



Boston University International Programs
London

Boston University British Programmes
British Journalism, Culture and Society
COM JO 358 (Core Course)
Summer 2009

Instructor Information

A. Name	Alexander MacLeod
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Course Objectives and Overview

This course offers Journalism students an introduction to the British information milieu they will encounter in their internships, and in pursuit of careers in a field that is increasingly global in scope.

Element One of the course will be an intensive study of British media in the context of the political, cultural and social life of the United Kingdom. Attention is paid to the character and state of the newspaper and broadcasting industries. An adequate amount of reading of set texts is required. Issues addressed will include freedom of the press, and ownership patterns of the media industry. There will be emphasis on the extent to which British media reflect and influence the audiences they serve.

As well as assessing how well the British media inform the audience, we shall seek to determine whether British print and electronic journalism enhances the lives of readers and viewers.

Attention will be paid to the European political, economic and social setting within which Britain operates as a nation, as well as to Britain's relationship to the international "information super highway". **For the most part, Element One will be covered in the Wednesday and Thursday sessions, as per timetable.**

Element Two of the course will be a close-focus "hands-on" study titled "**Journalism in Cyberspace**". It will consist of a sustained and detailed examination of the issues thrown up by the development of the Internet and World Wide Web as fast-growing aspects of journalistic activity not only in the United Kingdom but worldwide. Students will be expected to contribute actively to sessions on this theme, using their knowledge and experience of Internet-use.

Element Two will be covered partly in the Wednesday and Thursday sessions, and partly out-of-class time.

There will be a compulsory final examination on Thursday 25th June. It will consist of questions relating to Elements One and Two.

Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

**** Please note: students will have their first Internship Tutorial meeting either after their Elective exam on Tuesday 23 June or after their final Core lecture on Wednesday 24 June.**

Required Readings

Please purchase and read:

A Marr	My Trade
B McNair	News and Journalism in the UK

Selected texts on the Internet and World Wide Web. These will be accessible by students online. Additional readings may be posted on the course webpage:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/jo358> (you must be logged in to view materials)

Additional Reading

Students will be issued with a reading list consisting of compulsory texts and recommended texts. Nobody can expect to achieve a good result in the course if he/she fails to do necessary reading.

Students will be required to take a lively interest in news developments in the UK.

PLEASE NOTE: Reading of British daily and Sunday newspapers is a non-negotiable element of this course, as is regular accessing the Internet. Each week of the course, students will be required to purchase one daily newspaper and one Sunday newspaper, and be prepared to answer questions about them during classes. In addition newspapers will be available on class days, and students are strongly advised to read newspapers available each day in the Library at 43 Harrington Gardens.

PLEASE NOTE ALSO: Students will be required to view a range of British television programmes, with some – but not exclusive – emphasis on news and current affairs programmes. They will also be expected to surf the Internet on a regular basis. They must be prepared, during classes, to answer questions about their TV viewing and Internet surfing.

Failure to read reasonably widely in British newspapers and magazines, to access the Internet on a regular basis, and to view British TV programmes will be a cause for demerits. Any student who does not have access to a working TV set or Internet-accessible computer must report this to me immediately.

Obviously, students must also take full account of how life is led in the UK. To do this effectively, they should try to reach out as much as possible to the wider community in which they are temporarily living and learn as much as possible about lifestyles, living conditions and social distinctions. In other words: **Keep your eyes and ears open!**

You have the distinct privilege of visiting a country different in many respects from your own. Take advantage of that privilege and be on the lookout for comparisons.

Plagiarism is expressly forbidden and, if discovered, will be punished severely. Random checks on this issue will be made. Please read carefully the official BU rules below

In every case, when assigned written work, students must retain a hard copy of their paper in addition to submitting the paper for marking. If by special arrangement it is agreed that you may e-mail material for marking to me or Academic Affairs, it is mandatory that you retain a hard copy of what is sent.

Assessment Methods and Grading Criteria

There will be a compulsory final examination on **Thursday 25th June**. It will consist of questions relating to Elements One and Two.

Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.

**** Please note: students will have their first Internship Tutorial meeting either after their Elective A exam on Tuesday 23 June or after their final Core lecture on Wednesday 24 June.**

There will be a compulsory written assignment of up to 2000 words, on a topic to be announced after classes begin. The deadline for the assignment will be 7-10 days before the Final Examination.

Particular attention will be paid to class attendance (including punctuality) and participation; roll calls will be routine. A reasonable standard of dress must be maintained at all times. Eating or drinking during class will not be permitted.

In addition to the main essay assignment and the Final Examination mentioned above, students will be required to complete up to two in-class tests.

Overall marking: 1/3rd class participation, including class tests; 1/3rd major written assignment; 1/3rd final examination.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria, attendance requirements and policies on plagiarism:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/files/images/ACADEMICHANDBOOKSU09.pdf>.

Terms and Conditions

Anyone who for legitimate reasons cannot attend a class or will be late attending must give advance notice of his/her projected absence. This can be done either by advising a senior member of staff, with a request that the information be passed on to me; or by e-mailing. **Leaving it to another class member to convey messages will not be acceptable.** Appointments for interviews for internships must not be allowed to clash with attendance at classes. If there appears to be a possibility of a clash, raise the issue with me at the earliest possible moment.

Any student who is unable to attend a class, or to take part in an assignment, because of religious reasons, must give notice of the fact in advance. He/she will be required to make up for time lost. Guest lecturers will be invited to explore with the class some of the themes mentioned in this statement. Video presentations will be included in class work, **but these will not substitute for regular out-of-class viewing of and British TV.**

It cannot be stressed too strongly that to make this course effective, all class members must be prepared to adopt a lively, proactive approach throughout. This includes positive and creative participation in class discussions. Shrinking violets* will be at a distinct disadvantage!

Good luck!

ALEXANDER MacLEOD Email: macleodinlondon@aol.com

*A shrinking violet is someone who is unwilling to be proactive in class.

JO 358: PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE: SUMMER 2009

27 May	Course introduction: Why journalism studies? (AM) Britain: culture and society
28 May	The Internet and WWW (AM)
03 Jun	British Newspapers Today (Geoffrey Goodman, guest lecturer) Class workshop
04 Jun	Gordon Agonistes: the current political scene
10 Jun	The Internet and WWW (AM) Video session
11 Jun	Press Complaints Commission – field trip -2-30 p.m.
17 Jun	Internet and WWW Marie Dawson – Magazines - 3-30 p.m.
18 Jun	Public Broadcasting in the UK (AM)
24 Jun	Revision
25 Jun	Final Examination (take home)

**** Make-up Class Date: Friday 12 June.** Should any class dates need to be rescheduled, students are obligated to keep this date free to attend classes.