



**Boston University** International Programs  
London

**Boston University British Programmes**  
**The Foreign Correspondent**  
**COM JO 416 (*Elective*)**  
**Summer 2009**

**Instructor Information**

A. Name	David McNeil
B. Day and Time	Mondays and Tuesdays, 2:30-6:30pm
C. Location	Brompton room, 43 Harrington Gardens, SW7 4JU
D. BU Telephone	020 7244 6255
E. Web page	<a href="http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/jo416">www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/jo416</a>
F. Office hours	By appointment

Your tutor, David McNeil, brings to this course vast experience as a Foreign Correspondent with the BBC for 21 years. For 19 of those years, he was based outside the UK and has reported for the BBC from 46 countries.

**Course Overview**

This course will introduce you to the world of the Foreign Correspondent. In the United States, ambitious reporters often seek an overseas posting because it could further their careers back home. In Britain, the job of Foreign Correspondent is seen as a full career, and end in itself, not just a means to promotion.

In JO 416, you will examine the motivation and priorities of the Foreign Correspondent, “someone who is paid to travel the world, live in interesting places and tell people about them”. As the world shrinks, so we need to know more about other cultures. We cannot always “go there” and, if we do, it is often only for a brief visit in which we can garner no more than an initial impression. A Foreign Correspondent lives and works in the country from which he/she is reporting for years at a time. He/she can provide insight, background and context, as well as report events as they happen. In this way, knowledge and understanding are spread.

So what is it like to be a Foreign Correspondent? What credentials – journalistic and linguistic – are required? How does a Foreign Correspondent find the news? How does he/she process it? What constitutes political, social and personal reporting?

Many Foreign Correspondents find themselves covering wars and if they do well the first time they report a war, they will be sent to cover other wars. A large part of this course is devoted to analysing the role of the War Correspondent. We examine photojournalism, television news and radio coverage of wars from the first media war (the Boer war) to the first television war (Vietnam) to the recent war in Iraq.

In JO 416 we will also examine the function of the Foreign Correspondent within the structure of an international newsgathering system. In this context, we will consider the role of television, radio

and newspapers and the international news agencies. For example, why is radio still such an important source of news in the UK?

### **Reading List**

Additional readings may be posted on the course webpage:

<http://www.bu-london.co.uk/academic/jo416> (you must be logged in to view materials).

Scoop (set book)	Evelyn Waugh
The First Casualty	Philip Knightley
A Rumor of War	Philip Caputo
From Beirut to Jerusalem	Thomas Friedman
Live From The Battlefield	Peter Arnett
Anyone Here Been Raped and Speaks English	Edward Behr

### **Attendance**

The rules of Boston University British Programmes shall apply. You should confirm details with the administrative personnel, but the most important thing to remember is that there is no such thing as an unexcused absence.

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed attendance requirements:

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

### **Grading**

Your grade in this course will be based on two assignments and an examination. Your first assignment will require you to write a leader/editorial in the style of The Economist news magazine on a subject of topical interest to be chosen by your tutor, and this will be worth thirty per cent of your final grade. For the second assignment, you will need to produce an article written as though for publication by a newspaper or magazine in the United States. That too will be worth thirty per cent of your final grade. The final exam, worth forty per cent of your final grade, will be sat over a maximum period of two hours. In the exam, five essay questions will be posed and you will select two from five. Each of the two essays will be given equal weight in the marking process.

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

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

## Course Chronology

Tuesday 26 May	Course Introduction The Foreign Correspondent – motivation and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Function as part of an international newsgathering system</li><li>- Sources and subjects</li><li>- Essentials of technique</li></ul> The War Correspondent – photojournalism
Friday 29 May	The Foreign Correspondent <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interviewing and filing</li><li>- Tricks of the trade</li></ul> Reporters at War
Monday 1 June	The War Correspondent – a strategy for survival <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-relations with the military</li><li>-censorship</li><li>-ethics</li></ul> Campaigning Journalism
Tuesday 2 June	The International News Agencies The BBC in Vietnam
Friday <b>5 June</b>	British newspapers and magazines <b>Note time and room change: 11:15 am - 3:15 pm, Crofton Bell Room, 14 Queens Gate, SW7 5JE (make-up day for Tuesday 16 June)</b> The first media war Set Assignment One
Monday 8 June	POTUS on the move – The Foreign Correspondent and the White House Press Corps Radio Journalism
Tuesday 9 June	Interactive workshop – press releases and the art of the interview Set Assignment Two The Birth of the Newsreel
Monday 15 June	British Television News – Production Values Making Programmes at the BBC
<b>Tuesday 16 June</b>	<b>No Class</b>
<b>Monday 22 June</b>	The Way Ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Digital revolution</li><li>- Citizen Journalism</li></ul> Analysis of set book
Tuesday 23 June	Exam Exam times and locations will be posted on the BU London website and in the Student Newsletter two weeks before exam dates.