Global Learning Initiative Curriculum Plan: Journalism Program

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Report submitted May 2012 to Global Learning Initiative

Part I. Goals

The Global Learning goals of the Journalism major are multi-faceted. Journalism is a constantly changing field, both in how reporters gather news and tell the stories. Unlike those of 50 or even just 10 years ago, today’s news consumers hear news from across deserts and oceans minutes after it occurs. With on-the-ground citizen journalists wielding cell phones and flip-up video cameras, news in Africa or Europe or Asia can be on our laptops or smartphones, in our living rooms, and in our classrooms much more quickly than in the past.

As a result, Northern Arizona University graduating journalists urgently need to become more aware of the world around them, of “the other,” and of how cultural differences and similarities are reflected and refracted through the practices of journalism. As journalists, students will both understand the world in a deeper level, and be able to report in the ever-changing field of journalism. As a result, our curriculum plan includes more diverse and inclusive classroom lessons, foreign-travel options, increased exposure to noncurricular learning activities such as presentations by guest speakers and story coverage in the Student Media Center, and additional options from Liberal Studies to bring our Journalism students into this global arena. The Journalism major also carries a track in Photojournalism and Documentary Studies. In line with the Global Learning Initiative, courses dedicated to documentary and photojournalism implement course
materials and themes that capitalize on the worldwide proliferation of documentary work as a means for learning about issues and events across the globe.

The Journalism major carries an option for first-semester senior Journalism students to choose either an internship or an immersion semester in our Student Media Center—and we are currently developing a pertinent semester abroad. This option mirrors the current curriculum in the photojournalism and documentary studies emphasis, in which students are expected to complete an immersion experience (JLS 408 Fieldwork Experience) with a recommended 12-credit unit in which they create long-term photography projects, preferably abroad for a semester.

Our students will also collaborate with the Program in Intensive English students—who are international students learning English as a second language—at NAU in order to help them tell their own stories or have journalism students tell their stories in student publications, such as *The Lumberjack* and NorthernArizonaNews.com.

In addition, School of Communication offers minors in International Communication and Environmental Communication. We also encourage our students to look at Liberal Studies classes that will round out our students’ knowledge of foreign lands, including classes in language, history, and cultures of other people—for example, ANT 102 Exploring Cultures, ANT 306 People of the Southwest, ANT 414 Anthropological Life Histories.

Furthermore, we are making an effort to capitalize on faculty exchanges and bring in foreign professors for a seminar or part of a seminar to lecture and work with our students in how journalism and photojournalism is done in the professors’ home countries. Whether these visiting professors would be from Australia or Ireland or the Netherlands would not matter—just so our students would again be encouraged to broaden their awareness and understanding of how journalism practices intersect with the diverse populations in other countries and cultures. We anticipate that our faculty will have similar opportunities overseas to broaden our own horizons in ways that will enlighten us—and our students—upon our return. Furthermore, we have a long track record of inviting outside guest speakers (especially professional journalists) to campus for presentations, and will emphasize inviting outside speakers who will help enlarge our global perspective through their professional experience and choice of story topics.
Because we at NAU are close to the Navajo and Hopi sovereign nations, as well as other Native American lands, more of our existing classes can also be designed to include mandatory visits there to gather stories through words, photography, and/or video. Because of our location students can also gain international perspectives by focusing on the tourism experience in Northern Arizona, as well as on immigration issues and other stories related to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Part II. Learning Outcomes in Global Education, Diversity, and Environmental Sustainability

The three sections below identify learning outcomes in the areas of global education, diversity, and environmental sustainability. Each section identifies the learning outcomes in the Journalism curriculum for each thematic area, and the specific courses and opportunities in the curriculum where those learning outcomes are realized.

A. Global education learning outcomes in the Journalism curriculum. Students will:

1) Gain a global perspective on the varied media systems that exist in different countries and cultures.

Students are exposed to information related to this outcome through course content, projects, and exams in JLS 105 Introduction to Journalism, COM 102 Mass Media and Society, and JLS 284 Basic Photojournalism.

2) Compare American traditions of press freedom and constraint with those that exist in other countries.

Students are exposed to information related to this outcome through course content and exams in JLS 105 Introduction to Journalism. In JLS 106 Introduction to Documentary Studies, they are also exposed to information related to this outcome through course content, and describe those traditions through written work and examination. In addition, students gain exposure to this learning outcome in the required classes COM 102 Mass Media and Society and COM 400 Mass Communication Regulation and Responsibility.

3) Gain exposure to reporting on international issues, both in American-based and foreign media.

