



College of Media, Communication and Information
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

Department of Journalism

August 17, 2020

Welcome to the University of Colorado Boulder and, especially, the Department of Journalism in the College of Media, Communication and Information. We hope that the orientation program will provide a good basis for your studies with us. It is intended to be a thorough introduction to graduate education, to the CMCI, and to the University at large.

We encourage you to make the most of the resources that the CMCI and the University have to offer. Graduate study should be a time of exploration, reflection and renewal. Those who engage in it make a remarkable commitment of time and resources. At a university such as ours, you will be joining a community of people devoted to excellence in research, scholarship and creative and professional endeavors. It is exciting to think that faculty and students here are hard at work in laboratories, studios, libraries, and computer centers devoting themselves to advancement and exploration. You are about to join them in these pursuits.

During your time here in the Department of Journalism, you will learn the skills needed to establish a successful career in journalism. We're excited to provide you with classes not only featuring the skills and concepts needed in today's industry, but also courses that will help you gain valuable knowledge in your areas of interest.

Best wishes from the faculty!

Master of Arts in Journalism

The Department of Journalism is founded on the principle that a well-informed and engaged public is essential to democracy—perhaps more so now, at a time of dizzying change, than it has ever been; and that, in the face of this change, journalism retains a unique role in contributing to civic life and to the quality of public discourse.

MA students put this principle to work as constructive participants in an ever-evolving global media landscape. We train students to gather information from a diversity of sources, to analyze it critically, and to report what is significant, through stories and other narrative forms across multiple media platforms. As part of this work, we encourage ethical awareness so that students will think independently and be prepared to reflect on and to help shape media practices and norms rather than take them at face value.

We believe in the integration of classroom instruction with practical experience. Many of our students work for, and manage, campus online news and entertainment sites, television programs and a radio station. They intern at broadcast stations, newspapers, magazines, websites and social media companies.

MA students are encouraged to take advantage of the technological resources and the diverse interests of the faculty. The Department of Journalism is at the hub of the College of Media, Communication and Information, where students and faculty are committed to improving journalism through creative work, experimentation, and pioneering research.

Curriculum Overview

Students may earn an MA degree in one of two options: the Professional Practice Option or the Area of Expertise Option. Regardless of option, this degree is designed for students with limited academic or professional experience in journalism. It prepares students to work in a wide variety of professional settings, including print and broadcast outlets, digital and social media platforms, public service, and corporate communications. The focus is on multimedia training and experience for all students.

All students in the MA program take a common core of classes covering reporting and multimedia skills and the law and ethics of journalism (see details below). In addition, students complete a required capstone course, News Corps, and they produce a professional project. Lastly, electives inside and outside of the department provide students an opportunity to further develop their journalistic skills and also sample offerings from other departments in CMCI and at CU Boulder.

Common Core: 12 credit hours

1. Media Technology Boot Camp (3 credit hours)
2. Data Journalism (3 credit hours)
3. Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling (3 credit hours)
4. Journalism Law and Ethics (3 credit hours)

Newsgathering Capstone: 6 credit hours

1. News Corps (3 credit hours)
2. Professional Project (3 credit hours)

Professional Practice Option

This option is for students who wish to focus on quickly obtaining advanced journalistic skills. It can be completed with as few as 30 credits and in as little as two semesters plus a summer. To complete this option, students must take the 12 hours of the Common Core, six hours of capstone credits, six hours of journalism electives and six hours from departments outside of journalism.

Journalism Electives: 6 credit hours

Students can choose from a list of electives, including but not limited to Science Writing, Reporting on the Environment, Feature Writing, Video Documentary Production, Digital Journalism, News Team or Photojournalism courses.

Outside Electives: 6 credit hours

Students may pick from a variety of courses outside the journalism department.

Sample Sequence, Professional Practice Option

Augmester: 3 credit hours

1. Media Technology Boot Camp (Core)

Fall: 12 credit hours

1. Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling (Core)
2. Data Journalism (Core)
3. Two elective courses

Spring: 12 credit hours

1. Journalism Law and Ethics (Core)
2. Two elective courses and CU News Corps

Summer: 3 credit hours

Professional Project*

** Students start their Professional Project work during the semester before*

they complete the required project. During this time, they work with their project advisor to prepare a proposal and have it approved by a professional project committee.

