

# Best Practices in Teaching Globalizing the Classroom



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# Best Practices in Teaching Globalizing the Classroom

This booklet contains the winning entries of the Best Practices in Teaching Globalizing the Classroom 2014 competition, sponsored by the AEJMC Elected Standing Committee on Teaching.

Booklets produced for the previous competitions can be found online at:  
[aejmc.com/home/2010/09/best-practices-in-teaching-booklets](http://aejmc.com/home/2010/09/best-practices-in-teaching-booklets)



## 2014 Winning Entries:

**FIRST PLACE:** *International Storytelling Course*, Gary L. Hanson, Kent State University and Mitch McKenney, Kent State University

**SECOND PLACE:** *Together: Liberia*, Ken Harper, Syracuse University

**THIRD PLACE:** *Increasing Global Awareness of Journalism & Mass Communication Students Across the Curriculum*, Lyle D. Olson, South Dakota State University

**HONORABLE MENTION:** *Covering Immigrant Communities Like a Foreign Correspondent*, Jackie Spinner, Columbia College Chicago

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Best Practices in Teaching Globalizing the Classroom

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## FIRST PLACE

### International Storytelling Course

**Gary L. Hanson, Kent State University  
and Mitch McKenney, Kent State University**

**Abstract:** The International Storytelling course combines engaged experiential learning with international work and recreation, allowing our students to develop journalism skills while broadening their understanding of the world. Students enroll in a 15-week course, during which they learn about another country, plan and research stories they will cover in multimedia reporting teams, spend two weeks in their destination country reporting stories in partnership with students from that country, and return to produce their stories for a multimedia website available to the general public. The partnerships formed with international universities lead to individual friendships and future institutional collaborations.

**Explanation of the teaching practice or activity:** The course's student outcomes are: to develop and cover stories outside the United States; to apply cross-platform writing, video and audio reporting and photography skills in a multimedia, team-approach environment; and to experience the culture of another country and develop a broader understanding of the world. The key components of the course are:

- A three-semester-hour course in international reporting, scheduled for the full 15-week term of spring semester.
- A two-person teaching team of journalism instructors, providing leadership in print, broadcast and Web design skills.
- Selection of students by application, with an emphasis on well-developed journalistic skills, open-minded and professional attitudes, willingness to be a team player, and a balanced mix of skills among the students chosen.
- A two-week trip to the destination country during the semester, scheduled for the week of spring break and the week before the break. The first 10-11 days of the trip are spent on orientation and reporting work in the city of the host institution, while the last 3-4 days are reserved for cultural and recreational activities at a tourist location.
- A partnership in which English-speaking students from a host university accompany our students to assist them with logistics and translation. Depending on the skill level of the students at the host institution, they may learn from observing our students' journalistic practices, or they may be full partners in the news-gathering process.
- The expectation that our students will work in teams whose members have com-

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plementary skills to produce stories for a multimedia site using audio, video, images and text.

- Weekly class meetings during the non-travel weeks of the spring term. The first half of the semester consists of preparation for the trip — studying the culture of the destination, considering potential stories and doing initial reporting on them, practicing convergence skills and making travel preparations such as applying for visas. After the travel period, the remainder of the semester is devoted to completing the stories and publishing the finished projects on the course website.

**Rationale:** American students live in an increasingly global society; their education and professional development should prepare them to participate in it. However, at least one-third of our students are first-generation college students, and most of our students work while attending college. It can be difficult for them to afford semester-long study abroad programs. Not only do they find it expensive to live abroad for a semester, but they can't afford to be away from their jobs that long. The International Storytelling course provides an option for students with financial constraints. Because the international travel for this course takes place over two weeks instead of several months, and because one of those weeks is Spring Break, this course is affordable. But because the course involves serious pre-trip preparation, expectations for professional-quality work during the international portion of the course, and intense follow-up after returning to campus, the course is not viewed as a lesser experience.

