



**Boston University Study Abroad**  
London

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

Learning Outcomes:

This course will address the following BU Hub Areas:

Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy  
Intellectual Toolkit – Creativity and Innovation

Course objectives:

**Delve into the British psyche.** Students will be asked to notice, discuss and reflect, via observations and a range of reading materials and class discussions, British obsessions such as the weather, celebrity, the royals and the British class system, and draw parallels and distinctions between this and their own culture. (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy Hub Learning Outcome 2)

**Recognize the differences between British newspapers and contrast this with newspapers in their home country.** Students will be able to recognize the socio-economic and cultural differences between individual British newspapers and their audiences, and British newspapers as a whole compared with those in their home country. (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy Hub Learning Outcome 2)

**Contextualize British culture to the extent that they can join in ‘water cooler chat’ during their internships.** By the end of the course students will be able to discuss current events and stories in the press as they happen and feel confident that they understand the context and social reasons why these topics are being discussed at that moment in time. (Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy Hub Learning Outcome 2)

**Develop the ability to think creatively about communication.** Students will push the boundaries of conventional writing styles, using the new ways of thinking about writing and idea generation that they have learned on the course, to creatively present information to readers in a way that captures and maintains their attention. (Intellectual Toolkit—Creativity & Innovation Hub Learning Outcome 1)

**Identify what makes good ideas and how to generate them.** Students will recognize the key elements of features and practice generating ideas for them. In

class and in their reflection journals, students will follow initial ideas tangentially across research areas and facets of interests. They will gain the confidence to express 'bad' ideas in order to access their creativity and the 'good' ideas. They will learn how to differentiate workable ideas from others based on the time, resources and interest available. Sessions will also cover how to use current news stories, people, objects and trends to generate new angles and audiences for their ideas. (Intellectual Toolkit—Creativity & Innovation Hub Learning Outcome 1)

**Confidently write from different perspectives and for different audiences, recognizing the readers' cultural context and their own as the writer.**

Students will harness their creativity through learning how to observe the world around them as brimming with ideas whose focus can be narrowed for the appropriate angle and audience. As students of journalism they will actively balance their interest in an idea with the needs of their audiences. They will develop this skill in tandem with their own viewpoint and writing styles, exploring the creative possibilities in order to produce accessible, informative and entertaining feature writing exercises. Through the two feature writing exercises based on class field trips to areas and landmarks of interest within central London, students will be writing as outsiders for an audience familiar with London, having absorbed enough Britishness to write engagingly for an audience that is both familiar with the subject and yearning for new angles on their city and culture. (Intellectual Toolkit—Creativity & Innovation Hub Learning Outcome 1)

**Engage in the creative process by producing publishable features from conception to completion.** Applying the creativity-enhancing skills they have learned in class and developed during their homework assignments and field trip exercises, students will be able to confidently produce a finished feature with greater objectivity about which of their ideas are worth pursuing. They will be able to plan and organize their research to ensure an innovative and readable feature. They will apply the creative ways of thinking learned in class to create articles that both explore their own ideas and push the boundaries of feature article writing, with as much emphasis placed on the creative process and ambition that leads to their idea as to the finished product. (Intellectual Toolkit—Creativity & Innovation Hub Learning Outcome 2)

**Understand and experience creativity as a learnable, iterative process, and gain practice and confidence in expanding how students develop ideas** using a variety of concrete techniques. By the end of the course students will have their own individualized toolkit for developing original ideas and new ways of thinking that will serve every step of their creative careers. (Intellectual Toolkit—Creativity & Innovation Hub Learning Outcome 2)

Additional Course Objectives

**Understand the workings of the British State.** Students will learn how our representatives are elected, the structure of our parliamentary system, how

Government operates, and the basics of key institutions such as the BBC, NHS and education system, and be able to define and contextualize key terms and concepts.

**Be confident readers of British newspapers.** By being able to define and contextualize the way in which the British State and institutions work, and the cultural conversations and conventions in the UK, students will be able to read and understand the British press, including the recognition of the political bias and socio-economic backgrounds of the publications and the readers. Each week they will be asked to read a different newspaper and analyze its content individually. This will be followed by class discussion about each newspaper.

**Recognize different genres of writing and audience within a British context.** Students will write their own op-ed and feature articles demonstrating an understanding of audience and genre. Students will be able to recognize the linguistic, structural and creative differences between the types of article published in mainstream British publications, and reproduce these in their own work.

**Analyze the social, political and economic factors that influence published content.** Students will learn to identify which of these structural forces impact upon their own work, and the work of others, and how this may consciously and subconsciously impact how they write and consume journalism.

### **Grading**

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University's Study Abroad London Programmes.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Honour Points</u>	<u>Usual %</u>
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	89-92
B+	3.3	85-88
B	3.0	81-84
B-	2.7	77-80
C+	2.3	73-76
C	2.0	69-72
C-	1.7	65-68
D	1.0	60-64
F	0.0	Unmarked

### **Grading Criteria**

**'Incomplete'** or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **'Audits'** (AU), **'Withdrawals'** (W), or **'Pass/Fail'** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

**F** The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment
- Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism. This can be accessed via Blackboard Learn: <http://learn.bu.edu>

*\* Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absences.*

## **Attendance Policies**

### **Classes**

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend every class session, seminar, and field trip to fulfil 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:*

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available through the Academic Affairs section of the BU London Personal Page: <https://fm.bu-london.co.uk/fmi/webd/>

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

Students who expect in advance to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form ten working days in advance of the class date.

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

**Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must notify Academic Affairs as soon as possible by submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form in advance of the class. If it is the student's first absence of the semester (from any class) a doctor's note is not required.

**Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must complete an Authorised Absence Approval Request Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class. Once well enough, the student will need to meet with Academic Affairs.

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 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 Academic Affairs to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

### **Religious Holidays**

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

### **Special Accommodations**

Each student will need to contact the Disability & Access Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-DAS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-DAS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the DAS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

### **Lateness**

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have their final grade penalised.