CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

Course title: International Reporting
Course code: JOUR 3001 PRAG
Programs offering course: Central European Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

This hands-on, practical journalism course provides an unrivaled opportunity to learn the craft of the foreign correspondent in the Czech Republic. Students discover what makes foreign reporting different from domestic reporting by DOING IT. That means focusing on the issues foreign reporters frequently cover in the Czech Republic and other transitional countries including education, health, gender, history, the arts, corruption, politics, drugs, minorities, tourism, and intriguing personalities. Students have a chance to fine-tune their news and feature writing, reporting and interviewing skills in four well-researched articles. The course continuously reviews current foreign reportage in a variety of media to see what can be gleaned from the best and the worst. Stimulating debates on style, ethics, and story structure are guaranteed. The course benefits from guest speakers, real, live foreign correspondents from outlets such as Bloomberg, the Wall Street Journal, and the BBC, as well as field trips taking students to political hot spots (Parliament, Radio Free Europe) and possibly other sites representing journalistic areas of interest. The class is covered via lectures, reading material, class speakers, discussion, and exciting field trips.

SPECIAL NOTE: This class is by necessity a hybrid, addressing the needs, experience and abilities of journalism majors as well as non-journalism majors. To try to accommodate both groups, it reviews some basic reporting and writing techniques. However, non-journalism majors are expected to consult the instructor and do extra reading if needed to establish their knowledge of journalism fundamentals and style. Those with no journalistic writing experience are graded on their level of improvement in the course and need not worry about their lack of journalism background.

FLEXIBILITY: Changes in class topics and special events reflect the unpredictability of the news cycle. Students might get a note from the instructor 24 hours before class that the class would meet at a ministry or school instead of in the classroom. Those who are seeking a class where the syllabus is followed word for word with few surprises should probably not enroll in this course.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- analyze the basic reporting skills of a foreign correspondent;
- examine the basic journalistic writing skills of a foreign correspondent;
- conduct interviews applying interviewing techniques used by foreign correspondents;
- use research and networking skills applied by foreign correspondents;
- complete four articles using the above skills and techniques.

Course Prerequisites

Students should have an interest in learning how to write in a non-academic style within the requirements of journalistic practice. The class requires initiative outside the classroom to chase down interviews and contact interviewees. Students should be motivated to develop contacts and interview total strangers with their professor's support.

Methods of Instruction

You will develop journalistic skills through practicing reporting, writing, and interviewing. We will conduct mock interviews in class as well as street interviews. Classroom work is based mostly on discussion of articles and techniques as well as lectures about hot journalistic topics such as minorities and education for foreign correspondents within the Czech context. We will meet top journalists in the country at Bloomberg, Reuters, BBC,
and Radio Free Europe. We will also meet top politicians at the Senate and gain an understanding of Czech life in terms of human rights and education. Students will have a chance to pursue their area of interest by contacting politicians, environmentalists, artists, and whomever is appropriate for a timely journalistic endeavor. The class style is provocative, proactive, and participatory. We workshop our written assignments in class to foster improvement. We read articles by the best professionals in class to dissect their style and apply their methods to our own work.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Article 1: Short News 10%
2. Article 2: Profile 20%
3. Article 3: Short Feature 20%
4. Article 4: Rewrite of Feature/Profile 30%
5. Class participation/preparation (showing awareness of readings in class) 20%

**TOTAL 100%**

**Course Requirements**

**Article 1: Short News**

**Article 2: Profile**

**Article 3: Short Feature**

**Article 4: Rewrite of Feature/Profile**

Students are required to write a practice news article as well as a graded news article (both 500-600 words) about a current development in the Czech Republic that includes quotations garnered from interviews as well as background information obtained through research. This is usually done in a group so that students can help each other with interviews. Students are also required to write a profile article of a Czech person of interest and a feature article on a social trend. Both stories require in-person interviews with experts as well as subjects who are making waves in Czech society. We work together as a class to find appropriate interviews. At the end of the semester students must rewrite either their profile or feature for their final project.

**Class participation/preparation (showing awareness of readings in class)**

Homework assignments consists of both assigned READINGS and RESEARCH. Although the assigned reading might consist of 5-20 pages a week, you will be required to pursue reading material via the Web on your own as part research for your articles. The research requires seeking out past articles on relevant subjects. There is reading for every class (see below) as well as some practice exercises per the syllabus.

All readings are REQUIRED. Readings are to be done before the following class.

In addition to the readings, you will be required to monitor foreign news reports in on-line and in magazines and newspapers. STUDENTS MUST READ RADIO PRAGUE (radio.cz) and THE PRAGUE MONITOR EVERY DAY. ALSO SEE Aktualne, http://aktualne.centrum.cz/czechnews/, THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SECTION. CHECK OUT THE PRAGUE POST (WEEKLY) AND POSTS ON PRAGUE.TV AND EXPATS.CZ TO FIND OUT HOT TOPICS. THERE WILL BE REGULAR QUIZZES ON WHAT IS COVERED IN THE PRAGUE MONITOR, www.praguemonitor.com.

**CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy**

Assessment of students’ participation in class is an inherent component of the course grade. Participation is valued as **meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom**, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Students are required to actively, meaningfully and thoughtfully contribute to class discussions and all types of in-class activities throughout the duration of the class. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared, as directed, in advance of each class session. This includes valued or informed engagement in, for example, small group discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

Students are responsible for following the course content and are expected to ask clarification questions if they cannot follow the instructor’s or other students’ line of thought or argumentation.
The use of electronic devices is only allowed for computer-based in-class tests, assignments and other tasks specifically assigned by the course instructor. Students are expected to take notes by hand unless the student is entitled to the use of computer due to his/her academic accommodations. In such cases the student is required to submit an official letter issued by his/her home institution specifying the extent of academic accommodations.

Class participation also includes students’ active participation in Canvas discussions and other additional tasks related to the course content as specified by the instructor.

Students will receive a partial participation grade every three weeks.

**Attendance**

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program.

If you will miss a class for any reason, notify the Program Coordinator and your instructor beforehand via Canvas. You are responsible for any materials covered in class during your absence, and except in the specific cases listed below, credit will not be granted for missed assessments.

Excessive absences will result in a notification letter, and finally a warning letter, sent to you and your home school, based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of course hours missed</th>
<th>Number of CIEE classes</th>
<th>Minimum penalty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 10%</td>
<td>One to Three 90-min. classes; or One 180-min. class</td>
<td>No penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% - 20%</td>
<td>Four 90-min. classes</td>
<td>Written notification* to the student, followed by a warning letter to the student and home school; 3% reduction in the final grade</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five 90-min. classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Two 180-min. classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 20%</td>
<td>Six 90-min. classes; or Three 180-min. classes</td>
<td>Automatic course failure, and possible expulsion with notification to the home school</td>
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* The notification letters are intended to ensure that you are well advised in advance of any potential for failure or dismissal, so that you can take steps to avoid this.

As the table shows, **missing more than 20% of any class (e.g., due to undocumented illness, travel delays, flight cancellations, over-sleeping, etc.) results in automatic failure of the course.**

If you miss an assessment in class due to an absence, you will be able to make it up in the following instances:

- You provide a relevant doctor’s note from a local medical professional to your Program Coordinator within 24 hours of your absence (a scan or photograph sent via e-mail are acceptable)
- A CIEE staff member verifies that you were too ill to attend class.
- You provide evidence of a family emergency to your Program Coordinator.
- You have an approved absence related to the observance of a religious holiday from the Academic Director based on a request submitted before you arrived onsite.

**Please note:** Absences incurred due to documented illness, documented family emergency or the observance of a religious holiday approved before arrival onsite do not count towards the total of absences. Students may self-certify one absence due to illness without providing a doctor’s note as long as they notify the Program Coordinator within 24 hours of their absence by e-mail or a text message.

**Other attendance-related policies**

If you transfer from one CIEE class to another during the Add/Drop period, you will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of the new class provided you were marked present for the first session(s) of the original class.

If you are over 15 minutes late for a class, the instructor is required to mark you absent.

In case of class conflicts (irregularities in the class schedule, including field trips and make-up classes), always contact the Academic Department to decide the appropriate course of action.

Please remember to track your attendance on the Canvas Course Sites and report any errors in the record to the Academic Department within one week of the discrepancy date, as later claims may not be considered.
These attendance rules also apply to any required co-curricular excursion, activity, or event, and to for-credit internships.

CIEE staff does not manage absences at partner institutions providing direct enrollment classes (FAMU, ECES and FSV), but they have similar attendance policies and attendance is monitored there. Grade penalties may result from excessive absences.

*N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1 Overview of course

Review of topics frequently fodder for foreign news articles

The categories: hot news, feature/trend, profile, first-person


Class: 1.2

*Where do reporters abroad get their ideas? How do you give a foreign story context for a U.S. reader? Sources and resources: The pitfalls for foreign reporting.*

**Reading:**


"The Second-Day Lead and Other Variations," INTRODUCTION TO NEWSPAPER AND ONLINE JOURNALISM AT THE KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, CANADA

**Week 2**

Class: 2.1 Basic news writing tips and interviewing tips for international reporting

**Reading:** - “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell, Horizon, April 1946; Words and Phrases Commonly Misused, The Elements of Style, 1918; Basic News Writing, Ohlone College, Journalism Department; “Czechs See Peril in a Bootleg Bottle,” New York Times, 2012

Class: 2.2

*Street interviews!*

**Let’s get out there and talk to strangers!**

13 SIMPLE JOURNALIST TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS, MATDORNNETWORK.COM

**PRACTICE NEWS STORY, 500-800 words (NOT GRADED) IS DUE SUNDAY AT MIDNIGHT**

**Week 3**

Class: 3.1

PAPER DISCUSSIONS -- LET'S LEARN TOGETHER HOW TO CRAFT A NEWS STORY BASED ON YOUR DRAFT!

