



## **Addressing Violence through solutions-oriented reporting**

J3800 — Temple University — Spring 2016

Solutions journalism is rigorous and compelling reporting about responses to social problems, using the best available evidence while examining the whole picture -- the problem and the response. This course will introduce students to strategies for addressing violence in the news by reporting examples of people working toward solutions, how they do so and the impact of their efforts. Students will report on violence reduction initiatives with the intent of informing and empowering news communities to pursue meaningful change.

### **MEETINGS**

We will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3:20 p.m. in Tuttleman 400AB.

### **INSTRUCTOR**

Jim MacMillan

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 4-5 p.m., Weiss 324

Office Phone: 215-204-2360

Email: mac@temple.edu

\*All emails must have "J3800" in the subject line.

### **OBJECTIVE**

This course is intended to introduce students to the practice of solutions-oriented reporting, to the spectrum of responses employed to address violence and to analyze the impact of the solutions reporting process.

### **STRUCTURE**

Students will address one aspect of violence through three solutions-oriented reports, which they will then compile into one main report. All papers must be written in journalistic style, using attributions rather than footnotes. Meetings will include discussion of the solutions reporting practice and process, strategies to address violence and may include several expert guests from each field. Finally, students will analyze and reflect on the solutions reporting process and outcomes.

### **READINGS**

Most readings will be available via [solutionsjournalism.org](http://solutionsjournalism.org). Others may be provided by the instructor. Be prepared to discuss in class.

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## **SUGGESTED RESOURCES**

SolutionsJournalism.org [email newsletters](#). SolutionsJournalism.org [blog feed](#).

NYT [Fixes](#) blog

Fayetteville Observer [case study](#). Fayetteville [reports](#).

## **INTERVIEW SUBJECTS AND OTHER SOURCES**

All work must be original. Do not include sources previous or simultaneously used in other courses. Do not report on friends, relatives, neighbors, classmates or anyone with whom you have a prior relationship.

## **ANONYMOUS SOURCES**

Anonymous sources are unacceptable in most cases and will not be accepted without prior approval from your instructor. Otherwise, every person must be identified by first and last names.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Reading assignments should be completed before we meet.

Written assignments are due before we meet on Thursdays.

Edits will be returned by 9 a.m. on the following Monday, if not sooner.

## **UPLOADING**

Assignments are complete when they are uploaded to: <http://sites.temple.edu/stoptheviolence/>

We will have WordPress instruction in class before the first assignment is due.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE AND INFORMED CONSENT**

Journalism is not a private practice. All of your interview subjects must be informed that you are reporting for publication.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

Arrive promptly and prepared to participate thoughtfully and frequently during every meeting. Be attentive and respect your peers as professional colleagues. Leave the room as you found it.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Please attend every meeting if possible. Students may be excused from three meetings without penalty. Each additional missed meeting will result in a half-grade deduction on the final grade.

Assignments must be completed on deadlines, regardless of attendance.

## **JOURNALISTIC DISHONESTY**

Journalism's first obligation is to the truth. All journalists must meet the burden of correcting every error that comes to light. Public revelations of journalistic plagiarism or fabrication can seriously harm an individual's journalistic ambitions, cause serious harm to the reputation of a news organization, and do harm to the institution of journalism itself.

Fabrication or plagiarism will result in no credit for the assignment and possibly immediate failure of the course. If you have any questions, ask the instructor.

## **Weekly Schedule**

Weekly topics are subject to change due to guest availability. Deadlines will not change.

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## **WEEK ONE**

### **Tuesday, January 12**

Topics: Introductory Solutions Journalism presentation, quick topic exercise, personal introductions, discussion of goals and syllabus review.

### **Thursday, January 14**

Topics: Finding a solutions journalism story, when it works, pitching a story, and story structure.

Read before class: [Solutions Journalism Toolkit](#)

Written assignment due: Email me two paragraphs about your past reporting experience, studies or plans.

