Graduate Symposium in Journalism

JO 700 (JO 502 A1), Fall 2017

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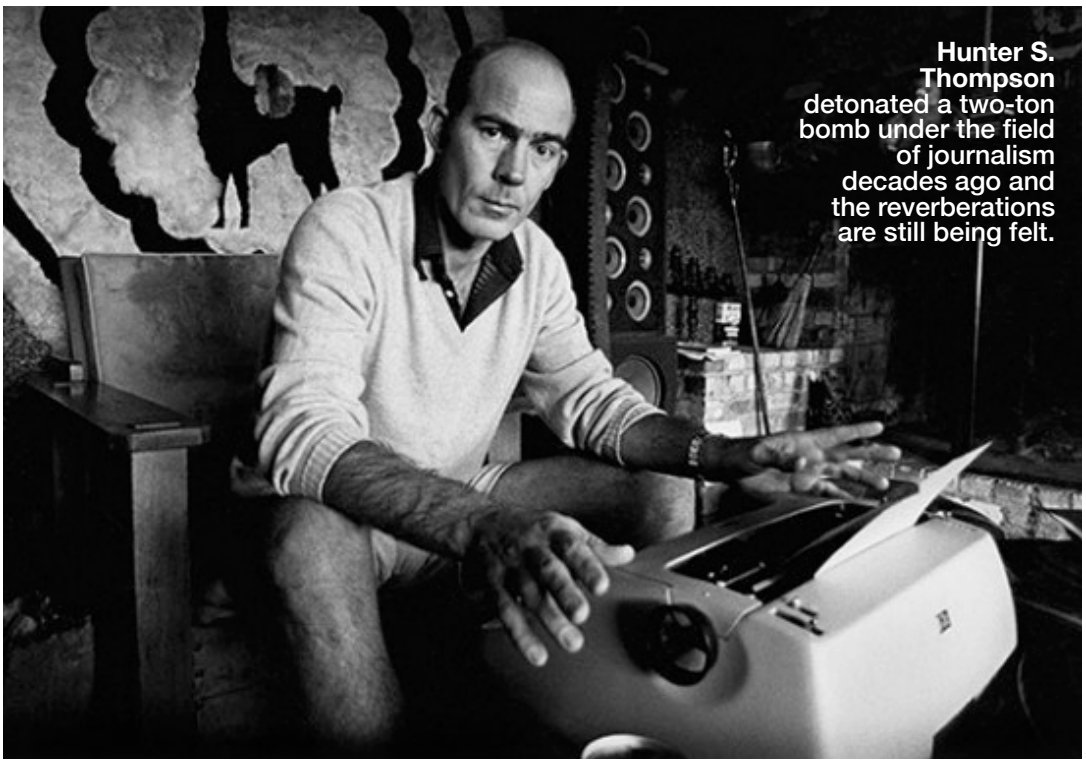


Hunter S. Thompson detonated a two-ton bomb under the field of journalism decades ago and the reverberations are still being felt.

About this course

This symposium is required for first-semester graduate students in journalism, and is open to all on a credit or non-credit basis.

The goal is to enrich the first semester curriculum by presenting a variety of topics relevant to the field, presented by interesting speakers who are experts in the subject matter.

You will be required to post written summaries of the discussions in your blogs, supported by examples of work from the field.

Attendance is mandatory

Fifty percent of the grade will be based on two reaction papers inspired by our required books, your class participation and your preparedness for our guest speakers. The remainder of the grade will be from a research paper on a subject of your choosing. Details to follow,

Poor attendance may lower your grade, at the discretion of the instructor.

Also, talking, dancing and making rude noises will also diminish your grade.

We have two required books:

- David Carr, *The Night of the Gun* (Simon and Schuster, 2008)
- Debbie Cenziper, *Love Wins* (Harper, 2016)

Daily reading of *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe* and other news sites is required.

One last thing: we insist that you have fun.

Research paper

You will write a research paper and make a brief presentation on your paper in our last class period, which is when the paper is due. These presentations do not have to be elaborate productions with Power Point or Keynote slide shows, but you are welcome to go that way if you wish.