**Outcomes:** In three years, 48 students have participated in International Storytelling; 37 have graduated. Several of the students have reported that, in their job and internship interviews, potential employers were more impressed with their International Storytelling experience than anything else on their resumes. In turn, we have hosted 16 students from our 2012 partner in India, and 14 students from our 2013 partner in Brazil. Students from these universities have expressed interest in coming back to our institution as exchange students or to complete an advanced degree. Perhaps most importantly, this course makes it possible for students who would never otherwise consider study abroad to have this life-changing experience. "Before traveling to India, I had never left the country, let alone flown on a plane," said one student from the 2012 class. Another said, "India is the first country I visited outside the U.S., and I hope to continue to travel abroad in the years to come."

Other students have said this about the course:

"I thought I would be most interested in the cuisine, architecture, shopping, politics and history of China, but the thing I am lucky to bring back isn't my pictures, but my friendships. I learned that just because our partners grew up halfway around the world doesn't mean they don't have the same interests and ambitions that I do."

"Reporting in Shanghai has made me more motivated and eager to improve as a journalist than any other class I've taken or any beat I've covered. My goal is to find my way back to China and other overseas destinations through a career in journalism."

"China was a stepping-off point for me. It is where my journey into the international journalism field begins. It has made me more determined than ever to pursue my goal of making human-interest documentaries. It was particularly fascinating to interview expatriates; I look forward to the day when will be an expatriate myself."

"It's changed everything. I wish that I were staying longer at [this institution], I would be applying for the next trip. Career wise, it molded my photography style and made me realize that I want to do documentary style photography. Personal goals: It changed the way I see the world and made me realize that I have to do something to help. There are so many unreached, undocumented areas of the world...and that's where I am going."

**DATELINE | केंची**  
An International Storytelling Project

HOME STORIES ABOUT THE PROJECT DATELINE DELHI ON FACEBOOK

**Why the river is a sewer**  
The Yamuna River is contaminated with sewage and garbage, making the water unsafe for drinking or even swimming. Solving the problem won't be easy.

**India's emerging economy**  
With 1.2 billion residents, India is poised to have the world's largest population by 2030. Its recent democracy creates opportunities and challenges for employers, workers and officials. In these stories explore.

**Faith, families and education**  
It's almost a cliché to say India is a study in contrast. Unaffluent. Rigorous. Educated/semi-educated. With or without parents. Working any number of jobs. And by the time we're done, we found that people.

**Social concerns and environmental issues**  
Poverty and environmental water lack the full of normal living jobs, but there are others. Some are working to address them, but the issue won't be easy.

**The role of women in India**  
In a nation that values tradition, women increasingly are taking untraditional roles in society. Whether it's securing working construction jobs or running for high office, the trend isn't universal.

## Jumping the Great Firewall: Social Media Among China's Youth

Story by | Video by

News spread quickly when a sophomore Shanghai International Studies University student jumped to her death from the twelfth floor of a campus building. But news spread quickest on a Chinese microblog.

Liu Wang, who chose to use an alternative name for fear of Chinese censors, was on scene after the suicide and snapped a picture with a mobile phone. He then uploaded the photo to [Sina.com.cn](#), a site that imitates Twitter.



**Accessing Outside Information**  
Recorder captures how Chinese youth document government responsibility to access popular American websites.

"If I didn't send a picture on the website, I think not so many people would retweet this message," SISU journalism student Liu Wang said.

In China, where the Internet is highly censored and professional news organizations are often extensions of the government, the average citizen has limited access to information. As a result, people put their trust in information from other people.

"They trust the mass population, the mass audience, what they believe, like this one," Wang said. "It was retweeted by 1,300 people, so a lot of people would believe that."

About the photo: A Chinese student uses the "technology" to keep readers updated. Photo: Illustration by

### History of Internet Censorship in China

**2005** - An American company, Cisco Systems, provides China with routers with advanced censoring capabilities. Wikipedia is blocked later that year.

**2006** - Google agrees to block China's illegal websites in exchange for a license to operate in the country. Users report difficulty using Hotmail and Google services. Wikipedia is briefly unblocked in November.

**2007** - LiveJournal, Xanga, Blogger and Blogspot are blocked. Blogger and Blogspot are later unblocked.

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## Growing pains

With 194 million residents, Latin America's most populous nation is the "B" in the BRIC emerging economies -- joining Russia, India and China -- and that growth can lead to challenges.



