

macleay college

Unit & Elective Descriptors

Bachelor of Journalism



Core units – year one

Foundations of News

This subject is designed to help you learn the basic elements of news gathering, reporting and writing in a news style. The primary goal of this subject is to develop the foundational skills of a reporter - news values, how to recognise and assess the merits of stories, how to write a newsworthy introduction, how to structure a story and get the facts in the right order and how to cover events in real time at press conferences and court cases.

Media History and the Ethics of News

In this subject you'll be developing and enhancing your understanding of the media – its role, culture, power and effect as well as the ethical dilemmas faced daily by journalists. The subject encourages the analysis of current media, recognising the diverse treatment and presentation of news in Australia and abroad. The subject helps you broaden your knowledge of current affairs and newsworthy events in Australia and internationally, and you'll be reviewing and discussing the coverage of news stories as they happen. The issue of journalistic ethics underpins all tutorials and discussions and you'll be considering these issues in conjunction with writing-based exercises to help you develop your news writing skills.

News Research

In this subject you'll be introduced to traditional and digitally driven news research. You'll be learning about, and discussing the best way to develop and research, story ideas and the tools needed to find what's true and accurate, particularly in the current 'post truth' and 'fake news' era. The subject also demonstrates that the best story ideas are borne out of critical and original thinking.

Data Journalism

Data journalism is a journalistic process based on analysing and filtering large data sets to find news stories. Sourcing and importing data, scraping for data and creating your own data sets have become core skills in digital newsrooms around the world. You'll be learning how to perform these tasks as well as how to visualise data so that it's easily comprehensible to an audience. While data-driven journalism deals with open data that is freely available online and analysed with open source tools, this subject also introduces you to the ethical and legal limits of the craft.

Media Law and Practice

In this subject you'll be developing a fundamental understanding of media law and its role in protecting the rights of the journalist, the public and the publisher. You'll learn about the legal risks associated with newsgathering and with published content. The subject helps you develop the skills necessary to recognise questionable information and potential breaches. You'll be examining the law as it relates to different platforms and different jurisdictions. You'll also experience a court in action and be shown how media laws shape coverage of current events.

Video Journalism

In this subject you will learn the skills needed to be a video or TV journalist in the digital age. You'll be learning how to perform in front of the camera and how to shoot a story as well as skills in editing, script writing and packaging using editing systems like Premiere Pro.

Feature Writing

In this subject you'll be introduced to different styles of feature writing and pitching ideas to magazines and newspapers. You'll be learning about the differences between hard news and features, the different structures used by feature writers to engage with their audience and the differences between writing long-form stories for newspapers and digital publications. The subject also teaches the craft of writing the perfect sentence, the perfect paragraph and, therefore, the perfect feature. Student projects in this subject are often published on the Macleay student journalism website, Hatch.

Mobile Journalism

MOJO is the name given to the way journalists conceive, research, shoot and edit their stories on mobile devices and it's fast becoming a core and required skill in all newsrooms. In this subject you'll learn about the various workflows available and the technical fundamentals associated with digital media production with a strong emphasis on mobile platforms (iOS, Android, Mobile PC). The subject teaches you how to troubleshoot and work with the ever-increasing number of app libraries and how to apply this knowledge to produce broadcast-quality radio and video packages.

Core units – year one (continued)

Reporting on Government and Institutions

This subject explains the roles of central and local government and examines the relationship between journalists and these institutions. It also explores the public role of other important institutions such as religious organisations and NGOs. You'll be covering local councils and national politics in practical exercises and will be learning how to assess the comparative news value of government decisions. You'll be learning how and where to obtain information from council agendas and central government records and how to distinguish between news and government spin. And you'll also be looking at the intersection between the public role of the journalist and the public interest in effective government.

Radio Journalism

In this subject you'll be developing the skills you need to produce audio content including scriptwriting, packaging using phone apps and podcasting. You'll be learning these skills in the context of digital and multimedia productions. The subject includes helping you to develop a radio voice as well as your reporting skills. You'll be learning how to work in a radio newsroom, broadcast live and produce podcasts.

Professional News Practice/Internship

In this subject you'll be developing a good understanding of the unique industry you're hoping to enter – the way it operates and the opportunities it offers. The subject covers the information and skills you need to help you establish a complete set of pro-active job-seeking skills and tools. You'll be learning about the skills required for job applications and interviews as well as the value and importance of networking. You'll be using your writing, production and web skills to produce a CV and shown how to develop a social media profile as an engaged journalist.

Electives – year one

Sports Journalism

In this subject you'll be learning about the challenges of covering sports, both live and in retrospect, that may have been seen by millions of people who all think they know what happened. You'll be looking at the challenges of covering sports stars and sporting institutions and the commercial and emotional pressures of covering the 'home team'. Most importantly you'll be learning how important it is to place sport in a wider cultural space that allows you to evaluate and critically analyse its impact on Australia.

Food, Fashion, Lifestyle and Travel

Food, fashion and lifestyle writing have seen a revival in the past five years and have become a specialist genre of media production. In this subject you'll be learning about the different styles of media production in food, fashion, lifestyle and travel, including blogging and magazine restaurant reviewing.

Business Journalism

Covering business and the economy is one of the growth areas of journalism. In this subject you'll be learning how business functions and why news about the economy is so important.

