
**City St George's,
University of London**

**Department of
Journalism**

**ELECTIVES
HANDBOOK
2024-25**

Journalism MA Elective Modules 2024-25

These modules give you an opportunity to learn about a journalism specialism and develop practical skills. You don't need any specialist knowledge to do any of the electives, just a willingness to engage with the subject.

All electives involve transferable skills, such as contact building; performing at a live event; cutting through jargon; developing and presenting a story on different platforms; reporting under pressure; and how to find key background details to an issue. So don't be put off trying an unfamiliar subject. Every year students say how much they have gained by taking an unfamiliar topic, as well as building knowledge on a subject they already have some expertise.

Each of the MA Journalism pathways offer a slightly different combination of the electives below. Please discuss the electives on offer for your individual MA with your programme director. The course officer team will provide you with full details of what is on offer and how many electives you can choose to study.

All the electives are taught in term 2 and 3, except for Data Journalism and UK Media Law, which run in term one. Audio Production (Podcasting) runs in term 1 for a small number of MAs, but for most in term 3.

To allow some students to take two electives in term 2 the modules are split between Mondays and Fridays. This means if you are taking two of these term 2 modules you cannot pick two on the same day as they run at the same time.

On Monday.

- Arts and Culture (JOM284)
- Health and Science (JOM327)
- Reporting the Middle East (JOM290)
- Reporting North America (JOM328)
- Lifestyle (JOM324)
- Political Reporting (JOM288)
- Reporting on Identity and Underrepresented Communities (JOM708)

On Friday.

- Film, TV, Video and Radio (JOM329)
- Popular Culture (JOM289)
- Security and Crime (JOM291)
- Sport (JOM287)
- Finance and Business (JOM286)
- Humanitarian Reporting (JOM285)
- Investigative Reporting (JOM292)
- Journalism Innovation (JOM323)

Narrative and First Person Journalism (JOM705) is taught over five intensive days in April 2025.

Photography (JOM704) is taught in May 2025 in term 3.

See below an outline of each elective, their tutor, and a brief description of the assessed assignments. More details are available on the module specification page of Moodle.

If an insufficient number of students opt for an elective the department reserves the right to drop the module for the year and offer you another choice. This is to ensure there are a workable number of students on each module.

Please note that the advertised tutors for the electives are correct at the time of publication, however, due to outside work commitments some may have to be replaced with equally qualified tutors.

ELECTIVES:

Arts and Culture

This course will deal with intelligent arts journalism in a serious but non-stuffy way. We'll be tackling pitching, reviewing, interviewing, profiling and commentary in the fields of cinema, theatre, music (pop and classical), books and contemporary cultural issues. There will be a series of guest speakers, who'll talk about a range of subjects, from dealing with Hollywood starlets to reviewing for the LRB. Students should be prepared to attend out-of-hours events (films, plays, gigs) for review, although these may be virtual events.

Tutor: Kat Lister is a writer and editor based in London. Beginning her career as a music journalist at the NME, she has gone on to write widely for publications including Guardian, Observer Magazine, Vogue, VICE, The Big Issue, The I and The Independent. In 2017, she joined the editorial team at The Pool, becoming a features and news editor until its demise in 2019. Since her husband's death in 2018, she has focused on investigating her experience of grief, writing widely circulated essays and features for The Sunday Times Magazine and Sunday Times Style. Her first book, The Elements: A Widowhood, was published in September 2021 with Icon Books.

Assessments

- Live review - This is a 500-word review of a live arts performance – gig, theatre, opera, classical music
- Interview - This is either an 800-word profile OR an arts feature identifying a trend or an issue that requires multiple sources

Film, TV, Video and Radio

If you're a film fanatic or television aficionado, this module will help you to harness your love of movies and TV series. Alongside film news, reviews, and interviews, we will be looking at all the different forms that film and TV journalism take, from podcasts to radio broadcasts, to news programmes.

There will be opportunities to pitch ideas, conduct your own interviews and learn about the difference between five-minute junkets and long-form Q&As. You will also be given practical advice on how to navigate being a film journalist by hearing from a multitude of people within the industry who love sharing their expertise with those who are equally as enthused about film and TV.

Tutor: Rhianna Dhillon is a film and TV critic and broadcaster. Starting her career as the film critic for BBC Radio 1 and 1Xtra, she now reviews weekly for BBC6Music and Radio 5Live and appears regularly on news channels covering the latest in the world of film journalism. Rhianna has hosted numerous podcasts and heads up Podpod, an industry podcast about podcasting! She also moderates Q&As for BAFTA, the BFI and various film companies and has interviewed everyone from Martin Scorsese to Michael B. Jordan to Oprah Winfrey.

Assessments

- Interview – You will develop and complete an interview piece, written, 800 words, or equivalent multimedia, with a subject involved in the film, TV, video and/or radio sectors.
- Review – You will complete a 500-word review of a film, TV, video, or radio performance.

