



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDIA
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Journalism & Mass Communication Student Handbook

The Journalism and Mass Communication curriculum is designed to present undergraduates with an array of media and a mix of practice and theory, in keeping with the mission of the School of Media and Public Affairs (SMPA). As part of a multidisciplinary school, ours is not a traditional journalism program but one with a distinct focus on public affairs, critical analysis, reporting and writing for print, broadcast and online media platforms. We embrace the twin goals of preparing those who choose to enter the profession and enriching others seeking a liberal arts education through the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS). As described below, the JMC curriculum requires 21 courses (63 credit hours) in five separate categories (A-E).

1. The Journalism and Mass Communication Major

The Journalism and Mass Communication major is restricted and available to students only through a competitive process, either through direct admission as a freshman or application after completion of introductory courses. Either way, course requirements for the major are the same.

2. Applying for the Major When Enrolled in the University

Each fall and spring, students who are already enrolled in CCAS may apply to the Journalism and Mass Communication major. This typically occurs in the sophomore year after students have completed SMPA 110 (Introduction to News Writing and Reporting) and as many of the CCAS Co-Requisite Courses (listed below) as possible.

Selection is made with a competitive application process which requires at least an overall 3.0 GPA and a B in SMPA 110 (Introduction to News Writing/Reporting) for consideration. Meeting these minimum standards does not guarantee admission, which will depend on the pool of applicants. Overall GPA, performance in the introductory and designated CCAS courses, and a short essay are the major factors used in judging applicants. Please do not submit letters of recommendation or samples of work, unless specifically requested to do so.

3. Directly Admitted Majors

Freshmen will be admitted to the program when they apply to the university and specify that they wish to major in journalism and mass communications. Directly admitted freshmen should concentrate on CCAS requirements during the freshman year. To stay in good standing in the program, directly admitted majors must complete SMPA 110 (Introduction to News Writing/Reporting) with a B or better.

4. Courses Required for Completion of the Major

The following course requirements must be fulfilled to major in JMC:

A. The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences.

B. Five required courses in related areas: Stat 53; PSc 2; AmSt 101-102 or Hist 71-72; and one course chosen from Econ 11, PSc 1, or PSc 3.

C. Six required SMPA core courses: SMPA 51 (Research Methods), SMPA 101 (JMC Theory & Practice), SMPA 102 (Intro PCM), SMPA 110 (Introduction to News Writing/Reporting; requires a grade of B or better to apply for or remain in the major); SMPA 112 (Intro Digital Media Production), and SMPA 199 (Senior Seminar).

D. Ten required SMPA courses in the major: SMPA 111 (Advanced News Reporting) and either SMPA 173 (Media Law) or SMPA 177 (Media History); four courses chosen from SMPA 130-143, 145, 146, 179 and 197 (see list below); and four courses chosen from SMPA 120, 128, 144, 158-178, 195 and 196 (see list below).

5. The Journalism and Mass Communication Minor

Unlike the Journalism and Mass Communication major, which is restricted, the Journalism and Mass Communication minor is available to all GW undergraduates if approved by their individual college and advisor. Students should declare their minor before the end of their junior year. Minors must take 18 credit hours of SMPA courses including SMPA 50; SMPA 110; 6 hours chosen from SMPA 130 through SMPA 146; and 6 hours from SMPA 169-179, SMPA 195 & SMPA 197.

6. Special Honors for Journalism and Mass Communication Major

Students with a 3.5 GPA in all courses completed at GW and in all courses required for the major may apply for special honors in Journalism and Mass Communication. A student intending to apply must consult with his or her faculty advisor at the start of the senior year. Application must be made by the mid-point of the graduation semester (October 15 or March 15) and must include a letter of application and a portfolio of published or broadcast work. The work will be evaluated by JMC faculty awards committee in consultation with student faculty advisors.

SMPA Courses

All course numbers listed below are SMPA courses; for example 50 = SMPA 50.

50 Media in a Free Society (3) Aday and Staff

The role of mass communication in democratic political systems: informational requirements of democracy, sources of political information and the role of news media and other channels in creating and disseminating it; issues relating to propaganda and public information; and the interaction between information flows and democratic political culture. Not open to SMPA majors

51 Research Methods (3) Harvey, Manheim, Gross

Process of inquiry within mediated communication. The concepts of framing research questions, conducting literature reviews, developing a research of design, and interpreting results of cultural and social science research within a societal framework. Open only to SMPA majors. Prerequisite: Stat 53

101 Journalism and Mass Communication Theory and Practice (3) Aday, Steele

An overview of journalism and mass communication in the United States. Organizations and institutions of print and electronic news media; the social context of journalism; how news is constructed; and intellectual underpinnings of occupational ideals and professional practices that guide journalism. Open only to SMPA majors.

