

Field Ethics of Journalism in Morocco

JOUR 3500 (3 Credits)

Morocco: Field Studies in Journalism and New Media

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Description

This course will provide students with the necessary background in journalism methods and ethics in order to prepare for the production of a major feature story (ISPJ) in Morocco. Students will have the opportunity to discuss these issues with professional journalists working in Morocco and with foreign correspondents, who will share the challenges they face and the strategies they utilize in their reporting. Students will be exposed to a variety of different storytelling mediums – audio, video, or photography – and will learn to critically analyze them. Students may choose these mediums to work in as well.

Lectures will focus on key reporting and story-telling techniques, such as how to introduce conclude a story; how to conduct an interview and write a profile; and how to structure a narrative.

Students will receive feedback on assignments through peer edits and from the AD and journalism advisors and will be expected to make substantive revisions. Class discussions will lead students to critically reflect on the role and position of the foreign correspondent, and on issues such as how to avoid stereotypes; how to convey the agency of victims of discrimination and repression; how to ethically navigate power imbalances and linguistic barriers; and how to operate professionally within restrictions on the media.

The knowledge and skills acquired in this class – in addition to what students learn about Morocco and North Africa in their other courses -- will help students produce a professional story pitch on an important issue in Morocco. This will become the subject of the student's Independent Study in Journalism (ISPJ).

Alternately, students may present a proposal for an internship with a local organization, carrying out work related to media, communications or journalism.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of course students will be able to:

- Explain ethical issues involved in international reporting, such as how to treat sources fairly and respectfully; how to represent another culture in a nuanced and sensitive way; and how to maintain professional journalistic standards of accuracy, fairness and independence.
- Practice skills to report, observe and conduct interviews while navigating differences in a new cultural context.
- Develop techniques in writing, interviewing and story-telling techniques.

- Interpret and incorporate editorial feedback and undertake revisions.
- Produce a professional-quality pitch for the ISPJ, paying attention to journalism ethics OR an internship proposal that includes a description of the host organization, an outline of tasks that will be performed, a proposed work timetable, and projected outcomes such as reporting/media projects.

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 and French that are useful in field reporting. On occasion, a lecturer may speak in Arabic or French, with simultaneous translation.

Course Schedule

Students will be provided a detailed course schedule during orientation on the program. Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1: Journalism Ethics

In this module, students learn journalism ethics, with an emphasis on issues encountered in foreign reporting, specifically in Morocco. The module involves reporting assignments with professor-guided peer edits, feedback and revisions. It also includes lectures and seminars from professional editors, photographers, and reporters and visits to organizations working in the field of media/publishing/journalism. They will discuss ethical issues that can come up in the course of reporting in Morocco, such as conflicts of interest and protecting sources.

Session 1: Carrying out Global Journalism

We discuss the need for international reporting in US media, some of the challenges facing foreign correspondents, and some of the fundamental principles of accurate, professional journalism.

Required Reading:

Stories published by previous students in the program

Session 2: Ethical Issues in Journalism

The academic director will lead a class discussion of some of the issues that arise when reporting on foreign cultures and countries.

Required reading:

Orwell, G. (1939). "Marrakech."

Smith, B. (2018). *This is What It Was Like To Report Before Fake News Was the Biggest Problem in the World*. BuzzFeed. Retrieved from: <https://longform.org/posts/this-is-what-it-was-like-learning-to-report-before-fake-news-was-the-biggest-problem-in-the-world>

Hansen, S. (2017). Excerpt from *Notes on a Foreign Country: An American Abroad in a Post-American World*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/08/unlearning-the-myth-of-american-innocence>

Shatz, A. (2014). "Writers or Missionaries? A Reporter's Journey involves writing with a sense of history and without false consolation." *The Nation*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thenation.com/article/writers-or-missionaries/>

Recommend reading:

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage.

Module 2: Journalism Methods

Through lectures and exercises with professional journalists, students will learn about particular journalistic methods, such as how to introduce, structure and conclude a story; how to write a profile; how to write a pitch; interview skills and strategies; and where to find reliable sources of information.

Session 1: Writing a Profile

Aida Alami, Moroccan journalist filing for the *New York Times* and other top-tier outlets, will help prepare students for the profile assignment, by discussing how to successfully introduce, structure and conclude a story as well as interviewing techniques.

Required Reading:

Kramer, J. (2006). "Letter From Morocco: The Crusader," *New Yorker* magazine, October 16 2006. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/10/16/the-crusader-2>

Fadel, Y. (2018). "To Be A Writer You Have To Be Against The State: Youssef Fadel Illuminates Morocco's Past and Present." *New Yorker* magazine, Feb 28 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/to-be-a-writer-you-have-to-be-against-the-state-youssef-fadel-illuminates-moroccos-past-and-present>

Session 2: Photojournalism in the Arab World

Mosaab El Shamy, Associated Press photographer in Egypt and now Morocco, will discuss photographing the news in North Africa, from the Arab Spring and its violent aftermath in Egypt to social issues in Morocco.

Required Reading:

Students are requested to visit the sites and view the work of contemporary photographers working in North Africa and the region:

<http://mosaabelshamy.com>

<http://arabdocphotography.org>

<http://www.nadirbouhmouch.com>

<https://www.zarasamiry.com/>

Session 3: Writing a Pitch

Ursula Lindsey, academic director and contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Nation* and the *The New York Review of Books*, will address both standard practice in writing a professional journalistic pitch, as well as the particular requirements of the ISPJ pitch.

