
City St George's, University of London

Department of Journalism

ELECTIVES HANDBOOK 2026-27

This handbook contains details of the various elective modules on offer to different MA journalism courses. Each course has a different set of options in terms of which modules are available and the combination of electives on offer. Refer to your individual MA for your pathway and choices.

There are different types of modules and electives –

Core Modules and Compulsory Modules: Classes you must take and pass with no other options.

Compulsory Electives and Core Electives (Restricted Option): A required number of classes you must choose from a curated list related to your course.

(Specialism) Elective: Classes you can pick from a basket of different specialist journalism subjects.

This handbook covers the **Compulsory Elective Modules**, and the **(Specialism) Electives**, some of which you need to pick in advance of starting your MA in September.

Compulsory Elective Modules

Listed below are the compulsory elective modules, with a brief description of the course, some details of who is teaching (this is correct at the time of publication but may change) and a summary of the assessments. Full details are available on the individual module specifications.

Different journalism MAs will be offered different choices in terms of which electives are available, and how many. For these details consult your programme director and information sent to you about your course and the choices available.

Contents

- ◆ JOM108 – AI, Journalism and the Future of News
- ◆ JOM971 – Audio Production (Podcasting)
- ◆ JOM515 – Audience Strategy
- ◆ JOM326 – Data Journalism
- ◆ JOM876 – Fundamentals of Financial Journalism
- ◆ JOM115 – Global Cultures of Journalism
- ◆ JOM112 – Journalism Entrepreneurship and Platform Development

JOM108 AI, Journalism and the Future of News

Artificial intelligence is changing the way journalism is produced, from finding stories and analysing data to creating content and reaching audiences. This module introduces you to the growing role of AI in modern newsrooms and explores both its opportunities and its ethical challenges.

Through practical workshops, you will gain hands-on experience with AI tools used by journalists and learn how they can support reporting, visual storytelling, fact-checking, and data analysis.

Tutors: Dr Rana Arafat is a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Digital Journalism in the department of journalism at City St George's, University of London. She is the current Director of Learning and Teaching for the Journalism Department. She is a 2025–2026 Faculty Associate at the Public Tech Media Lab, University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA, and a 2025 Fellow at the Kopenhagen Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication. She holds a PhD degree in journalism and political communication from the Institute of Media and Journalism (IMeG) at Università della Svizzera italiana in Switzerland. Her research agenda focuses on examining activist/advocacy journalism, conflict reporting, and journalism innovations including news gamification and the adoption of automation and AI technologies in newsrooms. Her research appears in top peer-reviewed journals. Along with her solid academic track, Dr Arafat has eight years of experience as a journalist in many local and international newspapers and magazines.

Tutor: Dr Irving Huerta has worked as an investigative journalist for over a decade. He was part of the global team of more than 300 reporters who uncovered the Panama Papers, exposing the use of offshore tax havens, and has contributed to cutting-edge data-driven investigations, including collaborations with the research agency Forensic Architecture on cases of political violence. He was the convenor of the Cambridge Data Schools at the University of Cambridge and continues to deliver workshops in collaboration with the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in the UK and abroad. Since 2025, he is Lecturer in Data Journalism at City St George's, University of London.

Assessments

- Assessment is entirely coursework-based. You will first analyse a real example of how a news organisation uses AI, aiming to offer an analysis of an AI system or solution already implemented in the industry, then work in a group to create an AI-enhanced social media news video using a real dataset. By the end of the module, you will develop practical skills that are increasingly valued in today's digital news industry.

JOM971 Audio Production (Podcasting)

This module is designed as an introduction to some of the skills and practices in the field of podcasting. The sector has expanded exponentially in the last few years with some of the largest media companies now stepping into the market and looking for staff (e.g. Netflix, Spotify, Goalhanger, Global and the BBC).

Creators are producing long-form narrative investigations, niche shows, chum casts, content informed by social media influencing practices and B2B corporate messaging.

This module will aim to provide an overview of the way the industry has developed and the principles around podcast regulation and structures, but the majority of this module will be to provide foundation skills in audio production. (we will not be including visualisation skills) There will be some large group lectures and then smaller workshop sessions where you will develop your own sample episode of a journalistic podcast with at least one suitable guest. You will be introduced to sound recording, mixing and editing skills, scripting and structures and how to interview and present for podcasts.