102 Introduction to Political Communication (3) Aday, Entman, Livingston

Basic concepts and theories of political communication; development of a framework for analyzing political communication; applications in the United States, other countries, and the international system. Open only to SMPA majors. Prerequisite: PSc 2

110 Introduction to News Writing and Reporting (3) Staff

Fundamentals of news reporting and writing, with emphasis on the print media. News judgment, information gathering skills, and crafting news and feature stories. Regular in-class and outside reporting and writing exercises. Directly admitted freshmen may enroll in their second semester; all other freshmen need departmental permission. (Open to non-majors: WID credit). Laboratory fee.

111 Advanced News Reporting (3) May & Staff

Reporting, writing, and computer skills for covering beats and developing in-depth news stories. Techniques in researching, observing, and interviewing to frame stories of public interest; outside and in-class reporting and writing assignments. Restricted to Journalism and Mass Communication majors or permission of instructor required. Prerequisite: SMPA 110. (WID credit). Lab fee.

112 Introduction to Digital Media Production (3) Osder & Staff

Basic introduction to digital media production, including web design and video shooting/editing, with emphasis on use in journalism and political communication. Open only to SMPA majors. Laboratory fee.

120 Public Opinion (3) Bailard

Key aspects of the literature on public opinion, with emphasis on the role of media in opinion formation and change. Topics include the meaning of public opinion in a democratic society, a review of methods used to measure opinions, and media effects on opinion.

128 Media, Politics and Government (3) Roberts

Exploration of the role played by communication, principally through the mass media, in the conduct of government and the making of public policy. Same as PSc 128.

- 130 Computer-Assisted Reporting (3) Staff**
Retrieving information from online sources and government databases, with emphasis on the ethical use and evaluation of data. Use of computer databases to analyze records and produce reliable and valid data for investigative news stories. Prerequisite: SMPA 110. Laboratory fee.
- 131 News Online (3) Staff**
The examination and practice of journalism on the Internet with and emphasis on news writing and presentation, including web page design. Students are exposed to news standards, approaches to online writing, ethics, and issues of access on the web and introduced to production techniques. Prerequisite: SMPA 110 Laboratory fee.
- 132 Online Journalism Workshop (6) Shanahan, Osder**
For SMPA majors in their senior year. Students report, write, and edit on-line GWU student news magazine. Permission of Instructor required. Prerequisite: SMPA 110. Laboratory fee.
- 133 Photojournalism (3) Staff**
Elements of effective news and feature photos, including study and evaluation of slides taken by students. Picture selection, cropping, captions. Student's costs include film and developing. Laboratory fee.
- 134 Publication Design (3) Staff**
Design, editing, layout, and photo selection for newspapers and magazines. Selecting and editing stories; writing headlines and photo captions; sizing and cropping graphic materials; laying out pages. Ethics of editing. Laboratory fee.
- 135 Broadcast News Writing (3) Feldstein, Staff**
Introduction to writing television news scripts based on actual events. Using workshop techniques, scripts are evaluated for content, structure and use of words, pictures and sound. Extensive writing and re-writing using streamed on-line video from professional newscasts. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 136 Broadcast News Reporting (3) Russell**
Advanced techniques in television news reporting and editing. Students will learn to produce, shoot, and edit news packages by teaming up to report in the field.(WID credit) Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 137 Broadcast News Studio Production (3) Russell**
Hands-on workshop designed to give simulated TV industry experience. Students work together to produce and direct a broadcast news program. Laboratory fee.
- 138 Television Magazine (3) Staff**
Advanced techniques in writing, reporting, producing, and editing television news magazine packages. Prerequisite: SMPA 136. Laboratory fee.
- 139 Television News Practicum (6) Russell**
Students shoot, edit and produce video packages, and then compile them in the weekly studio production of the GW student news broadcast, "The Source". The course is equally split between field reporting and producing in the studio. Prerequisite: SMPA 136. SMPA 137 highly recommended. Laboratory fee.
- 140 Washington Reporting (3) May, Shanahan**
Examination of reporting and writing techniques employed in news coverage of the national government, with an emphasis on serving a regional readership or audience. Using Washington as a laboratory, students focus on contemporary issues and news makers in the legislative and executive branches of government. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 141 Campaign Reporting (3) May**