## **WEEK TWO**

### **Tuesday, January 19th**

Topics: Intro to addressing violence. Wordpress instruction.

\* Guest: David Gambacorta, Philadelphia Daily News

Read before class: [Reducing and Reporting Violence](#)

### **Thursday, January 21st**

Topics: What's working? What's not? Finding interview subjects

Suggested reading: [Getting it Right: Reporting on Youth Violence](#)

**Written assignment due: First draft of The Problem**

## **WEEK THREE**

### **Tuesday, January 26th**

Topics: Story structure talks and feedback

### **Thursday, January 28th**

Topics: Pitch meeting, focus on the "how"X

**Written assignment due: Final draft of The Problem**

## **WEEK FOUR**

### **Tuesday, February 2nd**

Topics: Interviewing for solutions reporting

Read before class: Solutions Toolkit on interviewing

### **Thursday, February 4th**

Topics: Journalism and psychological trauma

Read before class: Tragedies and Journalists, from the Dart Center

## **WEEK FIVE**

### **Tuesday, February 9th**

Topics: What is an evidence-based program?

**Guest: Caterina Roman**

Read before class: Listen to WHYY report on CeaseFire

### **Thursday, February 11**

Topics: Solutions discovered

**Written assignment due: Spectrum of Solutions, draft**

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## **WEEK SIX**

### **Tuesday, February 16**

Topics: Journalism and psychological trauma  
Read before class: Tragedies and Journalists

### **Thursday, February 18**

Topics: Lightning talks  
**Written assignment due: Spectrum of Solutions, final**

## **WEEK SEVEN**

### **Tuesday, February 23**

Topics: Focused Deterrence  
**Guest: Reuben Jones**  
Read before class: TBD

### **Thursday, February 25**

Topics: Hospital-based initiatives  
Read before class: TBD  
**Guest: Dorothy Johnson-Speight**

**(SPRING BREAK!)**

## **WEEK EIGHT**

### **Tuesday, March 8**

Topics: Solutions Journalism impact  
**Guest: David Bornstein (tentative)**  
Read before class: TBD

### **Thursday, March 10**

Topics: Legislative action to address violence  
**Written assignment due: Focusing on One Solution, draft**

## **WEEK NINE**

### **Tuesday, March 15**

Topics: Sexual assault and solutions reporting  
Read before class: TBD  
**Guest: Tara Murtha**

### **Thursday, March 17**

Topics: Lightning Talks  
**Written assignment due: Focusing on One Solution, Final**

## **WEEK TEN**

### **Tuesday, March 22**

Topics: Addressing violence through the justice system  
Read before class: TBD

### **Thursday, March 24**

Topics: Addressing youth violence

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Read before class: TBD

## **WEEK ELEVEN**

**Tuesday, March 29**

Topics: Addressing sexual violence

Read before class: TBD

**Thursday, March 31**

Topics: Distributing your work

**Written assignment due: Final report, first draft**

## **WEEK TWELVE**

**Tuesday, April 5**

Topics: Final report workshopping, peer editing

**Thursday, April 7**

Topics: Lightning Talks

**Written assignment due: Final report, second draft**

## **WEEK THIRTEEN**

**Tuesday, April 12**

Topics: Solutions and visual journalism

Read before class: TBD

**Thursday, April 14**

Topics: Spreading solutions journalism

**Written assignment due: Solutions journalism analysis, draft**

## **WEEK FOURTEEN**

**Tuesday, April 19**

Topics: Revisiting “Ten Questions” of solutions journalism

Read before class: TBD

**Thursday, April 21**

Topics: Lightning talks

**Written assignment due: Solutions journalism analysis, final draft**

**Written assignment due: Final report, final draft**

## **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

Reporting assignments include three preliminary stories, one final report and one first-person response, explained below. Please revise and proofread every text several times before submission.

