

**The Department of Media and Communications**  
**Media Production Specialisation**  
**Journalism**  
**MC52007A (Spring Term 2012)**  
**Updated September 2011**

**This course is taken by Media and Communications students in their second year.**

**Introduction:**

The course is designed to enable you to build on and improve the skills you began to learn in years 1 or 2 by working as a team on East London Lines, the online news website which is run by Goldsmiths journalism students.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Apply an understanding of genre and audience.
2. Critically evaluate arguments and assumptions, frame appropriate questions and make judgments, in a wide range of research situations related to developing skills in journalism.
3. Devise and sustain arguments within journalistic conventions and recognize the limits of those conventions
4. Demonstrate a personal prose style and an understanding of the different genres and styles within journalism, such as news, features, interviews etc.
5. Understand and apply the writing and production processes for online journalism.

The qualities and transferable skills acquired will be:

6. The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
7. Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.
8. The ability to communicate information, knowledge and concepts to a non-specialist audience through journalism.

**Learning Method:**

You will work as part of a team to provide news, and other material for the East London Lines website which provides a news, listings and features service to the communities along the East London Line. This course teaches the web journalism skills that are currently in demand. You will learn how to sub-edit and use web software. You must be prepared to contribute to group analysis of all work produced. Individual tutorials will be provided as required.

**Portfolio:**

During the course you will build up a portfolio for submission at the end of term comprising:

- A minimum of three short original news pieces (300-400 words each)
- An interview (800-1000 words)
- A general feature (800-1000 words)

All should be suitable for use online and be applicable to the particular audience and geographical area covered by the East London Line.

**Assessment:**

**Portfolio Assessment (60%)**

Learning outcomes will be assessed by examination of a portfolio of your work as described above.

1. The ambition of the work.
2. The understanding of genre and audience.
3. The variety and appropriateness of sources used across the portfolio.
4. The quality of analysis.
5. The structure and style of the work (including spelling and punctuation).

**Class Work Assessment (40%)**

6. Consistent attendance
7. An understanding of the processes of web production.
8. Writing skills
9. Editing skills

Please keep and hand-in both original copies and screen print outs of your work for final assessment.

**Please ensure you refer to the handbook 'Pocket guide to media law and ethics' available on learn.gold when writing all articles.**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**THIS IS A PUBLIC WEB SITE. ONLY WORK CHECKED AND/OR AGREED BY YOUR TUTOR CAN BE UP-LOADED. ANY BREACH OF THIS RULE WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**

Please be aware that this course comprises half of all your marks this term and that you are expected to spend at least 50% of the week engaged in journalism. That means that your weekly Tuesday workshop day makes up less than half of the time we expect you to spend each week on this course and therefore you will be expected to spend the equivalent of another day and a half each week on work related to the course.

**First half of term:**

Workshops will prepare you to work for ELL and refresh the basics of news and feature writing that you were taught in the Introduction course as well as the specific skills for working online on ELL. Weekly assignment deadlines will normally be for the following Monday night. It is expected that some of your assignments will be suitable for use on:

ELL.

**Second half of term:**

In the second half of term each workshop will commence with a news conference led by students from the postgraduate journalism courses. You will be working principally as a reporting team which means you are expected to produce stories across the whole week that will be commissioned and then edited by MA students.

Some of you will also be given 'shadow' roles to work with the post-graduates in order to prepare you for full editorial control which may start in the last two weeks of term. You take over editorial control of the site for the first half of the autumn term in your third year.

Each week, you will be required to produce original copy for the website, linked to the specialist beats/areas you have chosen. The tasks will vary and will be organised by your tutor and the executive team of postgraduate students. Your final portfolio will be expected to derive largely from this work.

In the afternoons, students will be working on stories for the website, subediting copy or having tutorials in respect of their individual portfolios.

**Timetable:**

**Week One:**

AM:

Introduction to the course and to East London Lines.

Briefing on portfolio requirements; contacts; teams; working your patch

PM:

How the ELL site works, how it was set up. Key stories for the areas. How writing for the web differs from print: live blogging, updates, SEO. Using social media to promote the site and your stories.

**Assignment: Team research report on your ELL area**

**Week Two:**

AM:

Presentation of area reports and discussion of news and feature ideas. Recap on how to recognise and develop a news story. The importance of local news: working your patch and developing sources and contacts; dealing with police, courts and councils. Online research, including use of social media.

PM:

Features: how do we recognize and develop features for ELL such as Meet The Trader or for the arts or people slots.

**Assignment: Finding, researching and writing a local news story of 350 words**

**Week Three:**

AM:

Feedback on assignment. Recap on writing news stories; ELL style book. Recap on interview skills: How conducting interviews are crucial for all journalism; Using quotes effectively

PM:

Interview types: news, feature, arts, vox pop etc. The importance of the interview in features; examples. Vox pop briefing

**Assignments:**

**1. A vox pop on a current issue.**

**2 Develop two ELL interview/news feature ideas**

**Week Four:**

AM:

Feedback on vox pops and ELL interview ideas. How to be a sub editor. Sub-editing and headline writing exercises.

PM:

Structuring longer pieces of writing; examples, discussion

**Assignment: Find and write a news based feature or short interview for ELL of 400-500 words**

**Week Five:**

AM:

Feedback on news features/interviews

Briefing on working for ELL: Copy uploading and management, online subbing, categories, style,

linking and tagging, headlines, SEO. Pictures: How to select and use images effectively; sourcing, attribution, copyright. How to size and upload.

PM:

Briefing on editorial control: Editorial roles and responsibilities. The importance of editorial meetings, respecting deadlines and working as a team.

Briefing on portfolio requirements and discussion of ideas for interviews and features

**Assignments:**

**1 Find three local story ideas for first news conference**

**2 Prepare ideas/drafts for portfolios**

**Week Six:**

We would like to maintain the site over monitoring week and will be asking students to volunteer for this.

**Weeks Seven to Ten:**

AM:

News conference

Writing and editing for ELL

PM:

Working on ELL  
Group and individual tutorials

**Week Eleven:**  
Recap and de-brief; What we have learned.  
Portfolio assignments to be handed in.

**PLEASE HAND IN TWO COPIES OF YOUR PORTFOLIO IN TWO  
SEPARATE FOLDERS WITH YOUR NAME/NUMBER ON EACH.**