Data Journalism

This module is all about introducing you to data journalism.

Data Journalism is one of the most in-demand skills when reporting on news and features. It isn't about numbers and stats, but stories about people and their lives that involve data as part of their narrative. This module will teach you how to find stories within data sets, and how to tell these stories so they have impact, whether this is in visual displays, multimedia or text.

It is a way of finding and telling off-diary stories, allowing you to dig deeper into what is going on around you and gives you a toolkit that is much valued by editors when hiring.

Along the way we will look at:

- Where data journalism comes from
- Its role in fact-checking and verification
- Getting the information
- Analysing data
- Visualising data
- Telling data-driven stories

By the end of the module, you will be able to locate, manipulate, visualise and combine data from a range of sources and demonstrate effective skills using the web-based and other technologies involved.

You'll learn a range of skills including the effective use of the main features of online tools and technologies that underlie data journalism, including those for mapping, visualising and combining data.

Tutors: The data journalism module is run by Dr James Morris, a digital journalist with 30 years' experience writing about technology, currently for Forbes and Fortune. He was previously editor of the UK's market-leading computing magazine PC Pro and now edits the electric vehicle website WhichEV. The module includes workshops delivered by a range of industry data professionals. These include: Ashley Kirk, Visuals Editor at The Guardian, who also spent five years as a data specialist at The Telegraph; Leila Haddou, investigative data journalist who has worked at the Financial Times and The Times, as well as founding Journocoders; Nicu Calcea, a data journalist for the New Statesman, BBC News, and Global Witness.

Assignments:

- Group presentation and 2,000-word summary - demonstrating a critical understanding of data journalism and its role in democracy
- Digital portfolio and reflective log – to include a news story (400 words) and a feature OR an investigative story (800 words) substantially based on data techniques; and published digitally with appropriate visualisations

Finance and Business

Money makes the world go around. It affects our daily lives. It influences how companies and governments act. Living through cost of living, energy and Covid crises shows how vital it is to make the connection between the individual human story, the economy and global markets. We'll be looking at how to make these connections real and relevant as governments work out how to raise money to pay the bills. You don't need to be a maths person, as business and finance is about people and what they do.

If you've ever fallen into the trap of thinking that business and financial news is dramatically different from other kinds of reporting, this course will encourage you to think again, providing you with practical skills, knowledge and opportunities to network. Previous speakers include editors from Bloomberg, Reuters and the wider financial press as well as company CEOs.

It will show you how to cut through jargon, help you understand numbers, find new sources and develop ways to scrutinise government and business failures and success. It will help you join the dots between the political, the economic and the human story.

Learn how to turn complicated financial concepts into clear, informative news stories that people want to read. Confidence in knowing how to cover business/financial/economic news gives you a useful skill to offer and can be an advantage in getting a job in journalism or onto prestigious trainee schemes like those at the Financial Times and Reuters.

Along the way we will review a range of issues such as taxes, inflation, pay gaps, company scandals, the significance of financial markets generally, different perspectives on steering the economy and how business works globally. We'll also take a look at the influence of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues on the economy.

Classes will be taught in-person with at least one session likely to take place outside the classroom, for instance to the Bank of England, and one online to accommodate guest speakers.

Tutor: Camila Reed is a highly experienced multi-media journalist and editor specialising in financial markets, commodities and energy. She has over 20 years' experience in text and TV within Thomson Reuters, where she was a global editor, as well as the BBC World Service and magazines. Camila trains corporates, NGOs and journalists around the globe to get their message across effectively and efficiently. She's not a geek, but she can show you how to make numbers your friend and connect with your audience.

Assessments

- Interview of a small or medium sized business -- 600 words.
- News feature - a business or economics news feature of 900 words.

Health and Science

Health and science journalism covers a wide and fascinating set of subjects: it's no exaggeration to say that all human life is there. One day you could be talking to a Cambridge professor about the new weight-loss drugs; the next, attending a conference about the science of longevity or interviewing a woman with OCD about how she overcame her condition and went on to help inspire others to recovery. Sleep, diet, disease, mental health, fitness, cutting-edge medical advances: all of these come under the umbrella of health and science.

The best news of all is that there is more demand for health journalists than ever before: it is an ever-expanding field. During the Covid pandemic, we all became amateur scientists, and our appetite has not diminished. This module will teach you how to dismiss the 'bad science', and translate the 'good science' in a snappy way your readers will understand and enjoy. It will teach you how to find and interview experts - from top hospital consultants to wellness gurus, to members of the public who have found themselves on a difficult health journey.