(Please note that if you already have significant podcasting skills this may not be the best choice for you as there will be limited opportunities to look at the more advanced sound scaping skills)

Tutors: Sandy Warr is the module leader. She has more than 40 years' experience of working in radio and podcasting and developed the MA Podcasting programme at City St George's. She is a Fellow of the Radio Academy and the winner of the Gold award for services to the independent radio news sector as well as the winner of several Sony and New York Radio Festival awards for political, sport and music journalism.

Katherine Melandri is a Senior Lecturer in journalism in the department who also has decades of experience as a presenter and producer and editor at the BBC. There will also be support from other audio and podcast specialists and our media and tech department.

Assessments

- A one-minute individual audio sample
- A group podcast product (3 /4 students) of 12 - 15 minutes duration with 200 words of chapter notes (the content you would place on a hosting platform to 'sell' your concept) Plus a 15 hundred word reflective account of the editorial process and a personal reflection of 300-500 words.

JOM515 Audience Strategy

One of the growing job areas in journalism right now is the audience team, and publishers are actively recruiting people with these skills. And no wonder, as increasing numbers of publications switch to subscriptions and memberships as a key component of their business model, these are critical skills for the newsroom. Understanding audience needs and wants is vital if you want to work in anything from a mainstream newspaper or magazine to a podcast, to a

newsletter-based startup. Have you ever listened to a *New York Times* podcast? They credit the audience strategy journalist who worked on it at the end.

We'll start with audience research, exploring the rhythms of your target audience's lives, and how we find the spaces in their days where they have the time and desire to read your journalism. What sort of journalism do they want, when do they want it – and how?

Once we've set our editorial strategy, we'll dig deeper into social media skills, across platforms. The *2026 Reuters Institute Digital News Report* showed that social platforms are now the dominant way people find news, and newsrooms are crying out for people with great social media skills. We'll take a deeper look at newsletters, and how they fit into the product mix of news organisations – and how podcasts are part of the same equation. We will investigate how to get your stories found via search – and how that's changing in the age of AI.

This is very much a “hands on” module, with an hour set aside each week in the workshops for practical development work. We'll take those skills you've developed and run either existing publications used by your predecessors or brand-new publications for several months, building and developing audiences using those key skills as we do so.

And through that work, you'll get practical experience of changing strategy based on what's working, and what isn't. We'll use analytics to understand how the audience are reacting to our work and adapt what we're doing based on that information.

We'll also set aside time in each workshop to explore the latest changes on the social platforms, in newsletters and podcasts, in video and in search, both through our own research, and through speakers working in the field. In recent years, we've had guest speakers from *Metro*, *The Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Telegraph*, *CNN* and *Condé Nast*.

Tutor: Adam Tinworth has been working in the field we now know as “audience” for over two decades, helping companies all over the world, from the Straits Times in Singapore to the Toronto Star in Canada build new audiences on digital platforms. He has taught these skills at City since 2012, and former students from this module are leading audience teams or working as newsroom leaders globally. His background is in business journalism, although he possibly started his career at age eight, when he ran a newspaper for the children on his street.

Assessments

- Audience Strategy analysis – choose a journalistic publication and analyse how they interact with and develop their audiences. (1000 words)
- Audience Strategy Portfolio – a collection of evidence of your work in researching, setting and implementing audience strategies either in the module publications, on work experience, or on personal projects, accompanied by a reflection on your learning. (2000 words)

JOM326 Data Journalism

As journalism continues to evolve, the ability to combine traditional reporting with data analysis, visualisation and AI-assisted workflows has become an essential skill for reporters across every beat. This module introduces students to the growing field of data journalism and equips them with the skills to find, interrogate and tell stories through data.

Over ten weeks, you will explore how data journalism has developed and why it has become central to investigative and public-interest reporting. Through a combination of lectures and practical workshops, you will learn how to generate story ideas from datasets, source and collect data, and use industry-standard tools to clean, analyse, and visualise information.

The module will introduce you to the full workflow of a data journalist: from identifying trends hidden in large datasets, to scraping and cleaning information, to presenting findings in compelling and accessible formats. Alongside technical skills, we will explore the ethics of data-driven reporting, the importance of accuracy and verification, and how collaboration with communities and third-party contributors can strengthen reporting.

This module is equally suited to those who want to learn how to use data as a storytelling tool and more experienced students who want to strengthen their data skills.

By the end of the module, you will be able to develop original story ideas from data, use computational power to carry out key analysis, and produce journalism that combines rigorous reporting with clear and engaging visual storytelling. In an age of information overload, data journalism offers a way to make sense of complexity — and uncover stories that might otherwise remain hidden.

