



Module Specification

Investigative Journalism

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Investigative Journalism

Module code: UABAK6-15-M

Level: Level 7

For implementation from: 2023-24

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

Faculty: Faculty of Arts Creative Industries & Education

Department: ACE Dept of Creative & Cultural Industries

Partner institutions: None

Delivery locations: Bower Ashton Campus

Field: Broadcast and Journalism

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: Not applicable

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: This module is aimed at developing students' journalistic research, writing, editorial and presentation skills.

Outline syllabus: This module presents a number of theories about and methodologies for investigative reporting and enables students to undertake their own small-scale investigation on an issue of potential public concern (for example, in the field of economics, education, ecology, commerce, crime, health, media or politics).

Teaching in earlier modules will introduce some of the principles of journalistic research to enable students to arrive at this module with an identified investigative project. Students may advance this to production in subsequent production modules if appropriate.

Students will learn about different reportorial forms, conventions and strategies as well as mainstream news practices. Students will build core skills in investigative research techniques, including:

Interviewing (tips, tricks and types)

Interrogating civic institutions (how to get information on government, health, education, justice systems etc.)

Understanding company accounts

Computer Assisted Reporting (handling data and web-based research)

Technical skills – recording and editing audio and visual

Numerical skills - make accurate, reliable computations, relevant comparisons, put facts into perspective, and lend important context to stories through numbers.

Students will conduct supervised research utilising a range of news gathering skills from interrogating databases to FOI requests as well as interviews and information management. This will culminate in a pitch to help shape further research for a potential production (e.g. this might range from a current affairs radio or television documentary to an online feature or press article).

Seminars will examine a number of case studies illuminating the output of investigative journalists as well as identify and explore key questions and topics of journalistic concern. Indicative topics are:

To what extent are philanthropic models challenging traditional production centres of investigative journalism?

What is the most important recommendation from the recent House of Lords report into investigative journalism – and why?

Consumer programmes such as Watchdog are the epitome of investigative journalism – discuss.

NGOs are producing the most interesting investigative journalism at the moment – discuss, with examples.

Adopting a political economy approach, analyse a month's worth of Insight reporting from the Sunday Times.

The Freedom of Information Act is no more than a vehicle for fishing exercises to find out pointless information at vast public expense – counter this assertion.

What are limitations and opportunities offered by the Reynolds Defence?

Going undercover is all about the reporter as hero and rarely serves any newsgathering purpose – discuss.

Students will be required to keep a detailed log of their activities and demonstrate a constant critical engagement with their work and its practical, legal and ethical underpinnings. They will need to be able to explain their approach to their cohort and tutor on a regular basis.

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: Scheduled learning:

Students will be required to attend weekly 3 hour lecturer-led seminar/workshops.

Approaches to newsgathering, managing and writing will be addressed throughout within this classroom and tutor time.

In addition, a small number of elective technical workshops (e.g. basic camera operation, radio studio production, on-line blogging and presentation softwares) will be scheduled, which will be in addition to the lecturer-led contact time.

The module will culminate in a pitch day attended by tutors and industry professionals.

Independent learning:

Students will be required to carry out research outside of class time.

Students will be required to travel within Bristol area for newsgathering purposes.

Students will be required to use the technical equipment in their own time for production purposes.

Students will be required to spend time reading texts appropriate to their investigation in consultation with the course tutor.

Total contact time will average 42 hours to include all scheduled activity.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Identify compelling and appropriate ideas for investigative reporting

MO2 Assess, construct, pitch and refine an investigative research proposal in relation to audience, logistic and platform requirements

MO3 Carry out focused research using a wide range of methods, databases and sources within accepted legal and ethical constraints

MO4 Interview subjects using a variety of methods

MO5 Interrogate data

MO6 Translate complicated information, concepts, data and numbers for viewers and readers in ways they can readily understand in order to present livelier, more precise stories

MO7 Effectively project manage a journalistic investigation

MO8 Critically analyse a range of issues of journalistic concern and structurally analyse a wide range of British civic institutions

MO9 Work independently and in a group and be able to report effectively on progress

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 108 hours

Face-to-face learning = 42 hours

Total = 150

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uabak6-15-m.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uabak6-15-m.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The summative assessment is as follows:

Portfolio 100%

Students are required to submit a portfolio of work, which will include the outcomes of set tasks throughout the module. These will be designed to enable students to develop and demonstrate for the purposes of assessment their acquisition of the skills, knowledge, understandings and experiences that will enable them to meet the learning outcomes for the module.

Examples of the specific tasks to be included in the portfolio will be clearly defined in the Module Handbook.

These may include:

A presentation 'pitching' your chosen topic of investigation and Q and A.

A research workbook - including a comprehensive log of activity and evidence to support your pitch and chosen topic and a written version of your presentation.

A folder of assignments and supporting materials (which may take the form of a digital blog) demonstrating your engagement with the course. (e.g. evidence of outside reading, checklist of completed tasks demonstrating understanding of core investigative skills, engagement with key questions and topics of journalistic concern via a series of short, written blog pieces (maximum 1000 words).

All judgements related to assessment refer back to the learning outcomes.

Assessment Criteria:

Critically analyse and apply genre conventions, narrative elements and techniques of investigative reporting (relates to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

Quality of research plan and outputs (demonstrating ability to identify, analyse and synthesise research findings) evidencing a developed investigation of chosen topic (relates to learning outcomes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

Ability to demonstrate a strong story focus and developed narrative design for an

investigative report (relates to learning outcome 1).

Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of potential audiences and platforms for an investigative report (relates to learning outcome 4).

Ability to translate and present complicated information, concepts, data and numbers for an identified audience for an investigative report (relates to learning outcome 6).

Ability to critically reflect on potential challenges and future development requirements of an investigative report (relates to learning outcome 8).

Ability to formulate and deliver effective pitches verbally, visually and in writing to professional standards (relates to learning outcomes 2, 9).

Ability to project manage a journalistic investigation working independently and in a group as required (relates to learning outcome 9).

Quality of contextual analysis demonstrating engagement with topics of journalistic concern (relates to learning outcomes 1, 8).

Assessment components:

Portfolio (First Sit)

Description: Portfolio

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Portfolio (Resit)

Description: Portfolio

Weighting: 100 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6, MO7, MO8, MO9

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Journalism [Bower] MA 2023-24