Whether you are specialising in print, online, or broadcast, the basic principles are the same. Being a health journalist requires a mixture of intellectual rigour and human empathy. This class will teach you how to approach commissioning editors, pitch stories in an attention-grabbing way and to start out as a successful freelancer. We will also discuss the needs of modern newsroom and how to make your story 'sing', with the use of digital data, video and social media. Students on this module will also have the opportunity to network and make industry contacts.

On completion of the course students will be able to write news reports and produce balanced features on a range of health and science topics. You'll also learn how to weigh evidence, locate appropriate experts, conduct interviews, and access resources for health and science journalists.

Previous field trips include a visit to the press and PR centre of a major medical charity; a bespoke session at the Science Media Centre at the Wellcome Trust; and a visit to the science desk of The Observer. Previous guest speakers include Prof David Spiegelhalter, the Winton Professor for the Public Understanding of Risk at Cambridge University and an expert on statistics; Sarah Boseley, the health editor of The Guardian; and Eric Hand, the European Editor of Science.

Tutor: Miranda Levy has over 25 years' experience working in the health and features departments on national publications from the Telegraph to the Daily Mail, Grazia, GLAMOUR and Sunday Mirror, with bylines in the Independent, Guardian and New York Post. She recently worked as a senior editor on the launch of the Telegraph's 'Better Life' health hub. As the editor of Mother & Baby magazine, Miranda was shortlisted for a British Society of Magazine Editors award. She is also the author of two health-related books, The Rough Guide to

Babies, and The Insomnia Diaries: How I Learned to Sleep Again (Octopus Books), and has experience appearing as a guest on live TV and radio.

Assessments

- News story - 500-word news story based on a real event and/or briefing.
- Interview-led feature story - 600-700 words. Profile of a prominent scientist or medical researcher or an analysis of a current health/science issue.

Humanitarian Reporting

Humanitarian crises go largely under-reported despite a rising number of people facing hunger, conflict, and the impact of the climate change. This collision of crises is forcing more and more people from their homes and the number of refugees and displaced people globally has never been as high.

The main aim of this course is to stoke interest in this fascinating area of journalism and to also help students to pick up the practical skills which can be used in whatever type of journalism or communications they may decide to go into.

Recent topics examined include the politics of aid, ethical storytelling, war reporting, disaster reporting, climate change, the protection of human rights, as the media's handling of safety and trauma.

Guest speakers have included journalists covering wars, poverty and climate change, NGOs, and senior politicians.

Tutor: Belinda Goldsmith, is a journalist and media professional who has reported and led teams from over 50 countries on political, financial, humanitarian and general news. The Global Media Director of Save the Children and former Editor-in-Chief of the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Former board member of Coda Story, trustee of The Charlotte Project, and judge for the European Press Prize.

Assessments

- News story – This is a news story based on a live press conference or other live event. The piece of work is 500 words.
- Analysis/profile – 600-700 words.

Investigative Reporting

Do you look at the news headlines with scepticism, convinced you are only seeing part of the story?

Are you prepared to sift through official reports and company documents for a nugget of information? And learn where to look for the gleam of gold among the mass of data?

Do you want to discover how to talk to people, win their trust, and persuade them to help you find the answers you need?

If the answer to these questions is yes, you might make a good investigative reporter.

“Investigative journalism,” according to a recent survey, “should call the powerful to account, and expose corruption.” It sounds glamorous, but most investigations need many hours of work gathering lots and lots of small details. It also requires perseverance in the face of hard-pressed editors and, more often than not, a determination by those at the centre of a story to refuse to help with, or to attempt to hinder, your work.

With an increasingly attention deficient media heavily reliant on “churning” emailed press releases and gossip “unearthed” on Twitter, this course will provide an introduction to a more in-depth form of reporting.

We will consider how to use the overload of information available on the internet alongside more traditional techniques of developing and maintaining contacts, interviewing sources and analysing documents to develop original, ground breaking stories. Plus tips on how to get your hard work published.

Guest speakers will include leading investigative reporters who will discuss their work and the methods they have adopted.

Tutor – because of high demand the investigative course is run twice. You will be allocated one of two tutors.

Tutors: Jason Lewis is an award winning investigative reporter with over 20 years experience working on leading UK publications including the Sunday Telegraph and Mail on Sunday. He now runs the investigative research firm, International Insight.

Jenna Corderoy is an investigate journalist for openDemocracy. She is one of the UK’s foremost journalistic experts in using access to information laws, and is an author of a handbook on subject access requests. She has also written for VICE News and Finance Uncovered. Her work has been shortlisted for the Paul Foot Award, and the PressGazette British Journalism Awards.

Assessments

- Profile a named individual from free open-source databases and advanced searching. 600 words
- An in-depth editorial report (aim at publication or broadcast) on an investigative project of your choice. (1900-2000 words)

Journalism Innovation

Change is racing through the journalism industry as new technologies, unparalleled competition and financial challenges upend traditional assumptions. This module aims to give you some of the tools to take control of that change and use it to your advantage. We will cover bringing fresh thinking to an existing organisation, creating innovative content and starting your own journalistic business.

