Course Title: Special Topics in News Writing and Reporting: Enterprise Reporting and Solutions Journalism

Course Number: JOUR 328P

Section: 0101

Term: Spring 2025

Credits: 3

Course Dates: From Jan. 28 through May 13.

Course Times: Tuesdays, 4 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Classroom: Knight Hall, Room 2013

Instructor: Jerry Zremski

Pronouns: He, him

Cell Phone: 202-246-2396 (Feel free to text me)

Email: jzremski@umd.edu

Office: Knight Hall, Room 2100 H.

Office Hours: 3 p.m.-5 p.m. Mondays, 12:45-1:45 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. (Office hours will be on Zoom until further notice.)

Course Description

JOUR 328P, Enterprise Reporting and Solutions Journalism, is an advanced reporting course that aims to teach students how to write complex, in-depth stories that focus not just on societal problems, but also solutions. Students will contribute single-byline stories to a Local News Network project that is part of the Solutions Journalism Network's Student Media Challenge: an in-depth look at the mental health issues faced by young Marylanders and efforts to address those issues.

Learning Outcomes

By semester's end, students will learn -- at a professional level -- how to:

- Craft compelling enterprise stories using a variety of story structures.

- Work with another reporter to produce an enterprise story.

- Critically assess the work of others.

- Define solutions journalism, and what it isn't

- Recognize potential response-driven stories and gather facts for pitching story ideas.

- Craft stories that reflect the four pillars of solutions journalism and its applications to the field, including in-depth reporting and interviewing, deep context, compelling background information – including data and research – and involving multiple and diverse sources.

- Investigate, understand and present complicated narratives

- Apply a solutions journalism approach to an enterprise story

Required Resources

- Course ELMS site.

- The Associated Press Stylebook. You can subscribe to [the online versionLinks to an external site.](#) or order a hard copy of the Stylebook and bring it to class.

- The Capital News Service [websiteLinks to an external site..](#)

- An account on Otter.ai, a transcription service where you will record all your interviews. Otter offers a free account that offers 300 minutes of transcription monthly, but if you need more than that, you should consider getting a paid account.

- An account on the Solutions Journalism Network homepage (sign up [hereLinks to an external site.](#)).

- The class Slack channel.

- Readings supplied by the instructor in class and included on the course schedule.

Prerequisite: JOUR320 and permission of the instructor.

Course Structure

Our course will meet weekly for only 15 sessions, so our sessions will be strictly structured so that we can get the most out of each session. Class sessions will begin with a brief lecture, to be followed by a reading period and then either an extensive discussion of the issue of the day or lab work, where you will be writing or reviewing the work of other students in the class. I will also meet individually with all 10 students in the class every week to check on your progress on your solutions story.

Grading will be built around the solutions story you will produce during the semester, although there will also be several graded in-class exercises.

Participation

·   It is important that you attend every class and show up on time. Much of the work we will be doing will involve teamwork, so it is essential that you take part.

· Please notify the instructor in advance, if possible, if you will be missing class due to illness or emergency, so that arrangements can be made to get notes to you.

· If you become seriously ill during the semester, please contact me as soon as possible. Please include a note from your doctor, if possible. Please also let me know if someone in your immediate family is hospitalized, or if there is a death in your immediate family. I understand how difficult these situations can be, and I will work with you through any such crisis to try to help you finish this class.

· There will be no major assignments due on major religious holidays identified by the university. If you expect to miss a class due to a religious holiday, please notify me in advance.

· Students must complete all readings and assignments in a timely manner to fully participate in class.

Names, Pronouns and Self-Identification

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit the Rainbow Terrapin NetworkLinks to an external site. and Why Pronouns MatterLinks to an external site. to learn more. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and disability is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for your fellow Terps.

Assignments and Grading

There will be several assignments in this class, which will be spelled out in more detail in the class schedule and on the class ELMS page. Here are the assignments along with their share of the final grade in this class:

Assignment	% of final grade
Solutions story pitch	5%
Solutions reporting strategy memo	5%
Imposters' exercise	5%
Howdoneit' exercise	5%
Translating the complicated' exercise	5%

Solutions story outline	5%
Solutions evidence memo	5%
Solutions limitations memo	5%
Solutions story lede	5%
Solutions story first draft	10%
Solutions story second draft	15%
Solutions story third draft	25%
Class participation	5%

Grades

All grades are major grades. Late assignments will be accepted only with the permission of the instructor. Any other late missed graded assignments will receive a zero. Grades will be based in part on the following criteria to reflect professional newsroom standards:

- Plagiarism & Fabrication: Any story that includes fabricated or plagiarized material will be referred to the university's Office of Student ConductLinks to an external site. and the college's associate dean. Students found to have violated the honor code may face sanctions, including a grade of XF for the course, suspension or expulsion from the university.

