations
- Structures of Foreign Reporting
- Geographies of News
- Contents of Foreign Reporting
- Towards Global Journalism? Challenges and Innovations in International Reporting

Notes to the teachers

Depending on the size of a class, giving feedback on the students' answers to the deepening questions ("food for thought") of each session might be unrealistic. Alternatively, students could be asked to hand in their answers only to selected sessions, evaluate their progress by comparison with the model solutions, or to evaluate the answers of their peers.

The implementation of both the workshop on cross-border collaborative journalism / challenging bias and stereotypes as well as the panel discussion requires preparation and close coordination with the involved stakeholders / journalists. Suitable trainers to provide the workshop might be cross-border journalists, experts in cross-cultural communication, or representatives of NGOs active in the fields, depending on availability and focus of the specific implementation of the course. It might also be worthwhile to invite journalists from other countries (to join virtually) about how they perceive reporting from abroad about their country and what stereotypes appear there.

In general, we have designed the e-learning contents, the syllabus, and the teaching guide in a way that may allow for some flexibility in implementing the whole range of contents, the full schedule, or only parts of it.

General observations

The course aims at enabling journalists and newcomers to the field to reflect on the challenges of foreign reporting from a theoretical perspective and think about a first transfer of these theoretical reflections to journalism practice. By providing basic knowledge not as a canon, but as something to be constantly questioned, the course intends to stipulate a critical reflection of journalism practice in the field in day-to-day journalism.

Depending on the session and the language skills of the students, students claimed to have needed about 1,5 to 2,5 hours to work through each e-learning session. An additional 2 hours were needed for answering the deepening questions. No information is available on how much time the reading of obligatory and facultative literature consumed. Students said that the e-learning structure in general let them understand the connections between the individual topics covered in each session. They also emphasized that they enjoyed the possibility to work at their own speed and being provided with links to additional texts and materials in the e-learning materials. Furthermore, students said that the "food for thought" tasks in general indeed allowed them to start a more in-depth reflection of course contents.

The team

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