### Hydroelectric plant leads world in power generation

A look at a green-energy project that straddles two nations -- Brazil and Paraguay.



### Chemical imbalance: The unseen battle with pesticides

Pesticides cause many illnesses and even deaths in Brazil. Just a few years ago there were no laws telling farms what chemicals they could use.



### Brazil's growing economy has citizens growing, too

Brazil confronts a marked increase in obesity as the developing nation's habits change



### Traffic hobbles renowned bus system

Curitiba's transportation system is a model for the world, but it may not be the model that works for



## About the Project

**DatelineBrazil:** Sixteen students and their two professors, spent two weeks in Brazil in March 2013 to produce this multimedia collection of news and feature stories. Their hosts at the Pontifical Catholic University of Parana provided student-partners who served as guides, collaborators and translators.



captures video in the newsroom of the Jiefang Daily newspaper.

**An early sign:** I think were both impressed by how eager the students were to get started. I love telling the story of the morning when our still-jetlagged group was walking through Lu Xun Park en route to the nearest Starbucks. It was a nice day and we found people flying kites, performing music, playing with their kids -- even men in their skivvies swimming across the lake (despite the signs saying not to). The students immediately started proposing feature stories on Shanghai residents at play. You'll find them in the Urban Oasis package.

**Fast friends:** On our second full day there, our hosts arranged for a social time for the 32 students -- their 16 and our 16 -- to find partners. They figured students could match up by their professional ambitions (broadcast, photojournalism, etc.) or by interest in the story topics our students had in mind. Eight days later they parted, some with tearful goodbyes and promises to keep in touch.

## SECOND PLACE

### Together Liberia

Ken Harper, Syracuse University

**Abstract:** Together Liberia (TL) was a three month pilot development project intended to empower local communicators to share their own stories through training, equipment donations and relationship building. Together Liberia was comprised of professors and students from five U.S. universities with the xxxxx as the anchor institution. Teams trained Liberian students and professionals in storytelling, photography, ethics, multimedia and web design. Over the course of three months the U.S. team tested approaches to training while building a knowledge base of “best practices” for future projects.

**Explanation of the teaching practice or activity:**

- Pre-trip meetings, readings and web site development
- U.S. students and professors served trainers for Liberian participants
- U.S. students and Liberian participants co-produced multimedia stories
- U.S. students assigned their own stories and social media posts to produce

Seven students, along with six professors, participated in the Together Liberia project. Through independent studies classes I worked with students, Liberian participants and other professors to create the website and accompanying content that is displayed at [TogetherLiberia.org](http://TogetherLiberia.org).

As part of the planning process, I developed a reading list along with a summer syllabus and conducted weekly meetings with both students, faculty and Liberian participants.

It was on the ground however that the deepest knowledge began to be developed. Through creating personal and professional relationships with the Liberian participants students learned firsthand how to produce work in environments riddled with difficulties.

Project training was conducted in four blocks with Liberian participants from professional and academic institutions. Participants were trained by U.S. students and professors. Based on a common topic, each participant produced either a multimedia package, a still photo package or increased their web design skill set. Trainers would accompany participants into the field and subsequently work with them to produce and edit their stories, professors served as master trainers and role models. As part of the established set of expectations, students produced a personal body of work and a series of social media posts during the course of their time in Liberia. Professors served as mentors to students during content gathering and production.

**Rationale:** There is no better way to bring the world into the classroom than to bring the classroom into the world. Through thoughtful research and preparation, followed by the personal and professional struggles to adapt, students forge their world views and

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broaden their professional horizons through guided experience; this was the case in preparing for and working in post-conflict Liberia.

**Outcomes:** Although the project produced a large body of work and one story published in a major international media outlet, the real outcomes were in personal and professional growth from all involved. Additionally, this project served as a catalyst for students and future student-assisted initiatives such as the promotional video created for [NewNarratives.org](http://NewNarratives.org) and the campaign to release imprisoned project partner, Liberian publisher Rodney Sieh from prison through the [FreeRodney.org](http://FreeRodney.org) campaign.