You will learn how to have more and better ideas, how to look for audience needs which aren't being served and the basics of launching your own startup. You will work mainly in small teams devising and researching your own proposal for a new – and achievable - journalistic service. By the end of term you should be confident in your creativity, flexibility and value to any changing media organisation.

Throughout the term a wide range of innovators and entrepreneurs will join the class to share their experience and expertise. Journalists and other experts from big organisations such as the BBC, Reuters, the FT and Nature will contribute to panel discussions and one to one advice sessions alongside people who have started their own businesses, previous graduates of the course and professional advisors.

The aim of the module is to develop creative, flexible and innovative journalists who can bring fresh thinking to a media organisation, create dynamic content for a startup or launch their own journalistic service.

Assessments

- 3,500 word team proposal for an innovation
- Five minute team pitch of that proposal to a panel of senior industry experts
- Individual 1,000 word written reflection on innovation in journalism

Tutor: Robert McKenzie is an innovation consultant and facilitator who spent seven years as founding editor of BBC News Labs, one of journalism's leading innovation teams. He has also been BBC News Online's Business & Technology Editor, founding Editor of BBC World Service's Business Daily and Development Editor for BBC.com, the commercially funded arm of BBC News Online. Before

that he started in local radio, worked for independent production companies to produce award winning TV programmes and contributed to books and magazines as a personal finance expert. His grey hair is evidence that he's been finding gaps in markets, creating new formats and leading change for 35 years.

Lifestyle

Demand for lifestyle journalism – reporting and analysing ‘the way we live now’ – has exploded both in print and online media in recent years, driving sales of newspapers on Saturdays and Sundays, and dominating the content of innumerable magazines and social media titles.

This specialism helps students to develop the specific skill sets and mindset necessary to shine in this broad, fun and exciting form of journalism, and has a realistic, practical focus throughout. It explores a wide range of subject matter, including food, travel, fashion, well-being and real-life, as well as analysing broader themes in modern culture and talking about branded content. Highlights of the specialism include guest journalists explaining their working methods in detail.

Joint Tutors (Jo and Ash will divide the teaching): Johanna Payton has worked as a freelance lifestyle journalist for 20 years, counting Grazia, Elle, Sunday Times Style, Stylist, Red, and Psychologies amongst her clients. She started her freelance career covering real life stories for the weeklies, before moving into fashion, food and travel, with two popular blogs running alongside her journalism. Johanna also provided branded lifestyle content for the Guardian for over a decade, including two years as a staff commissioning editor for Guardian Labs, so she will be sharing her commercial, as well as editorial, experience on this course.

Ash Bhardwaj is a freelance journalist who writes about travel, current affairs, identity, mental health and diversity. Over the past decade, he has written for The Times, Sunday Times, Daily Mail, Wanderlust and GQ, amongst others. He is a columnist for Telegraph Travel and regularly reports for BBC Radio Four and the World Service. Ash also presents The First Mile and Edgelands podcasts, filmed expedition documentaries including Walking The Nile, etc and founded Digital Dandy - a video storytelling company.

Assessments

- Opinion piece or profile of lifestyle personality (600-700 words) with images.
- Print or video review (500-550 with original images) or video (3-4 minutes)

Narrative and First Person Journalism

The demand for narrative and first person writing has perhaps never been greater. This course will help you understand the ways in which personal narrative can tackle issues, identities and experiences across the lines of gender, race, and class. It will examine the history of the form, from the 16th century to contemporary practice. You'll also learn how to write op-eds and comment pieces that challenge our way of thinking.

There's a strong practical aspect to this module and it will help you think about the creative transition from journalism to longer-form narratives, including how to pitch stories and opinion pieces to editors. We'll also spend time exploring the path to becoming a published author, demystifying the journey from the nub of an idea through to a published book.

Seminar discussions and presentations by tutor and guest speakers. In these workshops, which will be interactive, you will hear from experts in the genre about the theory behind writing good first-person copy and memoir. You will undertake writing exercises and activities to apply and improve your skills.

Assignments

- Personal essay - 1,400 words exploring a subject of choice
- Topical op-ed/comment piece - 600 words on a subject of choice

Tutor: Kat Lister is a writer and editor based in London. Beginning her career as a music journalist at the NME, she has gone on to write widely for publications including Guardian, Observer Magazine, Vogue, VICE, The Big Issue, The I and The Independent. Over the years, she has published a variety of first-person essays and think pieces exploring women's experiences and their intersection with current affairs. She has also commissioned and edited them as a freelance editor at titles such as Stylist Magazine. Since her husband's death in 2018, she has focused on investigating her experience of grief, writing widely circulated essays and features for The Sunday Times Magazine and Sunday Times Style. Her first book, The Elements: A Widowhood, was published in September 2021 with Icon Books.