Tutor: Dr Irving Huerta has worked as an investigative journalist for over a decade. He was part of the global team of more than 300 reporters who uncovered the Panama Papers, exposing the use of offshore tax havens, and has contributed to cutting-edge data-driven investigations, including collaborations with the research agency Forensic Architecture on cases of political violence. He was the convenor of the Cambridge Data Schools at the University of Cambridge and continues to deliver workshops in collaboration with the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in the UK and abroad. Since 2025, he is Lecturer in Data Journalism at City St George's, University of London.

Assessments

- Presentation, written summary, and reflection: You will work in small groups (4–5 students) to create a 20–25-minute video presentation, demonstrating a critical understanding of data journalism through the analysis of a published example of data journalism. Alongside the

presentation, you will submit a 500-word group summary and a 200-word individual reflection on your learning.

- Digital portfolio and reflection: You will work independently to develop a short story (400 words) and a long-form story (800 words), both substantially based on data journalism techniques and published digitally with appropriate visualisations. For each story, you will also write a 200-word reflective blog-style post documenting your individual learning process.

JOM876 Fundamentals of Financial Journalism

The course covers the fundamental elements of business, economic and financial reporting, including the differences and similarities between these three areas. It will explore the different techniques and formats used by journalists to tell their stories most effectively, including the use of figures and graphics and compelling case studies.

It will examine how to tailor stories to particular audiences, and identify some of the key issues that would be appropriate to different audiences.

Finally, it will analyse the responsibilities of financial journalists, particularly in the context of financial crises and business scandals, and the ethical dilemmas they face.

Tutor: Camila Reed is a communications director and trainer with over 20 years of experience helping organisations and individuals find their voice and tell their stories. Her career path has taken her from the BBC World Service to the editorial leadership team at Reuters, where she helped launch the award-winning video-on-demand platform Reuters Insider TV. In recent years, she has partnered with diverse organisations including many UN agencies, technology firms like ARM Holdings, multinationals such as Tetra Pak, and organisations including the International Monetary Fund and the Thomson Reuters Foundation. She also works with newsrooms on ethical AI adoption.

Assessments

- Business feature (1000 words) plus a reflection (500 words)
- Group projects, which may be carried out as part of site visits, will be assessed through class presentations (20 minutes each for a group of 3).

JOM115 Global Cultures of Journalism

This module explores the ways in which journalism is shaped by different cultural, political, and social contexts around the world, examining why

journalistic practices vary across regions and providing a space for critical debate about the conceptual foundations of journalism. It encourages students to develop an awareness of the diverse cultural and political environments in which journalists operate, while engaging with contemporary international media contexts and exchanging their own experiences, knowledge, and culturally informed perspectives.

Through the study of key concepts such as, censorship, spin and media systems, the module highlights how these forces influence journalistic practice and the reporting of local and international issues. Students will critically examine journalism values, norms, and professional roles, while also developing an understanding of the differences between academic and journalistic research methodologies.

Overall, the module fosters a critical appreciation of how differing perspectives and contexts shape both the practice and understanding of journalism across the globe.

Tutor: Dr Zahera Harb is Director of MA International Journalism and Journalism Media and Globalisation (Erasmus Mundus) programmes. She is a Reader in International Journalism and 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 a 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

- An academic essay of 2000 words
- A group presentation (4-5 students) primarily researching an assigned topic and presenting on it for 20 minutes.

JOM112 Journalism Entrepreneurship and Platform Development

This module is all about the future of journalism, and how you can imagine a new approach to delivering content to audiences. After a long period of relative stability through broadcast and print, journalism has been in constant flux for over 20 years, with new technological developments arriving before the previous ones

have been fully assimilated. Before we have come to grips with the Internet and social media, AI is now making a significant impact.

In this module you will develop a creative, flexible and innovative approach to facing these transitions head on, bringing fresh thinking to a media organisation; creating dynamic content for a start-up media enterprise; or launching your own journalistic website, app, social media enterprise or other product. Through hands-on development in a group, you will build your idea towards an initial "minimal viable product". A range of guest speakers will provide their expertise, while guest panels will provide feedback on your projects to help you hone them for real-world impact.

The skills, insights and experience you gain in this module will be invaluable as you enter an industry in turmoil. Especially at a time when jobs are difficult to obtain and to retain, the confidence of knowing you can think creatively, work collectively and land on your own feet is a big asset in any work situation. In this class, you will learn to research, develop, refine and pitch an innovative journalistic idea that showcases your creativity, talents and market acuity.