- 5 US based academic institution relationships established
- 5 Liberian academic/media institutions relationships established
- 7 US student participants
- 4 Liberian publication partner relationships established
- 21 “StoryCorps” style stories produced
- 19 participant stories produced
- 24 participants trained
- 11,000 + website unique visits
- \$20,000+ new/used communication equipment donated
- \$51,000 total shared project expenses
- 1 international publication partner, aljazeera.com
- 1 project documentary created
- 2 music videos created
- 15 video shorts created
- 5 websites created
- 2 Facebook and 1 twitter page created
- 2 newsroom digital image workflows created

**Newhouse graduate student Andrew Hida and New Democrat reporter Peter Toby share a joke after a long day of work in Monrovia, Liberia.**



**Links to Student Produced Work - Additional Information**

- Project documentary: <http://tinyurl.com/together-documentary>
- Project Site: <http://togetherliberia.org>
- Artist documentary created (pw=tenure): <http://tinyurl.com/together-nassemandoc>
- Aljazeera.com student and participant publication: <http://tinyurl.com/together-aljazeera>
- Vimeo.com Archive: <https://vimeo.com/album/1623069>
- SoundCloud.com Archive: <http://tinyurl.com/together-hear>

## THIRD PLACE

### Increasing Global Awareness of Journalism & Mass Communication Students Across the Curriculum

Lyle D. Olson, South Dakota State University

**Abstract:** Globalization impacts nearly every facet, if not all, of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. American higher education and journalism and mass communication (JMC) education need to prepare graduates for this reality. This paper presents data on students' glaring lack of global awareness at an accredited JMC program that led the author to incorporate an international perspective into his classes. It outlines the content of a class dedicated solely to international media and, perhaps more importantly, presents examples of how to incorporate global awareness content into other classes from the freshman to graduate level.

**Rationale:**

- According to the Press Freedom Index, the top ranked countries are ... and the U.S. ranks ...
- Name three non-U.S. advertising or public relations agencies or newspapers or magazines.
- Name three non-U.S. journalists or photographers or designers or social media directors, etc.

If these items were on our exit exams, how would students do?

In 2002, the author surveyed 77 JMC majors at his university. Although these students clearly understood the value of an international mindset, they were not globally astute, especially in their own field. For example, when asked to list the country, city and name of up to three newspapers outside of the United States, 68 percent did not name any. Only five percent named three correctly. Seventy-seven percent could not name one non-American journalist. In 2006, the author found that out of 34 multiple nationality students at The American University of Cairo, only 10 identified Reuters as based in London, just seven identified AFP as based in Paris, and only nine correctly identified AP as standing for the Associated Press.

One indicator for ACEJMC's Curriculum and Instruction Standard 2 is: Students will "demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society." A key World Journalism Education Council principle is: "Journalism is a global endeavor; journalism students should learn that despite political and cultural differences, they share important values and professional goals with peers in other nations. Where practical, journalism education provides students with first-hand experience of the way that journalism is practiced in other nations."

How is JMC education doing on these goals? At the author's school, an accredited (since 1949), medium-size program of around 250 majors at a mid-west university, not so good. Students admit:

- “My knowledge of other countries is so pathetically limited. I am so naive of the world.”
- “I am ashamed to say I really know very little about other countries and when it comes to media knowledge, I'm not much better!”
- “I honestly have no media knowledge from other countries. This is not a good thing.”
- “From the beginning of the course, my approach to international journalism has been ‘get ready to learn something new every week.’” — from a seasoned 50+ year-old high school journalism teacher

**Courses & Activities:** Because of dismal survey results, the author developed an international media class and collaborative exercises in other classes — 100 to 500 level — to enhance global awareness across the curriculum.