Students are exposed to information related to this outcome through course content and exams in JLS 105 Introduction to Journalism. In JLS 106
Introduction to Documentary Studies, they are also exposed to information related to this outcome through course content, and describe those issues through written work and examination. In some sections of JLS 231 Field Reporting, JLS 328W In-depth Reporting, and JLS 335W Environmental Reporting students gain exposure to this outcome and are able to articulate what they have learned through course content and writing assignments. In JLS 284 Basic Photojournalism, students gain exposure to this outcome through an understanding of the implications of international law and policies on photojournalism. They also come to understand the role of photojournalists in countries outside the United States.

4) Gain exposure to global perspectives on the role of cultural, political, historical, religious, ideological, and economic forces represented through journalism and various documentary forms.

Students are exposed to and have opportunities to describe this outcome in course content and written work in JLS 106 Introduction to Documentary Studies. In the JLS 431C Journalism Capstone Project and JLS 482 Advanced Photojournalism and Documentary Studies courses, students produce written, multimedia, and/or photography assignments in which they articulate this outcome in a practical fashion.

**B. Diversity learning outcomes in the Journalism curriculum. Students will:**

1) Learn how reporters ethically represent the lives of others, and explore how cultural diversity is reflected in journalism ethics (for example, as found in the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics).

Students gain exposure to this learning outcome through theory and case studies presented in JLS 105 Introduction to Journalism. In the following courses, students have opportunities to practically engage with ethical reporting when they create projects involving under-reported subjects: JLS 231 Field Reporting Topics and JLS 284 Basic Photojournalism.

2) Explore cultural differences in storytelling and the dissemination of information, and how diversity shapes content and audience experiences of content.

Students are exposed to this learning outcome through the content found in the School of Communication’s core requirements for all majors: specifically, the content found in COM 101 Communication Analysis and COM 200 Communication Theory provide the foundational concepts for this subject. In addition, students are exposed to this learning outcome through JLS 106 Intro to Documentary Studies in course content that surveys various documentary approaches.

3) Explore diversity in the journalism workplace.
Students gain exposure to this learning outcome in JLS 105 Introduction to Journalism by looking at and comparing the editorial approaches, work forces, and audiences of historical publications or broadcasts with present-day media outlets. In addition, JLS 208 Fieldwork Experience, EMF 225 Production Techniques, JLS 382 Intermediate Photojournalism, and Study Abroad classes all contribute towards this outcome by providing students with practical experience of how the modern journalism workplace functions.

4) Realize that written and visual languages have varied, culturally determined values associated with them.

Students are exposed to this learning outcome through the content found in the School of Communication’s core classes COM 101 Communication Analysis and COM 200 Communication Theory.

5) Explore documentary forms and independent media as vehicles for the expansion of storytelling from diverse and underrepresented and under-reported perspectives and populations.

Students are exposed to this learning outcome through JLS 106 Introduction to Documentary Studies in course content that surveys various documentary approaches. In addition, the following courses provide practical, hands-on opportunities for students to create stories involving under-reported subjects: JLS 231 Field Reporting Topics and JLS 284 Basic Photojournalism. Furthermore, students can create stories in India through NAU’s Mainpat Global Interdisciplinary Project. On the extracurricular level, students are invited to participate in the international tri-university website, www.citylivesproject.com, where students present stories from their local communities (Sweden, Wollongong, and northern Arizona).

C. Environmental sustainability learning outcomes in the Journalism curriculum. Students will:

1) Understand that storytelling about the environment is on par with storytelling about human social, political, and economic systems, and that environmental issues are not separate from, but rather inextricably tied to, the global nature of many contemporary issues.

Students practice this learning outcome through course content and written assignments in JLS 335W Environmental Reporting. In addition, students also engage with this outcome in various topics and assignments associated with JLS 231 Field Reporting, JLS 328W In-depth Reporting, JLS 431C Capstone Project and JLS 482 Advanced Photojournalism and Documentary Studies.
2) Understand that responsible reporting about the environment plays a key role in shaping and informing public perceptions and policy.

Students practice this learning outcome through JLS 231 Field Reporting (when offered with an environmental topic) and JLS 335W Environmental Reporting.

3) Increase their capacity for understanding the varied languages of science and environmental issues.

Students are exposed to this learning outcome through course content and written assignments in selected sections of JLS 231 Field Reporting and JLS 328W In-depth Reporting (when offered with a science writing focus).

4) Understand how to critically examine public information and narratives that represent and interpret environmental issues.

Students are exposed to this learning outcome in the Liberal Studies electives encouraged for those interested in environmental communication and reporting: specifically, COM 150 Environmental Communication and COM 250 Environmental Perspectives on Communication Arts.

Part III. Assessment
The journalism faculty is currently creating a rigorous standards document, applicable across all journalism and selected COM classes, that will provide consistent guidelines for all instructors in providing grades and student feedback. In addition, our objective is to create a program assessment that will, through regular review of student projects in a variety of classes, allow our faculty to assess the program’s effectiveness in reaching Global Learning Initiative goals, as well as other pedagogic goals.