Students will submit a practice ISPJ pitch, which will be peer-edited in class. Students will receive feedback from the academic directors as well as from advisors who are professional journalists/editors. The ISPJ pitch should include a title for the potential article and a brief description that articulates the story's significance and why it would be compelling to an international audience; name of student partners and reporting location; potential sources and access to them; any ethical questions or consideration; and background research and reading.

Required Reading:

<https://ijnet.org/en/resource/how-pitch-story-ideas-tips-journalists>

Module 3: Cross-cultural Collaboration and Reporting

During this module, SIT students have guided encounters and workshops with students interested in journalism at the American University in Rabat and at the Connect Institute in Agadir. The SIT students are charged with finding a partner compatible with their interests.

After work-shopping interview questions and techniques, SIT students record and annotate interviews with their partners for potential editing into a podcast format.

Student partners collaborate on finding a story topic worthy of pursuing for a major feature story (ISPJ). During the ISPJ period, Moroccan and SIT students report their story together.

Required Reading

Harling, P. (2018). "Asking questions." Retrieved from:

<https://peterharling.blog/2018/03/08/asking-questions/>

Fisher, H. (nd). *Her Side of The Story*, podcast episode from Kerning Cultures. Accessed at: <https://kerningcultures.com/her-side-of-the-story>

Excursions

International University of Rabat

Connect Institute, Agadir

After completing Modules 1-3, students will split into groups by ISP or internship. ISP students will take Module 4a, and internship students will take Module 4b.

Module 4a: Introduction to the ISP

This module will describe the ISP processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their ISP. The module will include a discussion of past ISP. The module will also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application). It will give an overview of logistics and of deadlines during the ISP period.

Session 1: A Professional Pitch

During this module, SIT Study Abroad students, paired with Moroccan student partners who speak English, produce an acceptable story pitch for their feature story (Independent Study in Journalism or ISPJ).

This typically requires multiple pitch sessions and revisions with professional journalists and the Academic Director. Students propose stories and receive reaction and advice from editors/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 LRB application. The LRB Application must be completed in consultation with your journalism advisor, as it directly relates to outside field reporting and the Independent Study Project in Journalism (ISPJ).

Once the ISPJ is accepted, ISPJ preparation also includes discussion of how to present

oneself and one's work to sources, how to approach and develop a rapport with interviewees, how to manage interviewees' expectations, how to navigate gender norms and issues of language and access.

Recommended Readings and Resources:

<https://www.banffcentre.ca/articles/how-write-good-pitch-tips-editor-atlantic>

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/about/sample-pitches>

<https://medium.com/@annfriedman/how-and-where-to-pitch-your-writing-1c316fa37bda>

<http://killfeepod.com/story-pitching-secrets-from-top-editors>

Module 4b: Introduction to the Internship

This module will describe the internship processes and help students brainstorm ideas and set goals for their internship. The module will also walk the students through the Local Review Board (LRB) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and the application for Human Subjects Review (HSR application). It will give an overview of logistics and of deadlines during the internship period.

Session 1: Internship Proposal

With guidance from the academic director, students prepare proposals for internships, within organization in Morocco working in the field of media.

The internship proposal should include the objectives to be achieved during the internship period, a justification of the work and the organization selected, skills or areas in which the student can contribute to the work of the host organization, and an outline of the work plan to be carried out. Students prepare their Internship proposal along with the LRB application.

Once the internships proposal has been approved, internship preparation will include a discussion of issues such as how best to describe the internship experience and purpose to potential internship hosts and others, how to approach and manage interviewees' expectations, gender norms, issues of language and access, and workplace expectations. We will also discuss responsibilities of the student and the host organization for a productive and significant experience that can serve the objectives of both; review best practices for a successful internship; and consider the student's positionality in relation to the organization.

Recommended Readings:

Switzer, F. and King, M. (2013). *The Successful Internship: Personal, Professional and Civic development in Experiential Learning (4th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole (chapters 2 and 3).

McDonald, F. (2011). Ethical Use of Interns. Retrieved from:

<http://www.prsa.org/aboutprsa/ethics/ethicalstandardsadvisories/documents/psa-17.pdf>

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

ISPJ or Internship Proposal Development, including IRB Application (30%)

The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of scope and thoroughness, including sources, contacts, interview questions, methodological tools, goals and awareness of ethical issues.

Reporting Assignments (50%)

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. Students will be expected to follow local news and to contribute to the student news site Reporting Morocco.

Assignments include:

- Writing a profile
- Conducting, recording and annotating interviews with student partners
- Writing a sample ISPJ pitch

Readings, Attendance and Participation (20%)

Students should read assigned readings (often instructive examples of reporting on Morocco) and prepare questions for our lecturers. These questions should reveal the student's understanding of the issues we're studying and the unique and important role of a journalist in gleaning information from interview subjects. Assessment of a student's participation in the course will be based on prompt attendance at all course activities and positive presence in all course environments, as well as active listening—paying attention in class/during field excursions, taking full advantage of a lecturers' knowledge by asking appropriate questions, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes. Participation also includes involvement in class discussions—sharing knowledge and information both in small or large groups—and respect—positive and full interaction with host institutions, learners, SIT program affiliates, local communities, and fellow students. Students must also record observations regularly in a notebook.

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

Assessment:

Reporting Assignments	50%
ISP/Internship Proposal	30%
Readings, Attendance, and Participation	20%

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

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.

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.

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 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>.