*MCOM 413/513: International Media* — In the provisionally accredited online M.M.C. program at the author's university, this is the most popular class in the curriculum. Three key elements are:

- Media monitoring — Essentially, a weekly “lab” where students monitor international media outlets, including Aljazeera, BBC, Global Post, Global Voices, CGNet Swara, Reuters and so forth. They
  - look for how media coverage and story play differs from country to country and culture to culture, apparent Western or anti-Western bias, and prominent or seldom mentioned countries.
  - compare and contrast outlets, advertising, types of news, coverage trends, writing style, design and how culture [hot/cold, high context/low context, monochromic/polychromic, shame-based/guilt-based] affects media.
  - post summaries for their peers to read and discuss. (Note: Responses to online posts are optional, but posts are often so engaging that give and take collaboration between students is common.)
- Bios — Few students can name non-American media practitioners. They prepare biographical sketches of international journalists, etc., read previous bios and select two that inspire them.
- Country reports — Undergraduate students complete a PowerPoint on media in a country; grad students do the same but also search for and present fresh examples of how culture affects media. (For the bios and country reports, required online discussion interaction is lively.)

*MCOM 151: Information Gathering* — In this class required of all majors, simple exercises help students simultaneously (1) improve their information gathering skills and (2) become more globally aware:

- From the CIA World Fact Book, list three facts about a country that intrigues you.
- Find a newspaper in English in a country that interests you. Summarize an article you find interesting.

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- At Reuters, scan articles from “Oddly Enough,” “Entertainment” and “Life & Leisure.” Comment.
- At the BBC site, read an article from “Africa,” or “Asia-Pacific,” or “South Asia.” Tell the class about it.
- Go to Aljazeera’s site. Comment on the content and presentation of news, entertainment and sports. (For all of these assignments, students post their responses online and comment on classmates’ posts.)

*MCOM 220: Introduction to Digital Media* — What are some things invented centuries ago still in use? Typefaces are one such rare item, including one German Claude Garamond created in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Newer examples include Stanley Morison’s Times New Roman and faces by Hermann Zapf, including Palatino, and his wife Gudrun. The documentary *Helvetica* features famous typeface designers, many non-American. Presenting and discussing these people introduces students to international aspects of design.

*MCOM 316: Magazine Writing* — An entomologist from Indonesia talks about the writing instruction he received (little composition, much grammar) and how he adjusted to writing in the U.S. It is a remarkable teaching moment as he shares (and students ask questions) about Indonesian media and cultural insights growing up with a Christian mother and a Muslim father. Internationals are great resources in **every** class.

*MCOM 410: Advanced Editing* — Students examine the Society for News Design’s *The Best of Newspaper Design* to study award-winning presentation techniques. They select a non-American, non-English language newspaper and research both the newspaper and the country’s press system, contact editors and interview local sources. They present their research to the class via a tabloid-size poster, which displays a simulated nameplate and front page of the newspaper they selected. Students exhibit mastery of a variety of skills — design, editing, reporting and writing — and increase their global awareness.

*MCOM 430/530: Media Law* — When covering such topics as the First Amendment, libel, invasion of privacy, free press/fair trial, copyright and regulation, students understand American media law more fully via comparison and contrast to libel tourism, Reporters Without Borders’ Press Freedom Index and current events (social media during the Arab Spring and February 2014 turmoil in the Ukraine and Venezuela). Students engage in active learning, and it is possible to do this without changing a primarily U.S. focus.

**Outcomes:** Key media global awareness concepts surface in every class above. As evidenced by final exams, students:

- can name non-American media, media practitioners, typeface designers, etc.
- know that Scandinavian countries top the Press Freedom Index; the U.S. is quite far down and why.
- discover that some practices, such as product advertising, are not legal in other countries.
- see how culture affects media (hot/cold, high/low context, shame/guilt based, concept of time).
- learn that JMC education and the definition of “press freedom” differs widely country to country.

- understand that global acuity is relevant and important across the MCOM curriculum.

Supporting Material – exhibit 1 from MCOM 410: Advanced Editing

**TUESDAY**  
December 16, 2003  
Section A  
90 Pages  
5 Sections  
www.palabra.com

**PALABRA**  
Expresión de Coahuila

Year V  
Number 1587  
Saltillo, Mexico

### Palabra design targets Mexican youth

Palabra, a small Mexican daily, is so glossy as some big city newspapers, according to renowned design critics. According to Jan 23, The Best of Newspaper Design, Palabra's "revolve" fronts show that the editors know their audience, selecting stories different from those of other newspapers and telling them in fresh ways."