Area of Expertise Option

This option is for students wishing not only to acquire advanced journalistic skills but also to complement them with an area of expertise, such as environmental science and policy or political reporting. The Area of Expertise Option can be completed with a minimum of 36 credit hours and in four semesters.

All students in the MA program take a common core of classes covering reporting and multimedia skills and the law and ethics of journalism (described above). In addition, students complete two required capstone courses, News Corps and a Professional Project. Electives inside the department and elsewhere in CMCI provide students an opportunity to further develop their journalistic skills and knowledge of media, communication and information. Finally, students complete courses inside and outside of the CMCI to develop a specific area of expertise.

Students enrolled in the Area of Expertise Option take the following:

Common Core: 12 credit hours

1. Media Technology Boot Camp (3 credit hours)
2. Data Journalism (3 credit hours)
3. Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling (3 credit hours)
4. Journalism Law and Ethics (3 credit hours)

Newsgathering Capstones: 6 credit hours

1. News Corps (3 credit hours)
2. Professional Project (3 credit hours)

Journalism Electives: 6 credit hours

Students choose from a list of electives, including but not limited to Science Writing, Reporting on the Environment, Feature Writing, Video Documentary Production, Digital Journalism, News Team or Photojournalism courses.

Electives in a Specific Area of Expertise: 12 credit hours

Students create an expertise by identifying a discipline or cognitive area outside the Department of Journalism. As examples, these may include Political Communication (in collaboration with Political Science), Documentary Practices (in collaboration with Critical Media Practices and/or film studies), or Journalism, Religion and Spiritual Life (in collaboration with the Center for Media, Religion and Culture, the Department of Media Studies and the Department of Religious Studies).

Students choosing the Environmental Journalism Emphasis complete it by taking the Graduate Certificate in Environment, Policy and Society (EPS), which requires the Journalism Department's Science Writing and Reporting on the Environment courses (and no other Journalism electives). The four Area of Expertise courses are

taken outside the CMCI, from a list of EPS courses.

**Sample Sequence, Area of Expertise Option
(using Environmental Emphasis as the example of an Area of Expertise)**

Year 1

Augmester: 3 credit hours

1. Media Technology Boot Camp (Core)

Fall: 9 credit hours

1. Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling (Core)
2. Data Journalism (Core)
3. JRNL elective course

Spring: 9 credit hours

1. Journalism Law and Ethics (Core)
2. JRNL elective
3. Area of Expertise elective course

Year 2

Fall: 9 credit hours

1. Two elective courses, inside JRNL or area of expertise
2. News Corps

Spring: 6 credit hours

1. Professional Project
2. Final Area of Expertise elective course

MA Common Core Course Descriptions

Media Technology Boot Camp: This intensive, three-week course happens during Augmester and provides a foundation in the technologies of journalistic storytelling across a variety of established and emerging media platforms. Students acquire a nuanced understanding of the technical tools they'll need as journalists.

Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling: This one-semester course allows MA students to put their technological prowess to work in pursuit of advanced storytelling in a complex and ever-evolving mediascape. The course covers the craft of research and reporting on public issues and news events, as well as the construction of narrative in the journalism and documentary traditions. The goal is to help students develop skills and knowledge that are independent of any single medium or platform, leaving them better prepared for developments that will inevitably arise in their professional media production careers.

Data Journalism: This one-semester course instructs students in data-driven investigative reporting. It includes hands-on, in-depth instruction in how to gather data from census reports, commercial databases, global information networks, and other sources, and how to analyze information in ways that deepen and strengthen stories on a wide variety of subjects. Students work on information gathering and analysis projects that will help inform journalistic work they are doing in other courses.

Journalism Law and Ethics: This one-semester course explores the legal frameworks of media production, curation, consumption, subject privacy and intellectual property. It will also cover current and historical frameworks used to examine the ethical issues that arise in newsgathering and publication. The course delves into the subtleties and variability of the case law precedent system that governs most legal questions in media production and the thorny issues that sometimes put law and ethics in conflict with each other.