Photography

Journalism is full of images, from news sites and glossy magazines to social media and broadcasters' online platforms. It's easy to take them for granted -- but a great photograph can make a story, help to tell it better, or add otherwise hidden dimensions.

On this module, you'll learn to take better photographs (on your phone or a digital camera) – and to use them effectively, working within the context of journalism. We'll cover key techniques for exposure, focus and lighting, and how to use them effectively. Composing your photos well is essential, too – using and choosing the different elements you might want to include or avoid, and how to place them in your image, to produce an engaging result.

Doing this also involves looking carefully -- at published images as well as potential shots – to develop an understanding of what goes into making a good photograph, and how they can tell stories. We'll hear from professionals in the world of photography and journalism, and you'll be able to get feedback on the portfolio of images you'll be developing during the module.

Your portfolio forms the basis of the assessment, with a selection of your images from a news event, a photo essay/series, and some portrait shots. You'll write a reflection, too, on the context and rationale for the photos in your portfolio, including the decisions, processes and constraints involved.

We'll also cover some photo-editing (post-processing), consider legal and ethical aspects, a bit of history of photography, maybe an experiment in alternative techniques, and a photo-shoot on location (if time and weather cooperate...). Digital cameras (Canon or Nikon DSLRs) are available for you to borrow from the Journalism tech store – feel free to use your own, too, as well as your phone.

Visiting guests who contributed in 2024-25:

- Michael Clements, portrait photographer, published in *The Sunday Times*, *Guardian*, *Uncut* and *Q Magazine*, among many others.
- Trish Yourkevick, BBC staff photographer
- Sarah Gilbert, features photo editor, *The Guardian*

Assignments

- Photography portfolio (your selection of images from a news event; a photo essay/series; and some portrait shots)
- Critical reflection

Tutor: Before joining City, Jonathan Hewett was able to include photography in some his senior editing roles on consumer and B2B magazines and as a freelance journalist – having been a keen photographer from an early age. As a*

sub-editor and production editor, he also had responsibility for selecting and editing images for publication, sometimes commissioning photographers, too. He believes learning to see – to really look carefully -- is fundamental to all good photography: to quote photographer Dorothea Lange: “The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.”

**tbc as tutor for 2024/25*

Audio Production (Podcasting)

This is a hands-on, practical introduction to audio skills for podcasting. The aim is to provide you with techniques to record, edit and mix sound and develop familiarity with some of the main editing and recording kit used by podcasters.

The course aims to cover studio and location recording, basics of audio interviewing and presenting and mixing sound and music. You will work in a small team to use those skills to record a simple, conversation-based podcast episode. Your assessment will also include an in-class presentation explaining the concept of your podcast, your target audience and how that informed your production choices, and what you learned from producing the show.

You should note that this is a foundation module to build audio skills. We will cover some of styles and techniques of podcast production and these will be made available to you as podcast episodes to listen to in your own time, but we will not be covering publication, hosting and how to make money. You MAY be able to "audit" the advanced module in term 2 if timetables allow.

Everyone is also encouraged to attend the events organised by our Centre for Podcasting - last year that included an evening with the Gold medal winners from the podcast awards, careers panel on how to build a business in podcasting, and an opportunity to pitch ideas to commissioners.

Political Headlines

UK politics is making headlines every day and is at the heart of news and feature reporting. With a new Labour government, the disintegration of the Conservatives in Parliament and rise of Reform this should be a fascinating year ahead. In this module you will explore the characteristics of politics and political structures in the UK – what politicians do and say – and how journalists make stories out of them.

The course will examine some of the key political stories in British politics- how these are covered in the Broadcast media, in print and on social media. This is done through a series of talks and seminars with some of the country's leading political journalists and politicians.

Last year this included two Commons Press Gallery scoop-merchants, Tim Shipman (Sunday Times Chief Political Writer) and Pippa Crerar (Guardian Political Editor); the (then) Conservative minister Michael Gove; film maker, Michael Cockerell; top broadcasters Laura Kuenssberg, Hugh Pym and Matt Frei; Ryan Sabey the deputy political editor of The Sun, a session on political neutrality in reporting from the former head of ITV news Stuart Purvis a session with the Editor of Channel 4 News Esme Wren (who did the City course herself some years ago) and an hour with the former Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn...who promises to return in the spring term now he's a the 'independent' MP for Islington North.

Note: there is some overlap between Political Headlines and Political Reporting so we recommend you ONLY study both modules if you are seriously considering a career in political journalism.

