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JRNL 473.03: International Reporting - Northern Ireland after Brexit

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JRNL 473 International Reporting

Northern Ireland after Brexit

Spring semester 2022

Meets Monday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. in Don Anderson Hall Room 301

Instructor Info

Lee Banville, Professor, School of Journalism.

Office: Don Anderson Hall 406

Office hours: Tuesdays 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. and Wednesdays 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. I'm also available at other times by appointment.

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Course Objective

This course prepares students of journalism and related majors for the opportunities and challenges of news reporting abroad. It acquaints them with practical challenges that arise from working in unfamiliar international environments. This course will meet twice a week through the regular semester and will culminate in a two-week reporting project focused on Belfast and Londonderry in Northern Ireland.

Course description

The battle over Britain's exit from the European Union continues to plague the region's politics and economy. Central to the fight is the one place the United Kingdom and EU share a land border – the 310-mile-long division between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

With its estimated 300 major and minor border crossings, a “hard” border with customs stations and passport checks would be logistically nightmarish in the best of scenarios, but this border has a bloody and turbulent history. The division between North and South in Ireland fueled decades of violence between paramilitary groups pushing for unification with Ireland and others demanding closer ties to England. Some 3,500 people died in what came to be known as “The Troubles” and much of that violence centered on the border. Border crossings were attacked, paramilitaries on both sides were left dead on bridges and British Army patrols battled the Irish Republican Army. Now, as the specter of a new border looms, the University of Montana School of Journalism will lead a team of student journalists to the region to explore the scars of the past, the politics of the present and the hopes and fears for the future.

The project will create a single website while also producing stories for national and regional media. The project will build on the talents of the students on the trip and will span topics from politics and business to art and history.

Our goal is to tell a complicated story that mixes current politics with art and history. The result will be an opportunity for students to travel to a country that, while English speaking and a tourist destination, has deep fault lines that fuel distrust and violence even 20 years after a peace deal hoped to end The

Troubles.

Preparation for that reporting project will serve as the practicum for students to learn across three areas essential to succeeding as an international journalist or other international information-gathering missions: Practical skills, prereporting, reporting and delivering news from abroad.

Outcomes

Practical travel skills

Successful students will learn practical skills required to succeed when traveling and reporting international stories, including how to:

- Pack and prepare for an overseas assignment
- Plan and execute an international itinerary
- Stay safe and healthy in a foreign country
- Work respectfully within the cultural norms of a foreign country

Prereporting

Successful students will develop a basic familiarity with subjects intended to inform the final project of this course, such as:

- History, culture, media and politics of Northern Ireland
- An understanding of the 30-year period of violence known as “The Troubles”
- Contemporary response to natural and industrial disasters
- The psychology of survivors of religious violence
- Why the UK left the EU and its ramifications for politics and trade in Northern Ireland

Students will also prepare the logistics needed in order to communicate their stories across several media. Among other things, logistics preparation will include developing a:

- Technology plan
- Social media plan
- Story dissemination plan
- Marketing plan

Reporting

This is an advanced reporting class. Successful students will enhance and apply these specific skills, among others:

- Direct interviewing skills
- Interviewing through translators
- Note taking
- Story development, production or writing and revision across multiple media
- Working in news teams
- Story dissemination
- Digital and live audience engagement

Etc.

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.

- 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 me 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 quarter of classes will automatically result in failing the course.

Graduate Increment

Graduate students enrolled in this course will be on a graduate-level reading and presentation schedule. They will also assist in the creation and maintenance of digital features during pre-reporting and in-country phases of the project.

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. The syllabus and grading will be done through Moodle. To request reasonable program modifications, please consult as early in the semester as possible with the instructor. [Disability Services for Students](#) will assist in the accommodation process.

Course Grading

Attendance and participation	10%
Topic research/presentation	15%
Initial pitch	15%
Interactive project	25%
Northern Ireland reporting/producing	35%

Draft Itinerary

May 31, 2022. Students and faculty meet at Dublin Connolly Station. Team will travel by rail to Belfast together. Two-hour ride will be used to plan early reporting. Full team dinner that night.

June 1, 2022. Students divide into two groups for tours of the city, one focused on The Troubles and the other on Belfast/Northern Ireland economy. Additional group interviews with two experts will occur that afternoon.

June 2-6, 2022. Students work in teams of two to cover specific stories, meeting daily with their assigned faculty editor to discuss interviews, story angles and opportunities/challenges. May 31, full team dinner to discuss current state of reporting.

June 7, 2022. All students and faculty travel by bus from Belfast to Londonderry. Afternoon will include tour of bogside and walled city.

June 8, 2022. Meeting with officials in morning.

June 8-13, 2022. Students work in teams of two to cover specific stories, meeting daily with their assigned faculty editor to discuss interviews, story angles and opportunities/challenges. June 6, full team dinner to discuss completing reporting.

June 7, 2020. Faculty send off students to the Dublin Airport aboard a Londonderry bus. Students may continue travels in Europe or Ireland at this time, with prior notice.