Focus on the paper. The body of your paper--exclusive of bibliography and endnotes--should run no less than eight double-spaced, typewritten pages, and no more than 15. The papers should be well-written, technically perfect and thoroughly documented.

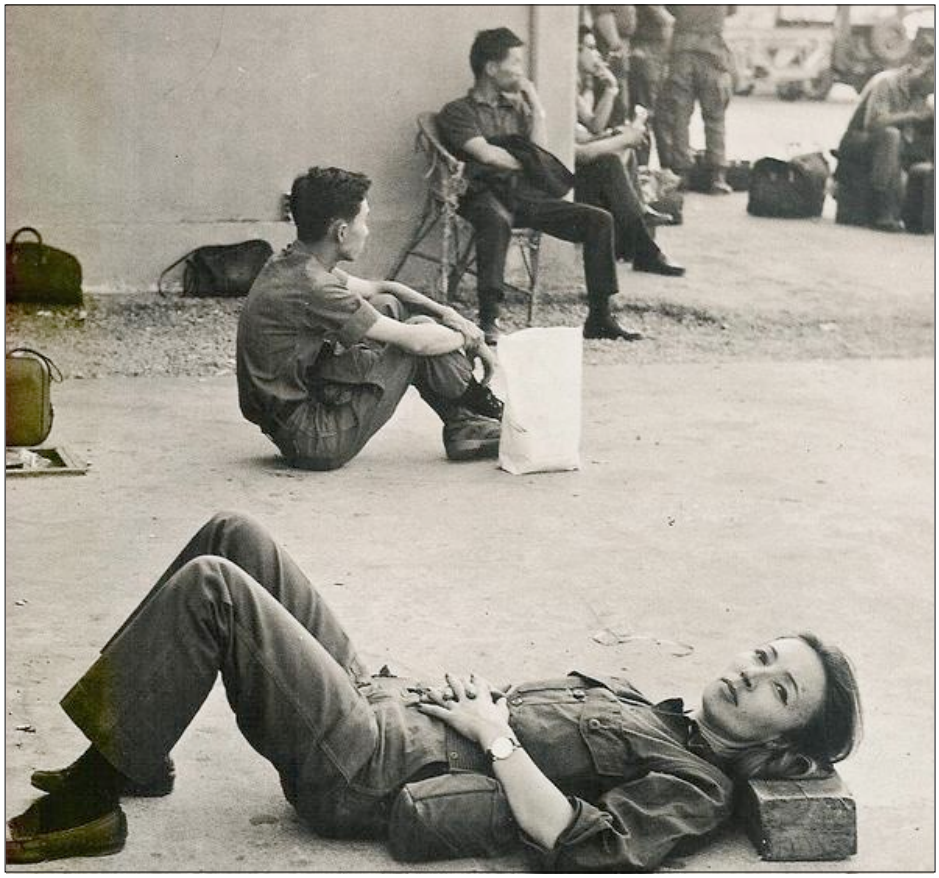
We will discuss the content of these papers early in the semester, but you will be encouraged to “adopt” a journalist, musician, activist or other player in our story, and write a paper about that person and their contributions during the decade.

You can also write about an issue rather than an individual. I think the approach focusing on the journalist is the way to go, but the choice is entirely up to you.

Here are answers to questions you haven’t yet asked:

1. **Style**. Consistency is what matters most to me. Historical papers generally follow the style outlined in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. This is a recommended text. But as long as you are consistent and give me bibliographical information, I will be happy.

2. **Citations**. Follow the simple practice of indicating a citation with a superior number. Then, put all your notes at the end. o go insane. I prefer that book citations follow the format under the required-texts section of this syllabus. Cite interviews with a superior number and include all relevant information in the endnote. Thus: *47. Edna Buchanan, telephone interview, October 8, 2016*.



Journalist **Oriana Fallaci** (foreground) takes a break during her time reporting on the war in Vietnam. Fallaci’s papers are housed in the Gottleib Archive at Boston University.

3. **Page Numbering**. Some lunatics apparently think if they don't number the pages I won't notice that they did not make the minimum length. I can count. But make it easy on me. Don't include a lot of blank paper to make your paper fatter. It will make me think that your paper is flimsy. It's a waste, too.