With a local history dating back thousands of years to the Amerindian civilization, Palabra editors cover local issues along with international and national news, while also trying to attract the most difficult readership: young people.

With a circulation of under 25,000, the newspaper continues to target a youthful readership with serious news, entertainment and sports. The paper draws its readers with dynamic front pages and bright colors.

A student project is documented through a time sequence of photographs. Yet at the same time, photos are eye-catching and many inside pages are as lively as their front pages.

Palabra is a newspaper that complements pictures and longer stories with bits and pieces of information to tell a layered story. The layout is colorful and bold, but not overpowering.

### Coahuila's news is easily accessible online

A significant portion of Palabra's daily print version can be viewed for free online at <http://www.palabra.com>. International, national, state, local, sports, and feature news are available at the newspaper's innovative website. Simply click on any headline or story for the latest in news.

### Working as a journalist in Mexico deemed dangerous

Journalists working in Mexico face danger on a regular basis according to a recent report from Reporters Without Borders.

RWBF is an international organization that works to help journalism in prison.

The passage of a freedom of information law in 2002 was the latest in a series of developments attempting to improve press freedom in Mexico.

However serious problems remain. Journalists have been murdered, imprisoned, and beaten for their reporting throughout Mexico's long history under various governmental controls.

Before 2002, threats, attacks and intimidation of journalists were commonplace in provinces where local politicians, officials and police who still found it hard to accept an independent press.

The justice system was sometimes used to intimidate or put pressure on journalists. Several were charged with libel, which always carries a prison term under Mexican law.

Such sentences are contrary to international human rights law, which defines imprisonment for press offenses as a human rights violation and a form of intimidation.

Eight journalists were questioned about their news sources, thereby jeopardizing investigative journalism.

The national human rights commission criticized all these summonses and said they were aimed at intimidating journalists.

Respect for press freedom was apparently not a priority for Mexico President Fox, who was interviewed by Reporters Without Borders during a visit to Paris.

When asked about respect for the confidentiality of sources, Fox said journalists who published information obtained illegally would always be prosecuted. As regards prison terms for press offenses, he said journalists were "citizens like any other."

In both responses, Fox showed that he failed to recognize that it was society's right to be informed that was at issue, not the rights of journalists as a professional group.

The debate continues. ■  
Source: <http://www.rwbf.org>

### Mexico's Press Freedom Index 75

Source: Reporters Without Borders, since 1998. Mexico tied with China at 75. Rwanda, Mexico, Armenia, and United States in 76.

**Today in Palabra:**

- Dudan EU y Europa de elecciones rusas: "The EU and Europe doubt Russian elections"
- Demandan Gobernadores explicaciones a Madrazo: "Governors demand explanations for Madrazo"
- Quise sentir la Navidad: "She wants to feel Christmas"
- No pierda la figura: "Don't lose your figure"

Supporting Material – exhibit 2 from MCOM 413/513: International Media

Sample Media Monitoring Summary Posts (in Desire2Learn):

"Wow, I have never really tried to read newspapers outside the U.S. I can see now that that was a mistake. It really opens your eyes to new ideas and ways that people think. Some of these sites will be very addicting."

1 perused various sites, including BBC, Aljazeera, Reuters, AP, AFP. This is the first time

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I've looked at any of these web sites. Wow! There is a lot of news out there. All of these sites are well-designed. It's too soon to say which site I like best. Aljazeera is interesting, to say the least. It is much more professional than I expected. I love the comments by readers. Reading those could become an addiction. This is truly wonderful to be able to read world reaction to our presidential (and other) elections."

"I really enjoyed this assignment. It really opened my eyes to how media works in other areas of the world. It has given me a whole new perspective on what I see as the 'news.'"

"I will definitely keep looking at these sites, especially Aljazeera, BBC and Reuters. I will continue going to these sites because they have helped me to understand the world a little bit better."