**HOMEWORK:** START RESEARCHING YOUR PROFILE ARTICLES!

Class: 3.2

*IN CLASS INTERVIEWS WITH RAs!!!!*

**Week 4**
Class: 4.1  FIELD TRIP TO A REAL NEWSROOM, REUTERS OR BLOOMBERG


**Topic:** WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE

Class: 4.2

Guest Speaker: Rob Camerom, BBC correspondent for Central and Eastern Europe

YOUR GRADED NEWS STORY IS DUE MONDAY AT MIDNIGHT!

Week 5

Class: 5.1  THE PERSONALITY PROFILE: WHAT IS IT? WE NAIL DOWN YOUR PROFILES!

WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE: HOW IS IT DIFFERENT WRITING A PROFILE FOR A LOCAL TV STATION/AMERICAN MAGAZINE VS. AS A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT?


HOMEWORK: YOU SHOULD KNOW WHO YOU ARE PROFILING BY THE NEXT CLASS!

Class: 5.2

WRITING ABOUT PEOPLE AS SYMBOLS OF A COUNTRY AND ITS ISSUES: BALANCING HISTORICAL CONTEXT WITH PERSONAL DETAIL!

**Reading:** The rule for descriptive writing: Less is more, James K. Kilpatrick, The Buffalo News, 2006.

Week 6

Class: 6.1  MAKING YOUR FEATURE COME ALIVE

**Midterm Exam Period**

Feature writing tips: Word choice and clichés, setting the scene

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF FEATURE WRITING!


Making Foreign Politics relevant to a domestic audience


Week 7

Class: 7.1  IN-CLASS POLITICAL QUIZ!

Making foreign politics relevant to Aunt Agatha: How politics affect every aspect of international reporting. What do you need to know about the political scene?

Class: 7.2 Visit to Parliament/Senate?

**Reading:** International Features, Part 3 -- New York Times: Dark Film on Teenagers Echoes From Mall to Church, 2010; In Its Efforts to Integrate Roma, Slovakia Recalls US Struggles, 2013; Gay Muslims Pack a Dance Floor of Their Own, 2008

**YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW WHAT YOUR FEATURE ARTICLE WILL BE BY THE NEXT CLASS!**

**Week 8**

Class: 8.1 IN-CLASS WRITING; PRACTICING YOUR LEAD AND NUT GRAPH.


**YOUR PROFILE IS DUE April 8 AT MIDNIGHT!**

Class: 8.2 CZECH SOCIAL ISSUES 2; Education, drugs/alcohol, economics, healthcare

**Reading:** HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING TO BE ASSIGNED

Class: 8.2 CZECH SOCIAL ISSUES 1: Minorities, gender, sex

**Week 9**

Class: 9.1 Paper Reviews


**Week 10**

Class: 10.1 FIELD TRIP: RADIO FREE EUROPE


Class: 10.2 THE ETHICS OF A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

**Week 11**

Class: 11.1 IN CLASS WRITING: WORK ON YOUR LEDES AND NUT GRAPHS!

**Reading:**

Six Tips for Crafting Scenes, Laurie Hertzel, Niemenstoryboard.org, 2005

Class: 11.2 FEATURE REQUIREMENTS REVIEW; 10 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR STORIES SHINE!

**YOUR FEATURE IS DUE SUNDAY AT MIDNIGHT!**

**Week 12**

Class: 12.1 FEATURE ARTICLE DISCUSSIONS

Class: 12.2 FIELD TRIP TO RESPEKT MAGAZINE

**Week 13**

Class: 13.1 Final Exam Week

**TBD/HOW TO SELL YOUR WORK**
Class: 13.2 Final Exam Week

CLASS REVIEW: YOUR FINAL REWRITE IS DUE ON THURSDAY!

Course Materials

Readings


PRAGUE.MONITOR.COM, Read it daily.

Reading 2:


AND

Ban on Americans adopting Russian children advances in Moscow/Ban on Adoption brings Uncertainty, New York Times, 2012; Gunman Kills 6 in Roma Family/ Killing spree in Slovakia taps into Troubled vein; New York Times, 2010

Reading 3: GEORGE ORWELL'S POLITICS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE; Words and Phrases Commonly Misused, The Elements of Style, 1918; Basic News Writing, Ohlone College, Journalism Department; Czechs See Peril in a Bootleg Bottle, New York Times, 2012

Reading 4: So Many Heroes, Alan Levy, 30-44, 209-235, (1972), 13 SIMPLE JOURNALIST TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS, MAJDORNETWORK.COM


PLUS Sharing the Secrets of Fine Narrative Journalism, NeimanReports.org, 2002; What is Narrative, Anyway? Poynter.org, 2014


READING 12, ARTICLES ON SOCIAL ISSUES: New York Times: Medical Care in Romania Comes at an Extra Cost, 2009; How to Avoid Honor Killing in Turkey? Honor Suicide, 2006

READING 14, HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING


READING 16: Six Tips for Crafting Scenes, Laurie Hertzel, Niemenstoryboard.org, 2005