



Boston University Study Abroad
London

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British Journalism, Culture & Society
COM JO 358 (Core course)
Spring 2013

Instructor Information

A. Name Alexander MacLeod

Course Objectives

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 and professionally competitive.

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 give close attention to the changing face of journalism: the drift away from newspapers; the growth of electronic media; the challenge of PR; issues affecting public broadcasting in the UK, and the future of "Journalism: Murdoch-style". It will consist of a sustained and detailed examination of the issues thrown up by the controversy over telephone hacking which led to the closure of the News of the World newspaper, and acute embarrassment for the world's most dominant media mogul. The Leveson Report into the future of the British Press will be closely studied.. Students will be expected to contribute actively to all sessions on the above themes.

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

Assessment

There will be a compulsory final examination on Monday 18 February. 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.

There will be **two** compulsory written assignments: (1) a formal essay on a key issue relevant to journalism in the UK, and (2) a journalistic report based on a day-long field trip to a designated area of London. Deadlines for the two assignments will be announced shortly after the semester begins.

Students will be invited to contribute items to the BU London Student Newsletter, based on their experiences in London and elsewhere. Performance in these items will form part of the Class Participation element detailed below.

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.

Overall marking: 1/3rd class participation, including Newsletter contributions; 1/3rd written assignments; 1/3rd final examination.

Grading

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism: <http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

Attendance Policy

Classes

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, tutorial, and field trip in order to fulfill the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

Authorised Absence:

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorized Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness, for which students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible).

Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- Illness, supported by a local London doctor's note (submitted with Authorised Absence Approval Form).
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

The Directors will only in the most extreme cases (for example, death in close family) allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.

Unauthorised Absence:

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed. This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

Course Chronology (subject to change)

Thurs 17 Jan Course introduction: Where are the media heading?

Britain: culture and society.

Weds 23 Jan The UK Polity: coalition politics

Changing media and Leveson Report

Thurs 24 Jan Crisis at The Beeb

Magazine Journalism – Marie Dawson (guest)

Weds 30 Jan Social media – personal and international

FaceBook – Zuckerberg's world

Thurs 31 Jan The Leveson Report (AM)

Class workshop

Weds 06 Feb Field Trip – London’s Docklands (all day – double session)

Thurs 07 Feb News and PR – who is winning?

The Royal Future

*** Contingency Class Date: Friday 8th February. Students are obligated to keep this date free to attend class should any class dates need to be rescheduled.**

Weds 13 Feb Media values – the Murdoch problem

Class workshop

****Please note: students on the Internship Programme will have their first Internship Tutorial meeting with Julian Putkowski on Wednesday 13th February, from 5.30pm-7.00pm in the George & Peto Room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU.**

Thurs 14 Feb Revision

FINAL EXAM

Final Examination: Monday 18th February (take home)

*****All students must attend a mandatory drop-in session (to sign Internship Agreement and for any questions about placement, social programmes, travel and academics) on Monday 18th February, 1.00-2.00pm in the Boston Room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU. Food will be served!**

Students must check their email and the weekly Student Newsletter for field trip updates and reminders, if any are to be included.

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: <https://lms.bu.edu> (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.

Additional readings and resources are posted on the course webpage: <https://lms.bu.edu> (you must be logged in to view materials).

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.

Terms and Conditions

Students will be permitted to use laptops during class, but for class-related purposes only. Use of laptops during class for any other purpose is strictly forbidden and may result in withdrawal of the facility.

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: macleodlondon@aol.com

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