- Development of news gathering and analytical writing skills needed for the coverage of political campaigns. Using in-class exercises and outside assignments, students acquire reporting and writing proficiency to illuminate how campaigns work and how politics affects the lives of citizens. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 142 Investigative Reporting (3) Staff**
Hands-on intensive training in reporting and writing in-depth enterprise news stories that expose hidden problems or wrong-doing. Not to be confused with special topics course in history of investigative reporting. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 143 Feature Writing (3) Roberts**
This course teaches the art of feature writing through intensive weekly assignments that include profiles, interviews, and stories about objects, places and trends. A major final project incorporating all these skills caps off the semester. Prerequisite: SMPA 110. Permission of the professor is required. (WID credit).
- 144 Narrative Journalism (3) Steele**
Introduces narrative or story-telling tradition in journalism. Utilizes a wide range of readings, both historical and contemporary, and encourages experimentation with these techniques in a series of written exercises, including a final project. Discussion format allows students to critique one another's writing and course readings. Enrollment is limited to 15 students with preference given to upper-class SMPA majors. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 145 Editorial and Persuasive Writing (3) Keller**
Techniques of editorial and column writing; editorial page and public affairs programming; function of commentary in a free press. Prerequisite: SMPA 110. (WID credit)
- 146 Specialized Reporting (3) Staff**
Advanced reporting in specialized fields—business, science, medicine, etc. Topics and instructors will vary each semester. Prerequisite: SMPA 110.
- 150 Public Diplomacy (3) Staff**
The theory and practice of public diplomacy: informing, influencing, and establishing dialogue with international publics and institutions. A conceptual and historical examination of public diplomacy, current practices, and contemporary issues, including international information dissemination, educational and cultural exchange, and international broadcasting.
- 151 Public Affairs and Government Information (3) Staff**
Aspects of information and public affairs functions of government agencies at all levels. Role of the information specialist.
- 152 Principles of Public Relations (3) Staff**
Principles, problems, ethics, and law of public relations for government, private concerns, educational and other public institutions.
- 153 Strategic Political Communication (3) Manheim**
Origins of strategic approaches to political communications; techniques. Use of strategic communication by individuals, groups, organizations, and governments in both domestic politics and policymaking and in the international system. Prerequisite: SMPA 102 or permission of instructor.
- 154 Political Campaign Communication (3) Staff**
Communication aspects of political campaigns for candidates and ballot issues. Examination of techniques and channels of communication, role of communication in campaign strategy, ethics and implications of campaign decision making.
- 155 Campaign Advertising (3) Keller**

- Introduction to the theory and practice of campaign advertising. Emphasis on televised political campaign spots, but a range of campaign advertising media are included: radio, direct mail, and the Internet.
- 156 **Political Debate** (3) Keller
Theory and practice of political debate. The campaign context, candidate strategies, debate issues, and debates and voter behavior. Participation in classroom debates.
- 157 **Political Speech Writing** (3) Keller
Theory and practice of public speaking in the context of mediated political communication. Students analyze, write and give speeches.
- 158 **Strategic Practicum** (3) Manheim
In SMPA 153, students were introduced to the theory and techniques of strategic political communication. In SMPA 158, they will apply their knowledge to design prototype strategic campaign. Students will be required to research the issues and actors associated with specific campaign settings, to identify the critical points in the decision-making process and the key constituencies with interests in each issue, and to develop theory-based communication strategies which they regard as most likely to achieve the stated objective. At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned to teams. Each team will be responsible for selecting a cause or issue objective and for designing a strategic plan to achieve it. Prerequisite: SMPA 153.
- 159 **Language and Politics** (3) Staff
Investigates connections between language and the political world. Explores theory and practice of language in politics, and discuss their impact on the creation and consumption of politics.
- 160 **Race, Media, and Politics** (3) Gross, Entman
Examination of the place of race in American society and politics, with specific attention to the role of media reporting in helping to shape understanding of race and racial matters, public opinion about race, and race and electoral politics.
- 161 **Campaigns and Elections** (3) Staff
Seminar exploring the academic study of campaigns and elections with a special focus on the role of the news media. Offered in even-numbered years.
- 162 **Information, Media and National Security** (3) Staff
Examines concepts, institutions, and practices in the interplay among media, political actors, and publics in the context of national security. Considers the influence of information technologies and global trends on statecraft and military conflict, the increasing power of media (including the Internet) and non-state actors in global affairs, and how policymakers, diplomats, and military leaders shape communication strategies and adapt to the public dimension of national security in the post- 9/11 world.
- 169 **International Communications** (3) Staff
Major international news-gathering and broadcasting organizations, international communications policy forums, organizations and treaties, spectrum allocation criteria, communications technology, and trade in communication.
- 170 **Comparative Media Systems** (3) Waisbord
In-depth study of the developmental, regulatory, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of selected foreign communication systems.
- 171 **Media in the Developing World** (3) Steele
Contemporary views of media roles in developing nations. The role of the press and electronic media in economic, social, and national development, including media as agents of modernization, development journalism, and post-colonial responses to