Assessments

- Story or segment pitch and proposal of 1500 words. You will pitch an idea for a political story or segment and develop your pitch into a finished proposal. The story/segment may be for any medium (newspaper, magazine, radio, television, online) and any format (investigation, feature, current affairs show, on-air interview)

Tutor: Professor Barney Jones was on staff at the BBC for many years before coming to City. He worked as a reporter at Westminster, a producer on 'Newsnight', was Political Editor on BBC Breakfast TV, worked on many election night programmes and started a new Sunday morning programme with the broadcasting legend David Frost. He launched the award winning BBC1 programme 'The Andrew Marr Show' in 2005 and ran that for 10 years. When not at City, Professor Jones works at the House of Commons and teaches courses in good governance and political reporting outside the UK.

Political Reporting

The course is intended to be a highly practical examination of the way political reporters cover the increasingly unpredictable UK political scene, with an emphasis on Westminster but also with reference to the European parliament, the UK devolved parliaments and UK local government including the London assembly. The seminars will have around 15 students at each session and will include discussions each week on HOW political stories are being reported and WHY the same facts emerge in such different ways in different outlets.

It will look at the way the reporters at Westminster go about their daily duties and how they interact with politicians, spin doctors and special advisers as well as Whitehall departments and the political parties, pressure groups, think tanks, lobbyists and pollsters.

Sessions will examine the history and development of political reporting as well as spin and media manipulation and the way journalists deal with these central elements of reporting politics. It will look closely at the way the media influences, or otherwise, policy making and sets the day-to-day political agenda.

In previous years the course has featured visits to The Commons, The Lords, The Commons' Press Gallery, the BBC's Westminster HQ, a Westminster think tank, and an end-of-year session in the pub with a former leader of the Labour Party! Guest speakers have included senior politicians, political correspondents, spin doctors and other figures from the world of politics.

Previous sessions included: "How the Commons and The Lords work...and produce stories"; "Spin to Win, how the Spin Doctors try to sell their version of the truth"; "Reporting the big political campaigns and elections"; "Brexit, the story that keeps on giving"; "Sources, how to establish and nurture those who can provide or stand up a story"; "The life of a political editor: keeping ahead of the competition" and "The Corbyn phenomena: how young people got interested in politics again, and why the m.s.m. called it wrong". Sessions in 2024 will be along similar lines with regular group discussion about current political events and how they're being covered.

Guests who came and spoke at the POLITICAL REPORTING 'elective' in 2023 included The BBC political reporter (and presenter of Radio 4's '*Westminster Hour*'), Ben Wright, an hour with producer of Andrew Marr's LBC radio show, Matt Harris (and a twenty minute drop-in from Andrew Marr), an hour with Cass Horowitz, Rishi Sunak's Director of Strategic and Digital Comms; Alan Rusbridger, editor of *Prospect Magazine*, and former *Guardian* editor; Neil Kinnock, former leader of the Labour Party; a session with the Political Editor of *Talk TV* Peter Cardwell who worked as a SPAD for 4 different Conservative ministers, plus an hour in Keir Starmer's office talking to his Head of Communications Matt Doyle.....with a brief meeting with Sir Keir himself.

Tutor: Professor Barney Jones worked at the BBC before coming to City. He worked as a reporter at Westminster, a producer on 'Newsnight', was Political Editor on BBC Breakfast TV, worked on many election night programmes and started a new Sunday morning programme with the broadcasting legend David Frost. He launched the award winning BBC1 programme 'The Andrew Marr Show' in 2005 and ran that for 10 years. When not at City, Professor Jones works at the House of Commons and teaches courses in good governance and political reporting outside the UK.

Assessment

- Class presentation – a 10-12 minutes
- Political interview of 800 words

Popular Culture

Style and writing are at the heart of the course, which is very tightly structured and involves a considerable amount of creative work. Graduates from this specialism have gone on to be novelists as well as leading journalists and broadcasters. To enable this outcome requires abandoning traditional news approaches and finding something radically different. Yes, we re-wire all applicants on entry.

The first half of the course focuses largely on how to interview subjects - both 'unknown' and 'celebrity' with careful tuition in how to manage difficult scenarios. One key factor is psychology – what makes a person tick, and how can you access that inner being.

In the second part, the emphasis shifts to feature writing, reviewing (TV, music, film, theatre, books), imaginative approaches for bringing ideas to the page and investigative reporting within the arena of popular culture – book pirating, ticket scams, bogus talent agencies and more.

Each week, the morning begins with a timed exercise requiring detailed stylistic analysis, followed by a seminar leading to two major pieces of course work. Topics covered are: profile writing; reviewing; features and investigative features; plus a few surprises. Previous visiting guests include senior commissioning editors who graduated from this class, such as Ally Head, Jasmine Gardner, Shaun Philips, Richard Preston, not forgetting the BBC's Jo Whiley.

Tutor: David Roper, writer, broadcaster and Managing Director of Heavy Entertainment, an independent production company making programmes for TV

and radio networks. Previously a feature writer and editor at Condé Nast, and arts reporter at the BBC and Channel 4.

