J463/563: Solutions Journalism

Submit the part one of your Idea Memo on **Jan. 20**. Only one person in the group needs to submit it to Canvas.

Required content

1) Overarching story idea
   -What is the solution you plan to report on for your project?

   Be specific. (Ex. don't just write "local success stories of combating childhood obesity." Say something like, "Childhood obesity appears to be declining in Eugene faster than the rest of Oregon. We're going to explore why and how." If you have more than that, such as a specific program or initiative, then include that too.)

2) Proposed cast of characters
   - You must list at least three academic sources (both primary and secondary) and at least three people you plan to contact who are "everyday" people. If you're not exactly sure of the exact individuals you can include the idea of the person and how you would find them. Remember that you can ask program directors to help you find people, but more rigorous reporting comes from bottom-up interviewing. Aim for both.
   (Ex. "I'll need to talk to parents and children who've participated in Lane County's Get Healthy initiative. I plan to attend the next community meeting to find those sources.")

   At the end of your memo, please also include in list format an ongoing source list with names, emails and phone numbers. At the end of the term you'll need to include this with your final project. Keep all sources you reviewed or seriously considered contacting on the source list and put an asterisk in front of any you end up including in your final project.

3) Existing story review
   - On Thursday, I'll send you SoJo stories related to your big picture issue. Read them and summarize (in full paragraphs) what the solution was and what sources were used. Also, explain what framing question the story relies on.

   (Ex. In "Hawaii Trailblazing Healthcare Underscores Disparity" reporter Noam Levey explores why Hawaiians are among the healthiest Americans and suggests the answer is the state's "trailblazing" health care system and long-standing policy of near-universal health coverage. As evidence, Levey cites data from the Commonwealth Fund, Hawaiians who've successfully battled major diseases, etc. etc....... The story frame is positive deviance, identifying Hawaii as an outlier in American health care quality, results and coverage and explaining how and why Hawaii achieved these results.)

   While the solutions described in these stories are unlikely to be exactly the solution

you'll report on (unless you get lucky), these stories can teach you how other reporters approached the same issue – ex. childhood obesity – and came up with a solutions story. I want you to think about how reporters approach an issue to ferret out and construct SoJo stories.

Format

Please format this like a memo at top. (Just Google an example.) Create subheds for each of the three required contact areas. In addition to your proposed case of characters overview, put a source list at the end of your document that you can continue adding to during the quarter.

Additional tips

I suggest sharing this file via Google Docs (or something similar) with your teammates and tracking changes within the document so you all can see and respond to each other's contributions. Each time you finalize the Idea Memo for submission to Canvas, save it as a final (appropriately named) file after turning off track changes.

I expect that you'll have more information than I requested on this document and I encourage you to use this as a team tool, especially as you'll need to detail your entire reporting process for your final project. However, at each juncture I'm requiring only certain amounts to take into account variation in the reporting process.