### **THE PROBLEM:**

Your first story should clearly define the problem that your reporting is intended to address. Interview at least one expert or one anecdotal source, and add several complimentary resources.

**First draft due: January 21st**

**Final draft due: January 28th**

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### **SPECTRUM OF SOLUTIONS:**

Your second story should outline at least three responses to the problem defined above. Interview at least two expert sources, including at least one who works directly with victims and survivors. Include additional resources. Include photograph and caption.

**First draft due: February 11th**

**Final draft due: February 18th**

### **FOCUSING ON ONE SOLUTION:**

Your third story should address one solution to your problem in greater depth. Consider more aspects, such as shortcomings in responses to violence and why success may be limited or unsustainable. This report may apply a solution from your previous assignment or a new response but must include at least one new expert and one new anecdotal subject, as well as additional resources. Include photograph and caption.

**First draft due: March 10th**

**Final draft due: March 17th**

### **FINAL REPORT: SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM FORM**

Your final report should clearly define the problem you have been addressing, the spectrum of solutions you have covered, and include a broad spectrum of interview subjects and additional resources. You may draw from all of your previous reports but new may add new information as well. Include several different photos with captions.

**Final draft due: April 21**

### **SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM ANALYSIS:**

Write a response to solutions journalism strategies, based on your experience in this course. Relate your work to our [10 Questions](#) about solutions journalism.

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I am not looking for you to answer these questions, but rather analyze the process. In other words, share your thoughts on the practice of solutions journalism. You may also relate your responses to our guests and/or your own work in this course.

**Due: April 21**

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Each student may earn up to five points by applying responses from their Solutions Journalism Ingredients Form and crafting a narrative or delivering a lightning talk.

**Due: April 21**

### **ASSIGNMENT WEIGHT**

The Problem, first draft: 50 points

The Problem, final draft: 100 points

Spectrum of Solutions, first draft: 50 points

Spectrum of Solutions, final draft: 100 points

Focusing on One Solution, first draft: 50 points

Focusing on One Solution, final draft: 100 points

Final Report / Solutions Form: 275 points

Analysis, final: 125 points

Participation in class: 150

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## **METRICS FOR ASSESSMENT**

Is it solutions journalism?

Does it meet the requirements of the assignment?

Is the report accurate and does it include new knowledge?

Does your story meet journalistic style requirements?

Is the story structured with a lead, nutshell paragraph, body and conclusion?

Are interview subjects appropriate selected and identified?

Are selected quotes informative and essential?

Is all additional information directly attributed to evidence or sources?

Is the writing free of redundancy and otherwise concise?

Does spelling, grammar and punctuation meet professional standards?

Does the story adhere to AP style?

Do any unanswered questions remain?

Is the headline concise and engaging?

Are photos and captions included?

## **DEADLINES**

Journalists need to meet deadlines. Missing a deadline will result in the deduction of 10 points immediately and another 10 points every 24 hours. Technological failures are not acceptable excuses.

## **GRADING SCALE**

92% and higher: A

90-91 A-

88-89: B+

82-87: B

80-81 B-

78-79: C+

72-77: C

70-71 C-

60-69: D

Below 60%: F

To calculate your running grade, multiply points earned by 100 and divide by total points possible. Grades are not negotiable or open to discussion during class meetings.

## **NO INCOMPLETE GRADES WILL BE GRANTED.**

### **OPTIONAL MULTIMEDIA REPORTS:**

Students have the option to submit multimedia reports if preferred, but must also include complete scripts meeting all of the requirements of text reports.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Students with Disabilities**

It is Temple University's policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities under the American Disabilities Act (ADA). At the beginning of the semester, any student with a disability should inform the course instructor if accommodations or academic adjustments will be needed. For more information about the ADA and academic accommodations or adjustments, contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services at <http://www.temple.edu/disability> or 215-204-1280.

### **Academic Honesty**

Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, and another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, and oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course that was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person.