## Samples Slides from Graduate Student Country Report

**Israel = monochronic / low context**

**monochronic vs. polychronic**

- **Monochronic** — prefer to complete one task at a time
- **Monochronic** — differences between time to work and time to play
- **Monochronic** — save time on lines, one event happening at a time
- **Monochronic** — time viewed as extremely, punctuality valued behavior

**low context vs. high context**

- **Low context** — convey information through conversation
- **Low context** — color & expectations are explicit, discussed
- **Low context** — communication specific, explicit, analytical
- **Low context** — direct language in language rules, little meaning in context

**Low context headlines**  
simple / straightforward / unadorned / blunt

**Officials: Starve Iran to stop nuke plan** Gasoline prices expected to hit record high at midnight

**Jews belong in Jerusalem** Missile defense chief: Israel can defend itself against barrages from Iran

**Hezbollah: Israeli attack on Iran would set Middle East ablaze** UN mulls new Syria resolution

**Nazi-hunter seeks German presidency**

Headlines from [jpost.com](http://jpost.com), [ynet.com](http://ynet.com), [haaretz.com](http://haaretz.com)

**Sample Comments About International Media:** Semester after semester, without fail, students say things like this —

- "International media is one of the most valuable classes I have ever taken."
- "I was amazed at how my opinions changed after studying the media of different countries for only a few months. When Aljazeera reports the same story from a different viewpoint than CNN, it makes you think a lot about the relativity of news and who is telling the truth."
- "International media exercises and stretches the mind in a way that helps develop a sense of what is truly 'out there.'"

**Concluding Comment:** Not only is it critically important to teach students how to become more globally aware, it is likewise tremendously fulfilling to do so and enjoy positive reactions to an entire class (or a class assignment) that impacts' students lives and that they enjoy!

## HONORABLE MENTION

### Covering Immigrant Communities Like a Foreign Correspondent

#### Jackie Spinner, Columbia College Chicago

A. This International Reporting course is a practical guide to being a foreign correspondent, using immigrant communities domestically to understand and cover issues of global importance. Students choose a region of the world as their focus for the semester and then connect that region to its corresponding immigrant community. They follow and analyze breaking news and in-depth reporting from the region in a weekly blog. Then, just as a foreign correspondent would do, they use a local “fixer” (liaison who arranges introductions) and a translator from the community to find and produce stories about immigrants. It is a multimedia course, taught at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, that gives students the opportunity to choose the platform on which to publish their stories.

B. This class simulates the environment in which a foreign correspondent works. Students start by selecting a region where their bureau will be located for the semester. It has to be a place where there already are news bureaus, in part, to be realistic but also so they are able to connect and follow correspondents who are working from that part of the world. I encourage them to pick places with news that would be marketable to a U.S. audience. They become the class expert on that region, sharing important developments in class and also through online class forums. (We use a closed Facebook group page and Moodle, a learning management system). In those forums, students react and talk about news as it breaks. Students use social media to report and distribute news, to connect with sources and to follow breaking news. In this course, students also spend time in the immigrant community that corresponds with the region of the world in which their bureau is located. This gives them practical experience reporting from that community. This is what teaches students how to be a foreign correspondent, more than reading a textbook, studying history, economics or culture, though all of those elements are part of the class dialogue and weekly readings. In the “real world,” and this class tries to be as “real world” as possible, correspondents are sent to places they’ve never been and for which they are not necessarily experts. They often do not know the language. They usually are sent with little notice and board a plane with a stack of reading material. It is both impossible and impractical to try to teach the whole world in an International Reporting class. Instead, I teach them how to teach themselves about the part of the world that they are covering, how to connect with people there and within their local communities. As a way of giving them broader historical and cultural information about their region, I allow them to choose from a list of about 20 books written by foreign correspondents. These are books that tell not only the story of the place but also the story of the foreign correspondent covering the place. They include such gems as *Love Thy Neighbor* by Peter Maas, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* by Katherine Boo and *Midnight in Mexico* by Alfredo Corchado. They write a book review and present it to the class during the semester. Correspondents also

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Skype into class or visit us through CoveritLive (interactive online video chat) to talk to the students to talk about their experiences, the path they took to be a foreign correspondent, how they find stories, what their lives are like. Guests have included: Annie Gowen, India correspondent for the Washington Post; Ziad Khalil Abu Zayyad, founder of the Middle East Post; and Abdullah H. Erakat, press officer for the Palestinian government.