- Western “cultural imperialism.” Media and Islam; role of the Internet; and theories of media and globalization.
- 172 **Media and Foreign Policy** (3) Livingston
Emerging role of news media in international affairs and diplomacy, particularly as it relates to U.S. foreign policy. Globalization of the news media advances in instantaneous communications technologies, consequences for international diplomacy.
- 173 **Media Law** (3) Sterling & Staff
The course surveys the constantly changing legal context of both print and electronic journalism, including libel, privacy, reporting on the courts, obscenity and indecency, media ownership, copyright, advertising, political advertising, and public broadcasting.
- 174 **Electronic Media Policy** (3) Sterling
Legal, technical, political, economic, and social aspects of radio, television, and cable and related delivery systems. Structure and operation of the FCC and other agencies, plus the role of Congress and the courts. Spectrum allocation, behavioral regulation, the trend to deregulate political influence, and current policy issues.
- 175 **Media Management** (3) Staff
Decision-making, strategic planning and daily operations of all types of media organizations. Includes sales strategies, promotion, and research.
- 176 **Changing Media Technology** (3) Harvey
Examination of current and likely future trends in electronic media, with emerging emphasis on radio, television, and cable, including developments in technology, programming, and public policy and their cultural implications.
- 177 **Media History** (3) Freedman, Feldstein
Introductory history of American media from colonial times to the present. The development of press, radio, television, cable, satellite and the Internet; government regulation and media relations; journalistic rights and responsibilities. Set against backdrop of on-going political, social and economic developments.
- 178 **Media Effects** (3) Phalen
Concepts of the impact of broadcasting and related media on audiences; social science research findings and methods, including persuasion, formation of opinion, media and personal interaction, the depiction of violence, audience characteristics and media use patterns, and development of related theories and models of mass communication.
- 179 **Documentary** (3) Sesno
Advanced techniques in writing, reporting, producing, and editing long-form television documentaries, including analysis of the techniques of propaganda and rhetoric used in film and television to visualize political ideology. Laboratory fee. Prerequisite: SMPA 136.
- 194 **Selected Topics in Political Communication** (3 or 4) Staff
Topic announced in schedule of classes. May be repeated if topic varies, but may only count toward the major once.
- 195 **Selected Journalism & Mass Comm. Topics** (3) Staff
Topic announced in schedule of classes. May be repeated for credit if topic differs.
- 196 **Independent Study** (1 to 3) Staff
Student pursues a program of directed reading, research and writing under the direction of a faculty advisor. Limited to seniors. In Political Communication,

generally reserved for seniors pursuing Special Honors.

197 Internship (1 to 3) Staff

Students spend at least 5 hours per week per credit with an approved news organization, agency or office under general guidance of a faculty advisor. Selection of the internship should be made in consultation with the advisor. Guidelines are available in the SMPA office and online. Grades are Pass/No Pass only. Restricted to SMPA juniors and seniors majoring in PCM or majoring or minoring in JMC. PCM majors must take the internship for three credits. May be repeated for up to six credits total.

199 Senior Seminar (3) Staff

Capstone course limited to SMPA program majors. Selected readings and discussion with possible fieldwork. The Journalism and Mass Communication seminar will focus on case studies of ethical dilemmas faced by journalists. Students should consult program director regarding additional restrictions on enrollment.

Check List

Journalism & Mass Communication Major

A) *CCAS Co-Requisite Courses (5 courses/15 hrs)*

All of these also fulfill GCR requirements

1. _____ AMST 101-102 *or* HIS 71-72
2. _____ AMST 101-102 *or* HIS 71-72

(take *either* American Studies *or* History *pair*)

3. _____ PSC 2 (Introduction to American Politics and Government)
4. _____ STAT 53 (Intro to Statistics for the Social Sciences)
5. _____ Select *one* of PSC 3 (International Relations); PSC 1 (Comparative Politics); *or* Econ 11 (Microeconomics)

B) *SMPA Required Core Courses (6 courses/18 hrs)*

6. _____ SMPA 51 (Research Methods) *Pre-req: Stat 53*
7. _____ SMPA 101 (Journalism & Mass Communication Theory & Practice)
8. _____ SMPA 102 (Intro to Political Communication)
9. _____ SMPA 110 (Intro to News Writing/Reporting) *Requires a minimum grade of B to apply for or remain in the major*
10. _____ SMPA 112 (Intro to Digital Media Production)
11. _____ SMPA 199 (Senior Seminar)

C) *Specific Required Program Courses (2 courses/6 hrs)*

12. _____ SMPA 111 (Advanced News Reporting)
13. _____ SMPA 173 (Media Law) *or* SMPA 177 (Media History)

D) *Elective Required Program Courses: Skills (4 courses/12 hrs)*

(Select any four from SMPA 130-143, 145-6, 179, 197)

14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____

E) *Elective Required Program Courses: Studies (4 courses/12 hrs)*

Select any four from SMPA 120, 128, 144, 159-178, 195-6

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____