News Corps: This one-semester course provides students with the opportunity to immerse themselves in a single project and then produce an in-depth text based or multimedia explanatory/investigative story for publication in professional media. Students spend several weeks studying the subject in question before reporting and producing their stories.

Professional Project: In this capstone experience, students select a faculty advisor to guide them in researching, reporting and producing a substantive journalism story or series of stories on a topic of the student's choice. Work on the project starts the semester before the work is undertaken, when the student writes a project proposal that is reviewed by the faculty advisor and by a committee that will evaluate the final version of the story or stories.

Journalism Courses for MA Students: 2019-2030

You can search for courses inside and outside Journalism through MyCUInfo. MA students generally take courses at the 5000/6000 levels, but with instructor permission they can register for 7000 courses.

Journalism

JRNL-5001 (3) Media Technology Boot Camp
JRNL-5011 (3) Newsgathering and Multimedia Storytelling
JRNL-5102 (3) Photojournalism Portfolio
JRNL-5344 (3) Video Documentary Production
JRNL-5502 (3) Newsgathering 2
JRNL-5512 (3) In-Depth Reporting
JRNL-5514 (3) Newsgathering for Television
JRNL-5521 (3) Data Journalism
JRNL-5552 (3) News Editing
JRNL-5562 (3) Digital Journalism
JRNL-5602 (3) Opinion Writing
JRNL-5624 (4) News Team
JRNL-5634 (1-3) Broadcast Projects
JRNL-5651 (3) Journalism Law & Ethics
JRNL-5684 (3) Advanced Camera and Editing
JRNL-5702 (3) Arts/Cultural Reporting and Criticism
JRNL-5802 (3) Feature Writing
JRNL-5812 (3) Science Writing
JRNL-5822 (3) Reporting on the Environment
JRNL-5851 (3) Graduate Professional Project
JRNL-6321 (3) Literary Journalism
JRNL-6651 (3) Media Law

Professional Project Checklist

General Formatting:

Bound copy with a cover page showing:

- Title; Student Name; Committee Members' Names

Also needed as part of bound final product:

- Table of contents and page numbers
- All components, in this order: Research Proposal (defended before committee); Project; Self-Critique; Project Contract
- Project needs to be sent electronically to advisor and Journalism Department Director of Graduate Studies after defense.

If project is a documentary:

- Documentary on a labeled DVD. Student must view and confirm it is burned properly on the disc before submitting.

If a website:

- CD or DVD has a document with screen shots of each page with the URL as well as electronic versions of all the above noted necessary components.

Needed Components/Timeline:

1. **Project Contract:** Sample at the end of this document, must be signed by student and advisor and given to department's Director of Graduate Students by the end of the semester *before* a student enrolls in project credits.
2. **Research Proposal:** A 7- to 10-page paper that includes background research on your project's topic. This paper should be thorough and include both academic and mainstream journalism sources. This paper should be provided to advisor and Director of Graduate Studies *with Project Contract* by the end of the semester *before* a student enrolls in project credits.
3. **Project:** The totality of the project will be determined by student, advisor and committee.
4. **Topic Defense:** Before enrolling in project credits, students must meet with advisor and committee (one or two other faculty members) to "defend" their Project Contract and Research Proposal.
5. **Project Defense:** Once a student completes their project, they must defend it in front of their committee. At this defense, they must have their advisor and committee sign the necessary paperwork, which is

available from both the CMCI's graduate office and department's
Director of Graduate Studies.

Project Contract

Semester/Year _____

Student Name _____

Student Number _____

Advisor _____

Title (or brief description):

Proposed Plan & Timeline:

The Final Product(s) Will Be:

To Be Completed By: _____
(date)

Signed By: _____
(student)

(Advisor)

Enrolled By: _____ Date _____

This is not a replacement for the final proposal presented to the full committee.

Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates Expecting to Graduate During 2020-2021

Graduate School deadlines and other important information for Journalism master's students can be found using the link below. We strongly urge students to read carefully through the deadlines and the sequence of requirements. Make yourself aware—*very aware*—of the procedures and requirements:

<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academic-resources/graduation-requirements/master-graduation-without-thesis>

Admission to the Graduate School does not constitute automatic eligibility for an advanced degree. Students must fulfill appropriate requirements as established by their major department and the Graduate School and submit an Application for Admission to Candidacy.