- Libel: Any story that includes libelous material - such as calling someone a murderer before they've been convicted or pleaded guilty to the charge - will result in an F, **or 55%,** for the story.

- Spelling: Misspelling a proper name of a person, place or organization will result in a dropped letter grade for each such error.

- Deadlines: Any story submitted after the deadline (2 p.m. Tuesdays for out-of-class assignments; 3:50 p.m. on Thursdays in most cases for in-class assignments), will result in an F, **or 55%,** even if a minute late. Any story that is not submitted at all will receive a 0.

Stories that have no factual errors and are submitted on time will be evaluated on the following criteria: Grammar, AP style, Structure, Conciseness, Readability and Completeness.

Please do not open your filed class assignments on Google Docs when you see that I am editing and grading them. Any student who attempts to change a written assignment while I am grading it will receive an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment. Instead, review my comments on your assignments after you see that I have filed your grade on ELMS.

Grading Rubric

- **A (90 to 100 percent):** The story has virtually no style, spelling, grammar or punctuation errors and could be published by a professional news outlet with very little editing. The lead is strong, the point of the story is clear and it is well organized. It contains all the important elements, leaving out information that is off point or redundant.

- **B (80 to 89 percent):** The story has a few style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with minor editing is ready to be published by a professional news outlet. The lead is acceptable, main points are explained and the story is well organized. The writing may need to be tighter and some word choices may need to be clearer.

- **C (70 to 79 percent):** The story has some style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors but with some significant editing can be published by a professional news outlet. The lead may be buried, main points may not be clearly articulated, and the story may have left out one or two important facts or included unimportant information.

- **D (60 to 69 percent):** The story has multiple style, spelling, grammar and/or punctuation errors. It does not have a clear lead and/or the story is poorly organized and written. Key points may be missing, requiring more interviews/calls. The story would have to be reworked to be published.

- **F (<60 percent):** The story is inaccurate, late, libelous or plagiarized, does not meet the requirements of the assignment (for example, for multiple sources) or is of such poor quality that another journalist would be required to re-report and write the piece in order for it to be published.

Tips for Success

- Discussions are a critical part of the course. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.

- **Manage your time.** Make time for your readings and participation in discussions each week. Give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems.

- **Login regularly.** Log in to ELMS-Canvas several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts.

- **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous one. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind.

- **Use ELMS-Canvas notification settings.** ELMS-Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable announcements to be sent instantly or daily.

- **Open your graded papers and review my edits carefully.** Please review your written assignments after you see that I have entered a grade for the assignment on ELMS. Also be sure to read the detailed note I leave at the end of each paper. **Please understand that closely reviewing your graded work is one of the most important learning experiences in this class.**

- **Ask for help if needed.** If you need help with ELMS-Canvas or other technology, contact Clint Bucco at cbucco@umd.edu. **If you are struggling with a course concept or are concerned about your grades, reach out to me for help.** Grades will be recorded as soon as possible so that you can follow your progress. I will also meet one-on-one with you, as warranted, to discuss your performance.

Academic Integrity

Along with certain rights, students have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Adhering to a high ethical standard is of special importance in journalism, where reliability and credibility are the cornerstones of the field. Therefore, the college has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy on academic dishonesty. Any abridgment of academic integrity standards in a College of Journalism course will be referred to the college's associate dean and will likely be referred to the university's Office of Student ConductLinks to an external site.. To ensure this is understood, all students are asked to sign an academic integrity pledge at the beginning of the semester that will cover all assignments in this

course. Students found to have violated the university's honor code may face sanctions, including a grade of XF for the course, suspension or expulsion from the university.

For this course, some of your assignments may be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit Turnitin Originality Checker for StudentsLinks to an external site..

Artificial Intelligence

I expect the work you complete in this course to be your own. You must properly attribute any material that you did not create yourself — including text, photos, video, graphics and more. There may be opportunities to use artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT in our workflow — but only at my direction or with my specific permission

The use of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT as a writing tool is strictly forbidden. Remember that ChatGPT frequently "hallucinates"Links to an external site. and generates false information.

It is acceptable to use Grammerly's Free Online Grammar CheckerLinks to an external site. to review your work. But we must remind you that the tool does NOT check for AP style, which we expect you to incorporate into your journalistic writing.