Assessments

- Interview with celebrity = 800 words
- Investigative feature = 1,000 words

NB This module focuses on improving your writing so may not be suitable for students who have no experience in this field or have limited writing experience. If in doubt speak to Jason Bennetto, Jason.bennetto.1@city.ac.uk the electives director.

Reporting the Middle East

This module aims to introduce and explore issues in and around the Middle East. It will focus on the contemporary Middle East and on the various ways of thinking about, analysing and reporting on that region.

This module will help you apply your journalistic skills to report on what has become one of the most conflict-torn regions in the world. By the end of this module, students should have a clear basic knowledge of the Middle East. You will be working on assessing and covering issues from Turkey to Iran to Syria to Palestine-Israel to Lebanon to Egypt. The module will help you understand the main lines of cleavage in the Middle East and the major antagonists; explore the political, cultural and other factors that shape journalism in conflict situations; and recognise the cultural, political and other assumptions journalists may carry with them into a reporting assignment and how these impact on their output. You will be able to absorb media reportage on the Middle East in a critical manner; and be able to write and report with some sensitivity on the region. This module aims to help journalists - who want to report on or from the Middle East - acquire the critical faculties to be an ethically more responsible actor in a situation of deep conflict.

*Tutor: Dr Zahera Harb is Director of MA International Journalism and Journalism Media and Globalisation (Erasmus Mundus) programmes. She has worked as a journalist in Lebanon for Lebanese and international media organisations. Her publications include a monograph titled *Channels of Resistance: Liberation propaganda Hezbollah and the Media* (I.B. Tauris, 2011) and an edited collection *With Dina Matar titled: Narrating conflict in the Middle East: Discourse, Image and Communication Practices in Lebanon and Palestine* (I.B. Tauris, 2013). Her recent book is *Reporting the Middle East: the Practice of News in the Twenty First Century* (I.B. Tauris, 2017). Dr Harb is trustee board member of Ethical*

Journalism Network and Dart Centre Europe for Journalism and Trauma. She has trained journalists in different parts of the world mainly in conflict torn countries.

Assessments

- Presentation/media critique, 10-12 minutes
- One 1000-word analytical feature

Reporting North America

This module is designed to enable you to deepen your understanding of societal and political issues in North America and learn about the experience of reporting in the region as a correspondent. You will explore topics that are unique to and shared by the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

By the end of the module, you will have examined and learned how to report on major issues like: Political polarisation and elections in federal systems; gun culture, mass shootings and violent crime; police brutality; immigration and borders; racial and ethnic discrimination and disparities; major changes to abortion laws; drug culture and corruption; religious fundamentalism; handling of the pandemic and health care; lingering effects of the 9/11 attacks; media and the entertainment industry.

As a correspondent, you will specifically learn from within to report on how the U.S. views itself, analyse the myth of American exceptionalism, and how the country projects its power and influence on the region and rest of the world. You will hear from experts from media organizations and stakeholders in some of these areas of interest.

You will develop skills on how to identify North American sources and analyse the role and practices of specialist journalists covering the three countries, and plan, develop and produce journalistic reports about the area.

Tutor: Fernando Pizarro is a three-time Emmy-winning journalist, news producer, editor, and correspondent with more than 20 years of experience in television, radio, online and print at media companies in the US, including The New York Times, CNN, NPR, Univision, ESPN, NBC, and APTN. He also has two decades of experience as a Capitol Hill and White House correspondent and producer, serving newscasts covering Washington, national, and international news. He is a lecturer at City, University of London and teaches broadcasting and podcasting.

Assessments

- Analysis piece/profile - 600-700 words in length (written) or equivalent multimedia
- News assignment –a 500-word report on a contemporary political or breaking news

Reporting on Identity and Underrepresented Communities

Our identities shape us, who we are and the stories we tell — and some communities are much less represented in the media than others. Aimed at anyone who has an interest in highlighting untold and marginalised stories, this module will introduce the basics of reporting on identity and will prepare emerging journalists to do so with care, sensitivity and nuance.

Over ten weeks, we'll cover techniques and tools essential to reporting on stories related to race, gender, LGBTQ+ communities, class, disabilities and more; understand the importance of being led by lived experience; and participate in practical exercises designed to critically think about the way marginalised communities are represented in mainstream media.

From trauma-informed interview technique, to trust-building with underrepresented communities, understanding how to report on identity intersects with every other specialism and beat area, and is an essential skill to have as a journalist in 2025 and beyond.

This specialism is suited for keen and enthusiastic reporters looking to cover stories centred on identity and underrepresented communities, as well as those who want to learn more about nuanced and sensitive storytelling more generally.

You will learn to report, write and pitch stories on identity and underrepresented communities, whether that's as a freelancer, an in-house correspondent or a general reporter. We will also hear from leading experts and journalists in this field on their work to build a more equitable media landscape—and the role that new reporters might play in its future.

