

**Eastern Illinois University**  
**Proposal to add an existing course to general education**  
**JOU 2091G, Journalism and Democracy, Honors**

**1. Catalog description**

- a) Course Number: JOU 2091G
- b) Title: Journalism and Democracy, Honors
- c) Meeting times and credit: 3-0-3
- d) Term(s) to be offered: F, S
- e) Short Title: Jou & Dem, Hon
- f) Course description: A study of the role of journalism in a democracy, the effects of the news media on society and the individual, the importance of an informed electorate in a free, diverse society, and the responsibility of citizens to know, think and speak out about public issues. WI
- g) Prerequisites: Admission to the University Honors College.
- h) Initial term of course offering: Fall 2006

**2. Student Learning Objectives and Evaluation**

- a) Students will
  - 1) Identify and describe how individuals can use the news media to fulfill their responsibilities as American and global citizens.
  - 2) Identify the Constitutional principles of freedom of speech and press and the journalistic principles of truth, accuracy, objectivity, credibility and diversity.
  - 3) Explain and evaluate how the roles of news media as watchdog, gatekeeper and agenda setter influence public perceptions and opinions.
  - 4) Explain and evaluate the social, political and cultural impact of coverage of women and minorities by the news media.

Relationship of objectives to general education:

- Objectives one and two promote the general education mission to introduce knowledge central to responsible global citizenship and to enhance student literacy in that students will be required to demonstrate their ability to write effectively.
- Objectives three and four promote the general education mission to encourage critical and reflective thinking, to introduce knowledge central to responsible global citizenship and to enhance student literacy in that students will be required to demonstrate their ability to write effectively.

b) Sample Assessment: Student performance will be evaluated by:

Quizzes and tests      approximately 40%  
 Written papers        approximately 40%  
 Oral presentations    approximately 20%

Topic	Quizzes/Tests 40%	Written Papers 40%	Oral Presentations 20%
Identify and describe how individuals can use the news media to fulfill their responsibilities as American and global citizens.	X	X	X
Identify the Constitutional principles of freedom of speech and press and the journalistic principles of truth, accuracy, objectivity, credibility and diversity.	X	X	X
Explain and evaluate how the roles of news media as watchdog, gatekeeper and agenda setter influence public perceptions and opinions.	X	X	X
Explain and evaluate the social, political and cultural impact of coverage of women and minorities by the news media.	X	X	X

- Writing and speaking effectively will be demonstrated by written reports and papers, essay tests and quizzes, and by participation in class discussion and presentation of oral reports.
- Critical thinking will be assessed on the student's use of frameworks of critical news media analysis to analyze news selection, presentation and the resultant effects upon society and the individual by reading, watching and discussing news and applying these frameworks.
- Potential to function as responsible citizens will be demonstrated in assessment of written reports, papers, essay tests, class discussion and reports dealing with the news media's role in promoting responsible citizenship. Students will examine the role of journalism in a democracy and in other political systems, and the effects of news media and journalism on society and the individual. The student's awareness of current events and historical antecedents and the duties of citizens in a democracy will be evaluated through papers, testing, oral presentations, and discussion.

c) Technology delivered courses: NA

d) Courses numbered 4700-4999: NA

- e) This course will be writing intensive. Several writing assignments and writing activities are required. These assignments and activities, which are to be spread over the course of the semester, serve the dual purpose of strengthening writing skills and deepening understanding of course content. At least one writing assignment is to be revised by the student after it has been read and commented on by the instructor. Students' writing will constitute at least 35% of the final course grade.

### 3. Outline of the Course

#### Week

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|---------|---|
| 1 – 2   | Social functions of the news media: news media as social institutions, comparative news media functions and purposes, global functions, cultural diversity, individual uses of the news media, critical thinking and the news media, the press and citizenship.                     |
| 3 – 4   | News media messages and effects: variations in news media effects, individual and social effects, form and content of news media messages, reality and perception, propaganda, public opinion, literacy, context, images, racial, sexual and other stereotypes, and agenda setting. |
| 5       | News and communication theories: kinds of communication, process of communication, news principles, news coverage of minorities, racism and sexism in the news media.   |
| 6 – 8   | History and functions of news media: the journalism profession, history of print and electronic news media including alternative and minority press, muckraking, sensationalism, the newsroom and news process.   |
| 9 - 10  | Relationship of news media and government: journalism and democracy, watchdog role, adversary relationship, four theories of the press, press conferences, investigative reporting, the news media and politics, coverage of campaigns.   |
| 11      | News media regulation and censorship: First Amendment, free expression and free press controversies, regulations of speech and press, prior restraint, censorship, public interest, the military and the news media.  |
| 12 – 13 | News media ethics and social responsibility: ethical theories, journalism ethics, misrepresentation, confidential sources, freebies, taste, privacy, confidential sources, photography ethics, news bias, codes of ethics, converging news media, global news media issues.         |
| 14      | Influence of the business and economic environments: ownership and publishers; profits and economic stability, news media ownership, conglomerates, concentration of news media.  |
| 15      | International news media and interdependence: global news media, satellite transmission, international news coverage, and global influences of U.S. news media.   |

#### 4. Rationale

- a) Purpose and need: This course counts toward the Social and Behavioral Sciences component of General Education. Students will learn communication theories and processes. News media literacy is critical to responsible global citizenship. The course's focus is to teach consumers of the news media to identify, analyze and understand issues, influences and trends in news media and their societal, cultural and economic impact. Students will learn how the news media affect and are affected by regional, national and global issues and perspectives. Various methods of inquiry, both quantitative and qualitative, will be applied. The diversity of human cultures, the socio-historical context of the news media, and the individual's responsibility to be an informed and involved citizen and steward of the environment will be stressed throughout all segments of the course.
- b) Justification of the level of the course: This is a 2000-level course because it is introductory in nature with no prerequisites.
- c) No similarity to existing courses.
- d) Impact on programs: This course will provide another general education option for honors students in journalism and other majors and may relieve some pressure on other departments who offer honors courses in the social and behavioral sciences segment.

#### 5. Implementation

- a) Course may be assigned to various faculty members including Brian Poulter and Dr. Les Hyder.
- b) No additional costs to students.
- c) Sample Texts:
  - Vivian, J. (2005). *The Media of Mass Communication, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
  - Overholser, G., & Jamieson, K.H. (Eds.). (2005). *The Press.* In Institutions of America Democracy series. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - Siochru, S. and Girard, B. (2002). *Global Media Governance: A Beginners Guide.* Rowman & Littlefield.

**6. Community College Transfer:** A community college course may be judged equivalent to this course.

**7. Date approved by the department:** September 23, 2005

Honors Council voted to support this proposal, Oct. 24, 2005

**8. Date approved by the college curriculum committee:** October 26, 2005

**9. Date approved by CAA:** December 1, 1005