This is a practical class, aimed at working as a team on a project, pitch, and background research document. Over the weeks, you will learn industry-standard techniques to manage and develop creativity within a team. These methods will be equally applicable to a startup or an established media organisation. With the many guest speakers and panellists, students on this module will also have the opportunity to network and make industry contacts that could be very useful throughout their career.

This module is mostly taught in an interactive 'workshop' style, with many visiting speakers and a practical task of developing a project across classes. Guest speakers come from Reuters, the BBC, Nature magazine, Snapchat, and innovative startups, providing a wide range of perspectives on journalistic innovation.

Tutor: Dr James Morris has over 30 years' experience as a journalist working both in mainstream print publications and with a variety of online startups, including 5 years as editor of market-leading magazine PC Pro. He currently contributes weekly to Forbes, has contributed to Wired and Fortune, while also running startup electric vehicle website WhichEV, plus its YouTube channel. After completing a PhD and book on AI, his academic research focuses on the impact of this new technology on news media culture, particularly as an amplifier of misinformation.

Assessments

- Group research project plan explaining the proposed innovation or enterprise (3,500 words)

- Group pitch (5 minutes group presentation in front of an industry panel)
- Individual reflective essay explaining learning and contribution to group project (950-1,050 words)

PG Journalism Specialism Elective Modules

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- ◆ Security and Crime (JOM291)
- ◆ Sports Writing (JOM287)
- ◆ Sport, Media and Communication (JOM114)

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 listed below are taught in terms two and three.

To allow some students to take two electives in term two the modules are split between Mondays and Fridays. This means if you are taking two of these term two 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)
- Political Reporting (JOM288)
- Reporting on Identity and Underrepresented Communities (JOM708)
- Sport, Media and Communication (JOM114)

On **Friday**

- Security and Crime (JOM291)
- Sports Writing (JOM287)
- Humanitarian Reporting (JOM285)
- Investigative Reporting (JOM292)
- Lifestyle (JOM324)

Term Three

Narrative and First Person Journalism (JOM705) is taught over five intensive days. It runs 11-1pm and 2-4pm every day 19-24 April 2027. This is before term three starts.

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.

Schedule – timetable of choices

You will be required to give your top two choices for each specialism elective you pick. This is to ensure we have manageable class sizes. You will be allocated one of the two choices you make for each specialism elective.

If you opt to study two electives rather than one, you will be restricted to picking from two "baskets" of electives. The reason for this is that many of the electives run at the same time so you will not be able to do certain combinations of elective specialisms.

All requests are dealt with after the given deadline so there is no advantage in making an early choice. Anyone who misses the deadline will be allocated a place on a specialism after the students who filed on time. You will only be offered a place on a module if there is room – this means anyone misses the deadline may not get one of your first two choices and may have to make a third or fourth.

It will be possible to switch electives if you change your mind, but only if the module you wish to take is taught in term two or three and ONLY if there is still room on the elective you wish to study.

SPECIALISM 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, books, art 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 *Quietus*. 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 about the arts widely for publications including: The Guardian, The Observer Magazine, Vogue, The Quietus, The i and The Independent. She has also 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. Her second book, Fragile Bodies, will be published by W&N in the spring of 2027.

Assessments

- Interview - 1,200-word profile or arts feature, plus a 500-word pitch.
- Review - 800-word review of a live arts performance

Health and Science

Health and science journalism covers a wide and fascinating set of subjects. One day you could be talking to a Cambridge professor about the new weight-loss drugs; the next, attending a conference on the science of longevity or interviewing a woman with OCD about how she overcame her condition. Sleep, diet, disease, mental health, fitness, climate change, AI, cutting-edge medical advances: all of these come under the umbrella of health and science.

Science and medicine may be about numbers and molecules, but - as in all journalism - the real stories are the human ones. Being a health journalist requires a mixture of intellectual rigour, tact and empathy. This course will show you how to find and interview everyone from top hospital consultants to members of the public who have found themselves on a difficult health journey.

Equally key, 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.

On completion of the course, students will be able to produce well-researched features and interviews on health and science topics. While sessions are mostly 'print' focussed, the principles are equally valid for broadcast students. You do not need a science background to take part.

