
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.

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.

Contents

- ◆ JOM108 – AI, Journalism and the Future of News
- ◆ JOM326 – Data Journalism

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.

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.

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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.