Use of Grammerly's AI writing tool is not permitted in this course -- and in fact may be counterproductive to what you are learning about news writing.

More Details About JOUR 328P

Technology Tips

- Please refrain from using cellphones and other electronic devices during class sessions unless we have designated such use as part of a class exercise.

- Please try to keep your camera on during Zoom sessions if possible.

- If you are having trouble with internet access or other technological issues, please alert me as soon as possible.

Communication with the Instructor

Your success in this course may well depend on how often you and I talk and how often you let me help you with your work. To that end, you should feel free to reach out to me in a number of ways:

· In-class help: Students will, on occasion, do some writing in class. In those cases, feel free to ask me to look at your work. This will apply whether we are meeting virtually or in the classroom. If we are meeting on Zoom on a particular day and you need help with your writing assignment, please ask me for a breakout room.

· Office hours: In addition to the office hours listed at the front of the syllabus, I am available to meet by appointment at other times during the week at my office: Room 2100 H.

- **ELMS announcements:** I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS announcements. You must make sure that your email and announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Canvas/ELMS inbox frequently.

· Due to popular demand from my past students, I plan to use ELMS as the main mode of communication with all of you this semester. I will check my ELMS messages several times a day.

· Email: Feel free to email me at jzremski@umd.edu. Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic and intellectual concerns/questions. It is in your best interest to use your Terpmail account and check it at least once daily. Pay special attention to JOURNEWS emails that detail internship and career opportunities. I will not respond to student emails that do not originate from a UMD email account.

- **Text:** While I will do my best to respond to emails promptly, **you will more likely receive a quick reply if you text me at 202-246-2396. Please text me or call me with any urgent matter.**

- **Phone:** I welcome phone calls from students -- but not between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. Please understand that if I do not respond promptly, it is likely because I am busy. I will return the call as soon as possible.

Communication with Peers

We will edit each other's work in this class, so you should come into this class with an open mind and a willingness to learn from constructive criticism. But all criticism in this class, from peers or from the instructor, must be constructive. Our aim is to produce compelling journalism, and in this class teamwork will be key to doing that.

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions.

I encourage you to exercise your right to free speech. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which you feel comfortable voicing thoughts without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned or devalued. But this course is NOT the space for intimidation or harassment.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity

- Student and instructor conduct

- Accessibility and accommodations

- Attendance and excused absences

- Grades and appeals

- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.htmlLinks to an external site. for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit UMD's Student Academic Support Services websiteLinks to an external site. to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need (UMD's Student Resources and Services websiteLinks to an external site. may help).

Staying Healthy

One of the keys to success in college (and life) is staying as healthy as possible both physically and mentally. Thankfully, UMD has resources to help students with this.

The University Health CenterLinks to an external site. offers telemedicine and in-person appointments as well as a HEAL LineLinks to an external site. and an after hours nurse line at: 301-314-9386. Please reach out to the Health Center or your personal physician if you are feeling ill. **Do not come to class if you are ill.** Instead, please notify me in advance that you will be missing class.

It's also crucial to look after your own mental health. These are difficult times in many ways, and many students struggle in ways they never expected. If you find yourself needing to speak with someone about a personal struggle, please consider visiting UMD's Counseling CenterLinks to an external site..

Here are some other important links:

The UMD Mental Health ServiceLinks to an external site. offers walk-in services for students suffering from mental health crises. Please go there if you are feeling suicidal, if you are experiencing panic attacks or if you are concerned about a friend or a student who may be at risk.

The UMD Substance Abuse Intervention and Treatment (SUIT) OfficeLinks to an external site. is the place to go if you or a friend may be struggling with a substance abuse issue.

Campus Advocates Respond and Educate to Stop ViolenceLinks to an external site. provides free, confidential advocacy and therapy services to primary and secondary survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking and sexual harassment.

Notice of Mandatory Reporting

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "responsible university employee," and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD's Title IX coordinator, per university policy. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD's confidential resources, such as CARE to Stop Violence Links to an external site. (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the Counseling CenterLinks to an external site. (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD's Title IX coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu. To view further information, please visit the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct's Links to an external site.website at ocrsm.umd.eduLinks to an external site..

Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working and living environment for people of all abilities.

The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The **Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS)**Links to an external site. provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. **Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.**

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability ServiceLinks to an external site. at 301-314-7682, or via email at **adsfrontdesk@umd.edu**. Information about **sharing your accommodations with instructors**Links to an external site., **note-taking assistance**Links to an external site. and more is available from Accessibility and Disability Service.