There is more demand for health and science journalists than ever before. Hence, this is a practical class, aimed at helping you find a job in health and science journalism, or to self-start as a freelancer. Over the weeks, you will learn how to approach commissioning editors and pitch stories in an attention-grabbing way. Most importantly of all, you'll learn how to find the headline behind the story. Students on this module will also have the opportunity to network and make industry contacts.

This module is taught in an interactive 'workshop' style, with relevant visiting speakers and practical tasks in class. Last year, we took a trip to the Science Media Centre to see how stories reach the press: the highlight of the course was a visit to the Telegraph, where students got to pitch their ideas to the Head of Health and her team.

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. As the editor of Mother & Baby magazine, Miranda was twice 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

- Explainer or interview-led feature story – 1,200 words. Profile of a prominent scientist or medical researcher or an analysis of a current health/science issue. Plus a pitch.
- Real life person “ghosted” first person story – 1,000 words.

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 - exacerbated by global aid cuts - 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, and the media's handling of safety and trauma.

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

Tutor: tbc

Assessments

- News story – a news story based on a live press conference or other live event. The piece of work is 750 words.
- News Feature - 1,100 words plus a 600-word pitch.

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.

Emma Youle is an award-winning investigative journalist who has worked for regional newspapers and HuffPost UK as special correspondent. She has covered stories including the contaminated blood scandal, the housing crisis, historic child abuse, the Grenfell fire disaster and won the Private Eye Paul Foot Award in 2017 for her reporting exposing conditions inside homeless hostels. She is a mentor on the Centre for Investigative Journalism’s Lyra McKee bursary scheme, and is on the editorial board of the British Journalism Review.

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)

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 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 a lifestyle personality – from 600 to 700 words with two images. Plus write a 600-word pitch for the completed article for a named publication and explain why suitable for the publication.

- Print or video review - a lifestyle review, either in print (700-750-words with 2 original images), or video (2-3 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, writing exercises 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 - 1,650 words exploring a subject of choice
- Topical op-ed/comment piece - 850 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 about the arts widely for publications including: The Guardian, The Observer Magazine, Vogue, The Quietus, The i and The Independent. She has also 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. Her second book, Fragile Bodies, will be published by W&N in the spring of 2027.

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 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 2026 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 2025 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 BBC, 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 abroad - primarily North Africa & Eastern Europe - on good governance and balanced political reporting.

Assessment

- Class presentation – a 10-15 minute group presentations and 800-1,000 word individual report
- Political interview of 1,000 words

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 a 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 and 700-800 word individual report
- One 1000-word analytical feature

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. 10-15 minute group presentation and 800-1,000 report

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 the 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: Jason Bennetto was the crime correspondent with special responsibility for security reporting at The Independent for 13 years. As a freelance journalist Jason has written for a range of publications including Esquire magazine, Mail on Sunday, Guardian, Daily Mail, and The Observer. He is a senior lecturer at City, University of London and teaches news, features, interviewing and research on the MA Magazine course.

Assessments

- News story (600 words) - based on a live press conference/interview
- Analysis/profile (1,000 words) and 800-word briefing document

Sports Writing

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 writers Jon Liew and Suzy Wrack, 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 level of football content, as that is where the majority of entry-level 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.

The assessments can be on any sport and can be provided via audio or video as well as written.

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 650-word report of a live event, either in-person or from a broadcasted live match. Or an exclusive news story, 650 words or video/audio equivalent.
- Feature/interview to include an interview/s with sportsperson. 1,250-words or video/audio equivalent. Plus a 600-word pitch

Sport, Media and Communication

This module introduces you to the dynamics of contemporary sports communication, exploring how stories travel across broadcast, digital and social platforms, and how commercial, cultural and political pressures influence the way sport is represented.

Through lectures and workshops, you will learn how to engage with the structures and practices of sports communication, including press conferences, crisis management, and digital content creation. Alongside developing hands-on skills in producing multimedia sports outputs, you will also critically analyse case studies in areas such as athlete PR, sponsorship, diversity in sports media, and the globalisation of sporting narratives.

The module complements Sports Writing by broadening your perspective beyond journalistic craft to include the wider ecosystem of sports media and communication, preparing you to operate effectively in a fast-changing and highly interconnected industry.

Tutor tba

Assessments

- Group presentation highlighting main approaches to a suggested sports entity communication strategy plus a report highlighting the research behind those approaches. Presentation is 10 minutes (team of two) plus research report (600 words)
- Write a 1,500-word communication strategy for a sports entity.

ENDS