



## Field Ethics of Journalism in Morocco

JOUR 3500 (3 Credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Morocco: Field Studies in Journalism and New Media

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### Course Description

This course will provide students with the necessary background in journalism ethics—both conceptual and experiential—in order to prepare for the production of a major feature story (ISPJ) in Morocco. Field Ethics of Journalism in Morocco includes the following modules. 1) Journalism Ethics: In this module, students learn the highest standards of journalism ethics, focusing on ethical issues unique to conducting a journalistic assignment in a cross-cultural setting, specifically Morocco. In fact, the highest standards of journalism ethics are woven seamlessly throughout the entire program in reporting assignments, peer edits, and especially in the ISPJ process. 2) Law and Journalism in Morocco: An overview of laws affecting the practice of journalism in Morocco and the legal milieu in which Moroccan journalists practice. 3) The Story Pitch: Producing a professional story pitch with the highest standards of journalism ethics on an important issue in Morocco. This will become the subject of the student's Independent Study in Journalism (ISPJ).

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be equipped to:

- Demonstrate a general understanding of the highest journalistic ethics and standards especially as practiced in a global environment.
- Show knowledge of the unique ethical issues involved in reporting from Morocco.
- Produce a professional-quality pitch for the ISPJ with sharp attention to journalism ethics.

### Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content and words in Moroccan Arabic useful in field reporting.

### Course Schedule

**\*Please be aware that course contents, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any changes of class topics or lecturers be necessary, students will be promptly notified.**

Field Ethics of Journalism in Morocco is structured in three interrelated thematic modules:

#### Module I: Journalism Ethics

In this module, students learn the strictest standards of journalism ethics with an emphasis on ethical issues encountered in foreign reporting, specifically in Morocco. The module involves ongoing reporting

assignments with professor-guided peer edits especially targeted to excursions and with a focus on journalism ethics. It also includes lectures and online seminars from professional editors, photographers, and reporters with insight into ethical components of professional journalism.

Readings include a close study of the Round Earth Media ethics policy.

Students must take a series of online reporting tutorials developed especially for this program by the Poynter Institute, a premier journalism training organization based in the United States. The Poynter tutorials offer our students access to some of the very finest journalism educators working in the field today. There is an assessment built into each tutorial for every student.

The Poynter tutorial that applies to this module is:

**Introduction to Ethical Decision-Making.** Ethics are embedded within our entire program but this course gives students the basic techniques and tools they need to confront complex and complicated ethical issues and support their decisions with clear and rational thought. Students need this foundation in order to produce reporting assignments and an ISPJ of the highest ethical standards. The instructors are Bob Steele and Al Tompkins. Steele is the director of the Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics at DePauw University. Tompkins is Senior Faculty/Broadcast and Online at The Poynter Institute. He is the author of a broadcasting textbook, which is being used by more than 130 universities' journalism departments around the world.

### **Module 2: Law and Journalism in Morocco**

This module covers the journalistic landscape in Morocco: the press, the judiciary, and government policies. It includes lectures on the Press Code in Morocco and objectives and functions of the Moroccan Information Agency and the High Authority of Audio-Visual Communication (HACA). This module also examines ways in which international journalists negotiate press restrictions when reporting from outside the US, specifically in Morocco. Students will also consider what has changed in the Moroccan press over time, especially post Arab Spring.

The following are a sampling of the lectures students can expect. All will be delivered by respected scholars and recognized experts in the field. (Each lecturer is introduced by a student who researches this person as if he/she is conducting a journalistic interview. Students are expected to ask questions and interview the lecturer after his/her presentation.)

Abdelhay Moudden, a professor at Mohamed V University in Rabat, specializing in human rights and political science.

Driss Ksikes, a Moroccan journalist, formerly editor-in-chief of *Tel Quel* magazine.

Paul Schemm, Associated Press bureau chief in Morocco

Aida Alami, Moroccan journalist filing for the *New York Times* and other top-tier outlets

Each lecturer assigns the most current readings on this subject, which is, of course, continually changing.

### **Module 3: A Professional Pitch**

During this module, SIT Study Abroad students, paired with Moroccan journalism students who speak English (students at ISIC, L'Institut Supérieure de l'Information et de la Communication in Rabat), produce an acceptable story pitch for their feature story (Independent Study in Journalism or ISPJ).

This typically requires at least five pitch revisions and numerous pitch sessions with professional journalists and the Academic Director. Students propose stories and receive reaction and advice from these acclaimed journalists. This is a particularly challenging module, affording students the rare opportunity to work directly with seasoned professionals. The focus is on finding a compelling, original journalistic story from Morocco.

Students prepare their ISPJ story pitch along with the IRB application.

Lectures include an unprecedented opportunity to Skype with a long-time editor for the *New York Times* about the reporter-editor relationship. That relationship will be a key component of the ISPJ.

Pitch sessions are with the AD and other professional journalists.

### **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

#### Description of Assignments:

IRB Application: The IRB Application must be completed in consultation with Round Earth Media professionals, as it directly relates to outside field reporting and the Independent Study. The application will be evaluated on the basis of scope and thoroughness, including sources, contacts, interview questions, methodological tools, and awareness of ethical issues.