4. **Title Page**. Put this sort of stuff on the cover: Title of paper, your name, course number (JO 502: Graduate Symposium in Journalism) and the date (Fall Semester, 2016).

5. **Errors**. Errors of fact seriously damage your grade. Spelling and grammar errors also will hurt. Typographical errors will be considered spelling errors. Edit carefully.

6. **Revision**. I may ask you to revise your paper. This will not affect the grade. But I will not *record your grade* -- give you credit for the work -- unless you turn in a revision if one is requested.

7. **Report Covers**. I hate those flimsy little plastic things. I usually throw them away. Paper covers and other fancy forms of presentation are mere annoyances. Save your money. Just staple or paper clip the pages together. And don't come to class the day that paper is to be turned in expecting me to have a stapler. You think I carry one in my back pocket? Get real.

8. **General Quality**. One last, vital thing: Do not think of this as "another boring term paper." You are a student in a college of communication. You are supposed to be a writer. I will be judging your paper as a piece of writing. It must be interesting. It should read like a good magazine article.

Hope you enjoy this assignment. I’m pretty sure you will.

Be good

The code of academic conduct can be found at: http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/
There, you will note that: "Academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic accomplishments, or impedes other students' opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work. Knowingly allowing others to represent your work as their own is as serious an offense as submitting another's work as your own."

Shameless plug

Available wherever fine books are sold. I have seven children and your purchases might allow me to get them back on schedule for three meals a day.

Instructor biography

I worked for newspapers and magazines before starting my teaching career. My first job, at *The Courier-Tribune* in Bloomington, Ind., lasted until that fine little newspaper went out of business. I was at *The Palm Beach Post* briefly and then joined *The American Spectator*, then served two years at *The Saturday Evening Post*. While at the *Post*, I helped edit a couple of books, including an anthology called *The American Story*.

Since I started teaching, I've taken several short term jobs — sometimes in the summers, sometimes night work on the copy desk during the school year – on *The Norman* (Okla.) *Transcript*, *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Ky.), *The Tampa Bay Times* and *The Gainesville* (Fla.) *Sun*. I've written reviews and features for *The Orlando Sentinel, The Tampa Bay Times* and *The Boston Globe* fairly regularly since 1989. I'm also book editor for an alt weekly called *Creative Loafing.*

I earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in journalism from Indiana University, writing a historical survey of the portrayal of journalists in popular culture. I earned my Ph.D. in education from the University of Oklahoma, though that was largely a history degree. My major professor was a historian and my dissertation was a historical account of a riot at that university.

I have an interest in political reporting and for four years managed a news bureau at the Oklahoma capital, covering state government. I've also covered the Democratic and Republican national conventions, so this course has a political bent.

My books include: *The American Story* (Curtis, 1975, edited with Starkey Flythe, Jr.), *The Beatles: A Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood, 1989), *Hunter S. Thompson* (Twayne, 1991), *Bob Dylan:* A Bio-Bibliography (Greenwood, 1993), *Tom Wolfe* (Twayne, 1995), and *Literary Journalism: A Reader* (Wadsworth, 2000).

My more recent books include:

- *Rock and Roll is Here to Stay* (W.W. Norton, 2000), is an anthology tracing the history of popular music.
- *Highway 61* (W.W. Norton, 2003) a memoir of a 6,000-mile road trip I took with my eldest son.
- *Outlaw Journalist* (W.W. Norton, 2008), my biography of Hunter S. Thompson.
- *Mile Marker Zero* (Crown Books, 2011) is about the writers, artists, actors and musicians who found their artistic identities in Key West.
- *Homegrown in Florida* (University Press of Florida, 2012) is a collection of stories about growing up in Florida.
- *Too Old to Die Young* (Dredger's Lane, 2015) is a collection of articles, reviews, recipes and memoirs. Available only as an e-book.
- *Everybody Had An Ocean* (Chicago Review Press, 2017), a nonfiction narrative about the crossroads of music, murder and mayhem in 1960s Los Angeles

I have seven children — Sarah, a designer with Pentagram Studios in New York; Graham, an environmental officer for Indiana University; Mary, nightlife impresario in Chicago; Savannah, a sophomore at Santa Fe College; and Jack, 14, Travis, 12, and Charley, 11, all young scholars in the Cohasset school system.