Religious holidays

There will be no tests or major assignments scheduled on religious holidays identified by the university. If you expect to miss a class during the semester due to a religious holiday, please notify the instructor in writing before the start of the second class.

Inclement weather

If the university closes due to weather (snow, ice, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes) or other emergencies and class must be canceled, students will be advised of assignment adjustments by the instructor. We will likely use our class Elms site to make these notifications and/or conduct a virtual class. Please check the university's home pageLinks to an external site. if in doubt about whether or not classes have been canceled on campus. Please also consider signing up for other emergency alertsLinks to an external site. from campus.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The University of Maryland has long promoted diversity, equity and inclusion as core values. We recognize a diverse educational community as one of our greatest strengths. Recognizing that all individuals have a unique background, we strive to create a vibrant learning community for all participants in class. Visit the websites of the Office of Diversity & InclusionLinks to an external site. and the TerrapinSTRONGLinks to an external site. initiative to learn more about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Maryland.

Land Acknowledgement

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment.

Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations.

Enslavement Acknowledgement

We, at the University of Maryland, recognize and honor the exploited labor of forcefully enslaved people upon which the foundations of the United States and our institution were built.

Enslaved people of African descent farmed, paved, maintained, and developed the land on which our university stands today. Through intergenerational resistance, leadership and a steadfast pursuit of freedom and justice, their descendants fought and continue to fight for a societal transformation in defiance of the profound injustices of the transatlantic trade, chattel slavery, convict leasing, Jim Crow laws, dehumanization and the caste system that permeates our existence. They desegregated and integrated our classrooms and now lead our university and Maryland Terps forward to achieving a better world.

We are forever indebted to the unwilling generational sacrifices and stolen labor of the enslaved Africans and their descendants. Together, we will strive to atone, heal and uplift the unbreakable spirit and beauty of Black Americans.

For more information, visit the [Office of Diversity and Inclusion websiteLinks to an external site.](#).

About the Instructor:

I joined Merrill College full-time in July 2022 to serve as a lecturer and to develop the college's Local News Network. I previously served as an adjunct instructor for a total of 10 years. I taught JOUR 201 for several years but have taught JOUR320 since the fall of 2019.

The Local News Network's mission is to improve local news coverage throughout the state – with the help of JOUR 320 students. Our first major project was a voter guide to Maryland school board elections that was published in part by news outlets across the state, and we will be working collectively on another education-related project this semester. In addition to

helping local news outlets do reporting they could not do on their own, the Local News Network offers an internship program and plans on sponsoring an annual Local News Summit.

I serve as the lead instructor for all JOUR320 sections. In addition, I am adviser to the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association chapter at Merrill College.

In my time at Merrill College, I've received three Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars Program Faculty Mentor Awards, as well as the 2024 Provost's Do Good Innovator Award.

Before starting my full-time position at Merrill College, I served as Washington bureau chief of The Buffalo News between January 2007 and July 2022. A professional journalist since 1982, I joined The Buffalo News in 1984 as a business reporter and have been a Washington reporter for the News since 1989, and I continue to write stories for The News on a part-time basis. I focus my coverage on federal issues that are particularly important to readers in Buffalo, as well as the Western New York House delegation and New York's two senators.

Awards and honors I've received for my reporting include:

- A Nieman fellowship at Harvard University in the 1999-2000 school year.

- The Society of Professional Journalists' Sigma Delta Chi award for non-deadline reporting in 2017 for "From Burma to Buffalo," a series that traced the journey of refugees from Myanmar who moved to the United States

- The Washington Press Club Foundation awarded me the David Lynch Memorial Award for Excellence in Congressional Reporting in 2017 for my coverage of Rep. Chris Collins. Collins was arrested on insider trading charges in August 2018, and my coverage was cited in the original indictment.

- The National Press Club's Washington Regional Reporting Award in 2018 for my coverage of the Collins scandal.

I am a native of Elkland, Pa., and a longtime resident of Washington, D.C. I earned a bachelor's degree in newspaper journalism from Syracuse University in 1982. I also hold a master's degree in political science from American University.

On top of my reporting duties, I served as president of the National Press Club in 2007. I chaired the Club's Speakers Committee in 2014 and 2015 and served as president of the Regional Reporters Association in 1997. I am also a member of the Gridiron Club, one of Washington's oldest and most selective journalism organizations, which holds annual dinners satirizing the nation's politicians. I often write many of the satirical songs in our shows.

Copyright Notice