Reporting assignments run concurrently with formal courses. Field reporting will take students to sites of interest but also to the unexpected corners of Rabat, where they will be alert to patterns, trends, and surprising activities or people. There will be exercises in observing, describing, and interviewing, all with the aim of developing original journalistic pieces in print, broadcast, or online media formats. Interview assignments may involve prominent journalists, NGOs, artisans, or the student's host family. For this course there will be close attention paid to the ethics and ethical challenges of doing these assignments.

Online tutorials: Students must complete the online tutorials satisfactorily by the deadlines set.

Assessment of a student's participation and attendance in the course will be based on the following criteria:

- Prompt attendance at all course activities and positive presence in all course environments.
- Active listening: paying attention in class/during field excursions, taking full advantage of a lecturers' knowledge by asking appropriate questions, entertaining contradictory perspectives, and taking notes. This includes asking our lecturers questions which should reveal students' understanding of the issues we're studying and the unique and important role of a journalist in gleaning information from interview subjects.
- Involvement in class discussions: sharing knowledge and information both in small or large groups.
- Students must show respect and participate in positive and full interaction with host institutions, learners, SIT program affiliates, local communities, and fellow students. Students should record observations regularly in a notebook.

Please be on time for class. Tardiness will be penalized.

#### Assessment:

Reporting assignments:	60%
Online tutorials	30%
Attendance and participation	10%

#### Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
Below 64%	F

#### Grading Criteria

A: Ready for publication or broadcast. Shows mastery of facts and elements. Story is compelling and original.

A-/B+: Accurate; contains all relevant material but may lack maximum precision and clarity in storytelling. May have spelling or grammar errors in text or lighting and sound problems in images and footage. The difference between an A- and B+ is the degree to which these occur.

B: Needs some editing, some minor rewriting, and minor production editing. All the elements are included.

B-/C+: A significant problem or two somewhere in the analysis, focus, organization, shooting, and/or production. The difference between a B- and C+ is the degree to which these problems appear.

C: Missing facts and key information. Major re-editing/reshooting or post production editing necessary. Missing crucial elements.

C-: Very weak effort.

D: Overhaul required. Poor organization, reporting, shooting, and/or production. Major storytelling issues (including sourcing, imaging) and absence of critical thinking.

F: Failure to meet assignment requirements and standards. Missed deadline.

Final grades will reflect plus (+) or (-) minus.

I = Incomplete

W = Withdrawal (student initiated)

AW = Administrative withdrawal

Note: SIT does not award A+ grades

## General Expectations

Students are expected to prepare for, attend, and participate fully in all lectures, course discussions, and field visits/educational excursions. In addition to completing the required readings and being able to discuss them with a lively curiosity, students are expected to read local, regional, and global newspapers and other media.

Assignments are designed to facilitate study, reflection, and analyses of trenchant issues of journalism and new media in Morocco and North Africa utilizing all aspects of the program—lectures, seminars, field excursions, and research conducted during the semester. Grades are based on preparation and participation in all seminars, discussions, and activities; peer edits; and demonstrated completion of all assigned readings. Timely completion of all course assignments is expected. Late submissions will be penalized.

**Deadlines: Please make them. To receive full credit for an assignment, you must turn it in by the deadline.** *All written assignments should be sent by e-mail. Make sure you keep back up files so nothing gets accidentally lost or erased.*

**Electronic devices:** No texting, surfing, tweeting, or logging onto social media or the Internet while in class unless instructed specifically for an assignment.

**Lectures:** This is not only a chance to hear what experts have to say about important topics in Morocco, but also a chance to interview them. Do your homework before each lecture. Have questions ready. If it is your turn, be ready to introduce the lecturer. Your questions for the lecturers will be taken into account in your grade for the courses. A big part of doing good journalism is asking the right questions. Respect differences of opinion (classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen and consider other perspectives with respect.

**Academic Honesty Policy:** This program has zero tolerance for plagiarism. Academic honesty is expected of all students. All quotes and source material must be properly attributed and verified. Your reporting must be original, truthful, accurate, and free of fabrication. Any work you present as your own must be your own. Violations of this policy include plagiarism, fabrication, and any other form of cheating.

## Definitions and Examples:

**CHEATING:** The conscious use of unauthorized, prohibited, or unacknowledged materials or methods, including, but not limited to, checking mobile devices, computers, or notes during online tutorials or copying others' work.

**FABRICATING:** The conscious falsification or invention of information, quotes, sources, or any other material presented as non-fiction.

**PLAGIARIZING:** The conscious representation of someone else's work as your own. Please note that ANY failure to accurately and completely document ALL uses of source material constitutes academic dishonesty. You may use a quote from another source, but it must be attributed in journalistic style. Background and contextual information may NOT be taken from Wikipedia or many other online sites. When in doubt, discuss appropriate sourcing with me BEFORE submitting your assignment.

**THIS IS JOURNALISM: DO NOT MAKE UP ANYTHING** in work submitted in our program.

**Communication:** It is your responsibility to know what's going on. This includes **checking MOODLE every day before class** for announcements, updates, and changes in our course schedule. **There will be changes. There will be new and/or additional assignments.**

**CARRY A NOTEBOOK WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.**

**A CAMERA AND RECORDER ARE ADVISABLE, TOO, though be discrete and abide by the rules of the program.**

**Please note:** the syllabus, course content, lecturers, and readings may modified by the Academic Director in order to better suit the needs of the course and its participants.

**Academic Policies:** SIT prides itself on providing students with an experientially based program; we hold ourselves, and our students, to the highest of academic standards. Students are asked to refer to the **SIT Study Abroad Handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.