Before becoming professor and chairman of the Boston University Department of Journalism, I taught at Western Kentucky University for five years, the University of Oklahoma for four years, and the University of Florida for 24 years, the last dozen as department chairman.

I sincerely hope you enjoy the course. From my side, I can tell you that teaching it is a privilege and a pleasure,

Some words about journalism

Favorite fancy-pants or funny quotes

The purpose of journalism is to irritate, infuriate and inform.
Jess Lewis Gardner III
student in the first class I ever taught

The past actually happened, but history is only what somebody wrote down.
A. Whitney Brown
author and former writer and performer on 'Saturday Night Live'

Ninety percent of journalism is saying "Lord Jim Dies" to people who didn't know Lord Jim was alive.
G.K. Chesterton
English novelist and essayist

It is not death or torture or imprisonment that threatens us as American journalists. It is the trivialization of our industry.
Ted Koppel
formerly of ABC News

The job of the newspaper is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.
Finley Peter Dunne
early 20th century journalist

The principal difference between a horse and a man is that you cannot rely on a horse to gather news.
Mark Twain
who needs no introduction

I would be a journalist if for no other reason than I would rather drink with journalists than any other people on Earth.
Hunter S. Thompson
gonzo journalist

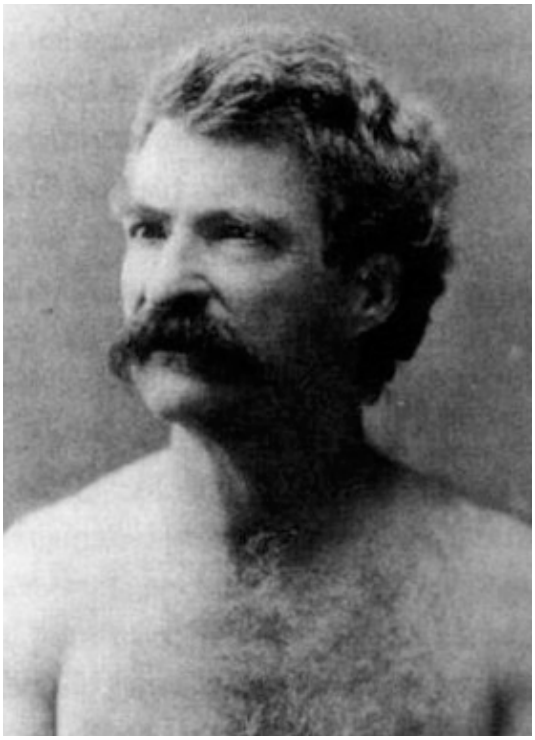
Reporters aren't very bright as a general rule. I mean, most of us learn to write when we're kids. Then we go on to other things.
Bobby Knight
retired basketball coach

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.
Maya Angelou,
speaking at President Clinton's first inauguration

Journalism keeps you planted in the earth.
Ray Bradbury
novelist and essayist

If journalism is good, it is controversial by its nature.
Julian Assange
of Wikileaks

Journalism is more addictive than crack cocaine.
Dan Rather
formerly of CBS News



Mark Twain *(above)* near the beginning of his career as a journalist, when he wrote for the Virginia City (Nev.) Territorial Enterprise. His name was Samuel Clemens, but he wrote under a pseudonym, so as not to embarrass his brother, the territorial secretary. The name he chose came from the old river term "mark twain," which meant "safe water."

Some final words

Consider this syllabus a contract. I've made some promises I intend to keep. By not dropping the class, I assume you accept the conditions.

There are two guiding philosophers in my life: Elvis Presley (who said, "If this ceases to be fun, we will cease to do it.") and my dear, late mother (who said, "If we all liked the same thing, it would be a pretty dull world.") Those two great thinkers shape my approach to this course.

I hope this course deepens your interest in journalism and helps you understand its legacy.

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