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JOUR 165.01: Current Events

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CURRENT EVENTS J 165
Michael Downs (mdowns@selway.umt.edu)
Phones: 243-6720 (office) and 327-0207 (home)

Wednesday, 3:10-5 p.m.
Office: J 303B

Off. Hrs: Tues 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Thur 9-11 a.m.
Fri 2-4 p.m.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

This class offers an apolitical examination of whatever happens to be in the news, while demystifying such journalistic catch phrases as “non-governmental organization” and “militant leftist.”

My objective is that each of you leaves this class a news junkie, hooked on the great drama that plays out across the world, the United States, and Montana. To that end, I will work to answer any question you ask. I will assign you readings intended to broaden your perspective and to build the context by which you will come to understand how world events are interrelated.

By the end of this class, you will understand many of the forces that shape international, national, state and local news. You will recognize world leaders, and you will better understand the conflicts and problems that continually bedevil the world and, by extension, appear in headlines and on news broadcasts.

TEXTS

Required

“The Economist” magazine and other online or local publications, as assigned.
For the Economist, write checks for \$25.05 payable to “University of Montana Foundation/ Journalism”

Recommended

A nightly news television broadcast
Radio news

DEADLINES AND CLASS ATTENDANCE

We meet only once a week. We will have a weekly quiz and a weekly presentation. Students who take the quiz but leave before the presentation without consulting with me in advance will have that day's quiz recorded as a zero. "Consulting in advance" does not mean the five minutes before class. Also, note that I hold final approval over whether your reason for leaving early is valid.

GRADING POLICY

Weekly reading quizzes	40 percent
Group presentation	30 percent
Final	30 percent

A WORD ABOUT PARTISANSHIP

This is not a class for debating politics. It is intended to give you the facts and context you need to better debate in other classes, in dorm rooms, at the dinner table back home, and anywhere else people exercise their First Amendment rights to argue. I ask that in class you try to refrain from partisanship. Maintaining a non-partisan atmosphere allows us to focus on inquiry rather than argument, and inquiry lies at the heart of this class.