Graduate Student Bill of Rights

Know your rights and your responsibilities. Familiarize yourself with the CU-Boulder Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. Be sure to check out the rights and responsibilities of faculty at CU so that you know what to expect when you start classes.

<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/policies>

Student Appeals, Complaints and Grievances

Grading and Treatment in Courses

The information provided here refers to grading and treatment within courses.

A. Disputes about Fairness of Grading

1. **Informal Student and Instructor Meeting.** It is the responsibility of the student and instructor, including both the section and course instructor where applicable, to first attempt to resolve any grievance. If a student has a question regarding a grade or his/her performance in a course s/he must first communicate with the instructor(s) in that course to resolve the question.

2. **Written Appeal and Meet with the student's departmental Director of Graduate Studies.** If the student and instructor are not able to resolve the question regarding the student's performance in the course, the student's grade in the course, or the grading policy, the student shall have the option of making a formal written appeal to the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. However, students need to be aware, as stated in the University of Colorado Boulder policy document regarding issues of grades, that department chairs, directors of graduate studies, and college deans **cannot require** an instructor to change a properly assigned course grade. Issues of disagreement about whether, for example, a given essay was worth, say, a B or an A, is decided solely by the individual instructor in charge. (See Student Appeals, Complaints and Grievances: A Brief Guide: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-appeals-complaints-and-grievances-brief-guide>)

The appeal needs to specify the problem, the reasons for the grievance, and the remedy desired by the student, and it must be submitted within 60 days of the end of the academic term in which the course was taken. In filing a grievance, the student is expected to provide:

- The name of the person against whom the grievance is made.
- The specific charges, including the date and time of the event(s) precipitating the charge.
- A statement of the student right(s) that was (were) violated.
- A detailed statement of the circumstances and available evidence.
- The names and addresses of witnesses, if any.
- The resolution sought.

After reviewing relevant materials (e.g., grades, grading policy information) the departmental Director of Graduate Studies will meet separately with the student and the instructor and will make a recommendation to the faculty member about his/her grading action. The recommended actions will be communicated to both parties in writing.

3. **Appeal to the College of Media, Communication and Information Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.** If a student is dissatisfied with the departmental Director of Graduate Studies' decision, or if a faculty member decides to not follow the recommendation made by the Director of Graduate Studies, written materials may be forwarded to CMCI Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. The Associate Dean will convey his/her recommendation to both parties in writing.

B. Issues about Faculty Conduct, Academic Advising, or Course Content

If it is reasonable, students should begin with the individual faculty person or advisor to discuss and resolve the problem together. If this fails, a student should contact the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. Should the problem not be resolved at this level, the grievance would be referred to the department Chair. If the decision the Chair makes is judged by the student as not acceptable, the student may contact the CMCI Dean's office.

C. Issues Related to Civil Rights Violations, Sexual Harassment, Disability-Linked Discrimination, or Other Kinds of Complaints

The university provides detailed information about how to pursue appeals, complaints, and grievances of a variety of types. For many of these issues, there are campus offices available to assist a person with a concern. Students can find out about this information at: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/appealsguide.html>

Department of Journalism
MA Professional Project Requirements

Typically, MA students complete their Professional Project during their final semester, the spring. Before they can sign up for project credits, though, they must do the following:

1. Find an advisor
2. With the advisor, choose two committee members for the project (for a total of three committee members)
3. Complete a, roughly, 10-page background research paper. This research paper should:
 - a. Outline the project's topic
 - b. Discuss how journalists have covered the topic
 - c. Detail the academic literature/research produced on the topic

The background research paper is designed to help the student complete some of the requisite research needed to undertake a large endeavor such as the Professional Project. Students should think of this paper as the beginning of their research for the project.

4. Once students complete the paper, they must get it to their advisor and committee.
5. Students must then defend their paper and topic (for a spring graduation, this would happen in November/December).
6. Students will then register for Professional Project credits under their advisor's name.

The Professional Project itself is a substantive journalism story or series of stories on a topic of the student's choice that must be approved by the committee and will be graded by the advisor.