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### JRNL 491.01: Study Abroad Seminar

Larry Abramson

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [larry.abramson@mso.umt.edu](mailto:larry.abramson@mso.umt.edu)

Henriette B. Lowisch

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [henriette.lowisch@umontana.edu](mailto:henriette.lowisch@umontana.edu)

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# JRNL 491 Study Abroad Seminar

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Meets Wednesdays, 4:50 to 5:40 p.m., DAH 301

## Instructors

Dean Larry Abramson

[Larry.Abramson@umontana.edu](mailto:Larry.Abramson@umontana.edu)

Phone: (406) 243-5250

@abramsonwrites

Office Hours: T, Th 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., and by appointment

Prof. Henriette Lowisch

[Henriette.Lowisch@umontana.edu](mailto:Henriette.Lowisch@umontana.edu)

Phone: (406) 243-2227

@t\_a\_nomad

Office Hours: M 12:30-2:30 p.m.; Th 1-3 p.m., and by appointment

## Course Objective

International reporting is about more than just applying for a passport and hopping a plane. Each trip starts with a vision for a story or series of stories, a winning pitch, a potential publisher and the ability to raise funds to cover costs. This 1-credit seminar will demonstrate how to build the foundation for a successful story-based adventure. While open to anyone interested in developing a large-scale media project, we will use a planned J-School study abroad to Berlin, Germany, as a real-world case study. The course is a launch pad to JRNL 473 International Reporting (3 cr.), offered in Spring 2016.

## Berlin Trip Planner

*Next summer, a group of University of Montana students will travel to Berlin to investigate the forces driving the latest immigration crisis in Europe.*

*During the 20-day trip to one of the world's most vibrant capitals, they will report on how Germany is dealing with a wave of immigrants driven by poverty as well as by the aftermath of the Arab Spring. In collaboration with local students, the Montana team will produce print as well as photo, video and audio documentaries for online publication.*

*The trip will be led by Larry Abramson, dean of the School of Journalism, former NPR correspondent and German teacher; journalism professor Henriette Lowisch, an international journalist and part-time resident of Berlin; and Shane McMillan, a Berlin photographer and filmmaker who grew up in Montana and graduated from the UM J-School in 2010.*

*Pending student input, the Berlin trip requires a series of timely decisions on these items:*

- *Trip Dates*
- *Travel and Accommodations*
- *Number of Participants*
- *Total Cost Per Student*

*Students interested in traveling to Berlin will need to put down a non-refundable deposit of \$500 by spring registration in October. The total student fee will be due in April 2016. Current estimate of cost per student: \$3,500 (plus airfare, passport). Students participating in*

*fundraising efforts through the seminar can expect to reduce those costs significantly. Putting down a deposit for the Berlin trip is NOT a requirement to pass JRNL 491.*

## Course Topics

You can write? Awesome. You can create beautiful pictures? Great. But can you sell an idea, build a project, and create a budget? These skills are increasingly important for freelancers and even storytellers working within media companies. This course will give you the following skills to get your film off the ground, finance your long-form series, or finally undertake that exotic reporting trip:

### Project Planning

From finding a place to stay to bringing the right equipment, every detail counts. Learn how to structure your project, build a budget and collaborate effectively as a team. We will also move beyond the big-idea questions into details such as how to use spreadsheets to organize your work or online tools to ease your workload.

### Pitching

Help your story idea to become reality by finding the right publisher, developing a brag graph and formulating a winning elevator pitch. This course will introduce you to fundraising skills you can use to support your own work, or that of others.

### Project Marketing

Develop promotional materials to plug your project and show off your skills to prospective publishers, clients and funders. This is an increasingly important skill for journalists, filmmakers and storytellers of all stripes in getting to do the work they want to do.

### Fundraising

From crowdsourcing to grant making: Explore and apply various methods to raise the money you need to fund for your reporting trip. We will also learn how to integrate all of the planning, pitching, and marketing into a project that gets backing.

### News and Stories

Follow the news about Germany and the European refugee crisis by reading the English edition of *Der Spiegel* at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/>. We will quiz you on current and historical events throughout the semester. You will also receive a prompt for a short essay related to the politics of migration, due at the end of the semester.

### Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you will have built a final proposal package. This will include:

- Vision statement
- Budget reflecting costs and funding sources
- Fundraising strategy
- Promos, including video
- Project pitch
- Grant proposal
- Fundraising event
- Social media presence
- Trip schedule
- Rough production timeline

## Grading

- Individual assignments: 25 percent
- Teamwork: 25 percent
- Essay, quizzes: 25 percent
- Class discussion: 25 percent

## Professionalism

To learn is your responsibility. It is imperative that you follow all instructions closely and completely. Otherwise, you risk squandering the opportunities this course affords.

- Adhere to all deadlines and closely follow instructions for assignments.
- Don't be late. Class doesn't start at 4:51 p.m. It starts at 4:50 p.m.
- Notify me in advance if you are ill or need to miss a class for other valid reasons.
- You get one free absence, as long as you notify us in advance.
- Mute your electronic devices and use them for class-related activity only.
- To act professionally at all times will positively affect your final grade.
- Unexcused absences and late shows will negatively affect your final grade.
- Missing one third of classes will automatically result in failing the course.

## Academic Honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#).

## Same Work for Multiple Classes in J-School

You may not submit for this course any assignment that has previously or will be concurrently submitted for another class, unless you receive prior approval from the professor for this course. To do so without permission will result in an "F" for the assignment, and could result in an "F" for the course.

## Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

This course is accessible to otherwise qualified students with disabilities. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult with the instructors. [Disability Services for Students](#) will assist in the accommodation process.