Foreign correspondents have to be nimble. They work away from the newsroom, away from their editors, away from tech support. This journalism course creates a similar atmosphere, helping students transition from the classroom into the professional world. This is not a tech skills course, but it requires some tech skills to produce news on platforms that are not always familiar to the students. They have to learn how to teach themselves new apps, equipment and software. Story assignments include a range of breaking news and more in-depth profiles produced on Cowbird, Videolicious, Storify and (for the final project) Creativist. Extra credit is given to students who complete Poynter News U. online courses on such topics as “Telling Stories with Sound” and the “Language of the Image.”

C. I designed this course not only to teach students how to be foreign correspondents and to cover global news but also to create a model for news organizations to cover immigrant communities. The larger news organizations often have more diverse newsrooms that reflect the diversities of the communities where they are located. That is a luxury. Most newsrooms do not have staff members who speak every language and come from every culture and ethnic group represented in the community. Therefore, to provide this coverage, local reporters have to act like foreign correspondents, finding fixers and translators to go into those communities to find and produce stories. My students carry the experience from this class into their newsrooms, expanding the breadth of communities that get coverage.

D. Upon completion of this course, students are able to analyze international topics to understand their global importance and then to connect those issues domestically. Regardless of whether the student ends up reporting overseas professionally, this is an invaluable outcome that boosts foreign news literacy. Students are able to dissect sources of information on the Internet, testing it for authenticity and use crowd-sourcing and social media to supplement “official accounts” from state-sponsored media. Students need to understand the world in which they live and how they are connected globally to people and places that are different from them or for which they previously had no interest. It matters. This is why. Those sentences are mantras for this class. As journalists, they are then able to pitch stories and produce them, reporting from communities in which they are likely not a member and have no language or cultural proficiency. It adds depth to their portfolios when they are able to show their success in covering a variety of communities, with or without language. Students are able to develop news sources, drawing from the community itself, from people overseas (mostly through social media) and from scholars and researchers. By following foreign correspondents and understanding how they do their jobs, they are better able to appreciate how foreign news is reported, particularly the challenges. With that knowledge,

they become more savvy consumers and critics of foreign news. Lastly, they publish, demonstrating their ability to cross platforms to tell stories, with audio, video, photography and data visualization.

## Addendum

Excerpt from class assignment to tweet public lecture on war reporting (class hashtag redacted)



Excerpt from syllabus

### Week 2, Feb. 4

Social Media in foreign reporting and citizen journalism

In-class assignment: Create a Storify about your region/country's representation in the Olympics.

**Homework due next class: Research the immigrant community from this region and where they live locally, with a discussion of potential story ideas from here. Organizations? Community groups? Places of worship? This is your blog entry for this week.**

### Week 3, Feb. 11

Immigration and evolving demographics in the United States

**Homework for next class: Create a web-based graphic using Census and Homeland Security data to tell a story about your immigrant community. We will explore these data bases in class.**

### Week 4, Feb. 18

Visas, green cards and refugees. How do people get to America and why? Stories behind the numbers.

### Week 5, Feb. 25

In-class assignment: Go directly to your immigrant neighborhood at the start of class. Using the **Videolicious** or **Splice** app, produce a mobile multimedia piece during class. You do not need to set something up in advance, but it would be helpful to have a general idea of what you want to do. Deadline is 12 at the end of class. You must post the link to the class *Facebook* page. You also are required to tweet **THREE TIMES** from your neighborhood. The first tweet must be posted within the first 15 minutes of class. Use best practices for tweeting as discussed in class.

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Student published work samples

*Students also publish long-form magazine pieces and audio stories. I did not include these because they often identified the student by the institution.*

<http://vimeo.com/81449965>

*Nigerian community*



<http://youtu.be/O48tk5LZDs8>

*Pakistani community*



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