Assessments

- Feature – a 1,000-word feature story covering identity and underrepresented communities.
- Presentation – a critical media analysis on a theme of your choice covered in the course.

Tutor: Suyin Haynes is a London-based freelance journalist, focusing on storytelling around identity, culture and underrepresented communities. Her writing has appeared in the Guardian, openDemocracy, CNN, ELLE and more. She was previously Head of Editorial at gal-dem, leading an award-winning team platforming the perspectives of people of colour from marginalised genders. Before this, she was a journalist with TIME for five years, first as an Audience Editor in Hong Kong, then as a Senior Reporter in London. As a media consultant, she has worked with values-driven organisations including Good Law Project, Migration Museum and The Voice of Domestic Workers.

Security and Crime

Reporting on crime and security is a demanding and exciting job. It requires a wide range of skills. Since the rise of al-Qaeda international terrorism has rarely been out of the headlines. The attacks by supporters of Islamic State, and the threats posed by the Taliban taking control of Afghanistan, are the latest examples.

This course covers how to report on UK-based terrorism, from jihadists to far-right extremists and state-sponsored terrorism. It will involve looking at terrorism from all angles, including through the police and intelligence agencies, to propaganda and online spaces where extremists network.

A similar approach is taken to reporting on crime - whether it is a piece of analysis about police culture in wake of the murder of Sarah Everard; an interview with a former criminal; a feature on people smuggling gangs; how to get the best out of crime statistics; or talking to a victim of a miscarriage of justice. Preparing court backgrounds and coping with big breaking crime stories are also covered.

This is an extremely practical specialism - students will learn a variety of skills that will prove invaluable in whatever area of journalism they work. It includes how to make contacts; responding to a breaking story; questioning press and police officers; performing at press conferences; and getting exclusives. Previous visits include trips to the National Crime Agency headquarters (Britain's "FBI") to speak to some of the country's top detectives, and the Old Bailey court, as well as a range of guest speakers including former criminals, and correspondents from the BBC, Daily Mail, and Times.

Tutor: Lizzie Dearden has been covering terrorism and extremism of all kinds since 2014, and her first book, 'Plotters: The UK Terrorists Who Failed', came out in 2023. But she's been writing about crime for much longer, dating back to her first work experience on local papers in 2005. Lizzie was The Independent's Home Affairs Editor until 2023, and its Home Affairs and Security correspondent since 2017. She now freelances for multiple national newspapers, radio stations and appear in documentaries and podcasts.

Assessments

- News story (500 words) - based on a live press conference/interview
- Analysis/profile (600-700 words)

Sport

Sports coverage is a core component for media organisations from tabloid to broadsheet, on television and radio, and across the web and social. Working in it has become one of the most coveted and competitive branches of the media.

This course aims to provide you with insight into how this part of the industry operates enabling you to deal with its unique challenges. You will be taught techniques to enhance your story-gathering and reporting, and given a platform to forge your own career in the field.

The specialism will cover the key elements of sports journalism: live events, interviews, press conferences, features and news reporting. You will learn about the craft as well as the art of sports writing, how to work with the pack, how to work with the desk, how to draw information from an athlete who would rather be playing Call of Duty.

We will also spend time on the most important aspect of all: how to find work. Recent students are now on the sports staff at The Daily Telegraph, Standard, ESPN, Athletic and Daily Mail.

During the course it is intended there will be contact with leading sports journalists, and a working visit to a live event.

Guests have included TV commentator/presenters Jacqui Oatley and Lynsey Hooper, Guardian writer Suzy Wrack, Sky News US Correspondent Martha Kelner, the Mirror's John Cross and then-Athletic editor-in-chief, now director of BBC Sport, Alex Kay-Jelski.

This course will inevitably have a high football content, as that is where the jobs are in the UK, but the teachings will be relevant to all sports. It will also be more focussed on writing (for print and web) than broadcast/podcast but much of the material applies to any medium and it is intended at least one guest will be from broadcasting.

The live event will take place outside the classroom and not on a Friday morning.

Tutor: Glenn Moore is a freelance journalist who in recent years has covered the Paris Olympics, the Premier League, the Women's football World Cup, Wimbledon tennis and Ashes cricket.

A City journalism graduate he was for 23 years on staff at The Independent, primarily as football correspondent, then football editor. He now works primarily for Australian Associated Press, World Soccer and the i newspaper. He has also been a cricket writer for Reuters, a podcaster for BT Sport and Sport England,

and a sub-editor for the Telegraph. Along the way has covered World Cups in three sports plus everything from hockey to horse-racing, angling to table-tennis.

Assessments

- Match report/news – a 500-word report of a live event or a 600-word sports news story.
- Feature/interview to include an interview/s with sportsman/woman. 900-words or video/audio equivalent.

ENDS