Investigative Journalism

This unit will challenge students to debate the issues which should inform the work of the investigator, from the ethics of dealing with sources to the tension between the public interest and what is merely interesting to the public. At its best, investigative journalism provokes change, and influences the agendas of both citizens and policy makers. But it also, according to critics, negatively impacts the process of decision making in government and, in some cases, is said to damage national security and financial markets. Where does the balance lie? Students will study and critique the ethical decisions made in major investigations, both historic and current, and learn how to use their knowledge and judgement to solve problems in their own investigations.

Music Journalism

Music is a part of our daily lives and is a huge international industry. This subject studies the history of reporting music, the different genres of music reporting, the emotions involved and how to reflect these in writing. It also covers the ins and outs of accessing information about a specialist area and how to profile music and musicians.

Photojournalism

In this subject you'll be learning the theoretical and practical fundamentals needed to be able to produce great photo essays. You'll be exposed to the potential of photojournalism through the exploration of current reportage and documentary photography in print and digital mediums.

Podcasting

In this unit students will learn end-to-end production techniques and create their own podcasts. Each week's lesson will blend theoretical learning with practical, hands-on production practice to allow students to gain confidence in their skills while also providing an understanding of the trends underpinning podcasting today. Students will learn about history, major innovations and trends throughout the trimester but will be required to build their technical and editorial skills every week. Each lesson will include a practical component where students will advance their recording, scripting and editing capabilities.

Core units – year two

Media and News Entrepreneurship

Media is in a state of flux. But flux isn't all bad news. It can be great news if you have ideas, energy and ingenuity. In this course, you'll be learning how to use your creativity and business acumen to create new media ideas. Using your entrepreneurial skills, you'll be working on a project to come up with new ideas to keep journalism relevant and vital while keeping journalists employed.

International Reporting

In this subject you'll be engaging with the issues of reporting in a world without borders. You'll be learning how to deal with issues of culture and language and will also be examining the ethics of parachute journalism and how to responsibly report in countries you may be just visiting. The subject includes discussions around the modern implications of the Mark Twain rule - how a lie can travel around the world before the truth gets its boots on. This subject also uses case histories to study the do's and don'ts of being a foreign correspondent.

Newsroom 1

As well as attending timetabled lectures in this unit, you'll also be practising what you're learning in our newsroom Hatch, at the campus. There's also an expectation that when you're not in a Newsroom 1 class or any other class, you'll be producing your own news items. You'll be able to choose to cover daily stories or you might prefer to choose to work on longer form, investigative stories. Work that meets the College's editorial standards will be uploaded to Hatch.

News Photography

This unit introduces students to news and features photography. Students will examine the power of still imagery and become acquainted with the key works in the genre of news photography, and the features that distinguish it from other visual media. Students will learn how to use a digital SLR Camera on manual and the importance of manual camera functions as well as using a smartphone. Students will learn how a technique that began as an art form has been adapted to the language of the modern news media. They will engage with current ethical dilemmas facing the photographers today, and how to make critical professional judgments selecting imagery and to critically evaluate their own imagery.

Social Media Journalism

This subject introduces you using social media as a journalist and analyses its impact on the profession. Social media platforms are integrated into every aspect of story production - from content gathering and verification, to editing, distribution and story production. The subject examines how social media impacts news coverage and you will learn how to create, gather, receive and distribute content on social media platforms.

Multiplatform Writing

The global transition to convergent newsrooms has given journalists greater access to integrated and innovative storytelling tools. In this environment, multiplatform writing is an essential skill. In this unit students are taught to recognise the textual differences between social, digital, audio and video journalism. They will be shown how to write to sound and pictures; how to craft compelling headlines and captions; and how to adapt and re-purpose multimedia stories for publication and broadcast across all platforms. Through the exploration and discussion of narrative structures, students will develop the ability to produce both short-form and long-form news stories. Sub-editing exercises will further consolidate their understanding of the characteristics and functions of contemporary journalistic writing.

Newsroom 2

This subject allows Hatch to practise advanced disciplines of digital journalism. Working in the on-campus newsroom on campus, you'll be part of a team running an online operation showcasing student work, including daily stories and long form-form pieces. With a focus on digital and video journalism, newsroom 2 runs as a daily operation three days a week when you are not in class.

Coding Fundamentals

Learn about what coding is, what it is used for, various coding languages and how experience with coding is essential in web development, dashboards, apps and digital platforms and tools. Learn which coding language is best suited to which business and technological issue and develop hands-on skills in programming in one or more industry standing coding languages.

Multimedia Project

This unit consolidates learning from other parts of the journalism program and focuses on building advanced digital work incorporating editorial design principles, motion graphics, explainers and animation. Students will study the power of visual imagery and how to use different content forms in storytelling. They will learn to apply journalistic judgements to alternative domains. Students will advance their digital skills using software including Premiere Pro, After Effects and Photoshop.

Newsroom 3/Internship

This unit consists of five main elements, all of which are aimed at ensuring that students in their final trimester are fully prepared to work in a professional newsroom on graduating. These are: completing an internship; producing multimedia works of a high standard for publication on the HATCH news site; analysing the daily practice of 24/7 digital journalism and the changes continually sweeping the industry; creating / polishing CVs, social media profiles and professional portfolios; and perfecting the art and craft of advanced reporting and multimedia writing.

Electives – year two

Sports Journalism

In this subject you'll be learning about the challenges of covering sports, both live and in retrospect, that may have been seen by millions of people who all think they know what happened. You'll be looking at the challenges of covering sports stars and sporting institutions and the commercial and emotional pressures of covering the 'home team'. Most importantly you'll be learning how important it is to place sport in a wider cultural space that allows you to evaluate and critically analyse its impact on Australia.

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