Reporting Buenos Aires

Class code: JOUR-UA.9204.1.001

Instructor Details
Nicolás Cassese  
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Office hours: by appointment

Class Details
Reporting Buenos Aires
Tuesday and Thursday 1.45-3.15 pm  
Anchorena 1250

Prerequisites
In order to take this course students do not have to have journalism knowledge but they should be curious and should have a satisfactory score on writing skills in terms of accuracy and objectivity.

Class Description
The course intends to introduce students to the coverage of Buenos Aires, a city of more than four million people and 47 neighborhoods. Emphasis will be on dealing with cultural differences and local context. During the course, students will explore and practice the key elements of journalism by reporting, analyzing, and understanding domestic affairs, and by examining the way stories are developed in the local media. Topics covered will include generating story ideas, exercising news judgment, and gathering information. We will have guest speakers and classes will combine lecture and editorial meetings.

Desired Outcomes
The course will aim to sharpen students’ abilities to develop beats and find news angles for Argentine newspapers and magazines by using the techniques of information gathering, organization, and writing. Writing and reporting on different topics will be a significant aspect of the course.
Assignments will take students around Buenos Aires to report 1,000-word pieces (Times New Roman font, 12 size, single spaced) and a final profile that will run from 2,000 to 2,500 words (Times New Roman font, 12 size, single spaced). Every two weeks they will bring to class memos that will work as road maps to plan their work regarding different topics (human rights, social issues and cultural issues).

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

It is important students spend time outside class reading Argentine newspapers. They may also be required to attend relevant screenings, lectures, and discussions at various venues.

Students will be evaluated from day one. Written work due in class must be submitted before the deadline to the professor. All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of their written work as well as hand in a printed copy.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive features/news pieces/profiles and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

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Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

Final profiles must be submitted to the professor in print and electronic copy. If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he/she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FedEx, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 - (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.

NYU Buenos Aires has a strict policy about course attendance.
- Students should contact their class teachers to catch up on missed work but should NOT approach them for excused absences.
- Absences due to illness must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña within one week of your return to class.
- A doctor note excusing your absence is mandatory.
- The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam.
- Absence requests for non-illness purposes must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña prior to the date(s) in question.
- If students have more than two unexcused absences they will be penalized by deducting 50% of the class participation grade. Please be aware that in most of the courses the class participation grade is 20% of the final grade. So the 50% of the class participation grade would mean 10% of the final grade.
- If students have more than four unexcused absences they will fail the course.
- Each class has a duration of one hour and half or two hours. Missing one class represents one absence. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or earlier departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- Holidays’ make up classes are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs during office hours (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the feature/news piece/profile the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs and will write the date and
time of submission on the work, as above.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

**Please note** end of semester features/news pieces/profiles must be submitted on time.

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**Plagiarism Policy**

The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.

It is expected that the student follows the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

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**Required Text(s)**


Ruberg, Michelle y Yagoda, Ben. “Writer's Digest Handbook of Magazine Article Writing”.

Poynter Institute: www.poynter.org

Nieman Program on Narrative Journalism: www.nieman.harvard.edu/narrative

Maynard Institute: www.maynardije.org

Transom: www.transom.org

Nieman Narrative Digest http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/narrative/digest/

Revista Anfibia: www.revistaanfibia.com

The Pulitzer Prizes www.pulitzer.org/

Tape recorder
**Required Equipment**

Video/photo camera (optional)

**Week 1**

**February 14-15**

The introductory meeting. The grading policy will be explained and the expectations of both sides expressed. Overview of course.

Introduction to the local newspapers *Buenos Aires Herald, Clarín, La Nación* and *Página 12*.

Readings/screenings/field trips:


**Week 2**

**February 19-21**

200/300-word writing exercise of observation and description due.


Readings/screenings/field trips:


**Week 3**

**February 26-28**


Reporting and Writing: The Profile. Selecting the subject. Different Approaches. The Interview. Other sources.

Reporting and writing: Trend stories. Focus, topic, tension and characters.

Readings/screenings/field trips:

Street art in Buenos Aires Tour.


**Week 4**

**March 5-7**

400-word writing exercise on street art due.

Covering Gender Rights: Gender laws in Argentina. The gay marriage law debate and how it was discussed in the argentie media.

Guest speaker: Pablo Plotkin, Editor in Chief of *Rolling Stone Argentina*.

Readings/screenings/field trips:

Clippings from local and international newspapers.


**Week 5**

Covering Soccer: The social and economic relevance of sports in Argentina. Different
ways of covering sport.

March 12-14
Guest Speaker: Andres Burgo, author of “Ser de River”.
Readings/screenings/field trips:

Week 6
March 19-21
1,000-word piece on Soccer or Gender Rights due.
Covering Human Rights: Confronting past abuses. How local and international newspapers and magazines cover stories regarding the “desaparecidos,” recovered children and trials for crimes against humanity.
New York Times Op-Ed Columnist Roger Cohen and his dilemma about changing people’s lives for better or worse: The Reggiardo Tolosa twins case.
Readings/screenings/field trips:
Argento, Analia. “De vuelta a casa. Historias de hijos y nietos restituidos”.
Actis, Munu; Aldini, Cristina; Gardella, Liliana and Lewin, Miriam. “That Inferno: Conversations of Five Women Survivors of an Argentine Torture Camp”.
Clippings from local and international newspapers.
Field trip to ESMA/Atletico/ Mansión Seré/Mothers of Plaza de Mayo site or Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo’s.

Week 7
April 4-5
1,000-word piece on Human Rights due.
Covering Political stories in Latin America.
Guest Speaker: Martín Sivak, author of “Evo Morales”.
Readings/screenings/field trips:
Sivak, Martin. “Evo Morales”.

Week 8
April 9-11
Reporting and Writing ideas: Narrative approach on ideas/science reporting.
Readings/screenings/field trips:

Week 9
April 16-18
Covering Social Issues: Guest Speaker: a middle-class ex paco addict’s testimony.
Reporting and Writing: The Profile: Discussion on assigned readings.
Readings/screenings/field trips:
Field trip to a paco addicts center of rehabilitation that is run by Nuestra Señora de Caacupé, the main church at Villa 21 where priests do social work against paco.

Week 10
April 23-25
Covering Social Issues: Madres del Paco, a group of addicts’ mothers who fight against drugs. How local and international newspapers and magazines cover stories regarding Madres del paco.
Discussion on students’ Human Rights stories.
Readings/screenings/field trips:
Clippings from local and international newspapers.
Screening: “Paco”, de Diego Rafecas.

**Week 11**


April 30-May 7

Reading/screening/field trips:
Field trip to a Bike Polo practice.

**Week 12**

**Final profile draft.**

**1,000-word piece on Bike Polo due.**


**Week 13**

Reporting and Writing: Guest Speaker: Being a Foreign Correspondent. Reporting across cultures. What makes foreign reporting different from domestic reporting. How to give a foreign story context for a local reader. Sources and resources: The pitfalls for foreign reporting.

Readings/screenings/field trips:
Clippings from local newspapers.

**Week 14**

Discussion on students’ profile.

**Classroom Etiquette**

The use of computers, Blackberrys, phones and IPods in class are forbidden.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

All the field trips are mandatory. They are a primary sources, raw material for the features the students have to work on. Exhibitions, lectures, concerts and/or debates related to human rights, social issues and immigrant communities that may be scheduled.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

Faculty Networking Activities.

Changes to the syllabus may be made, especially if there are developments that make the discussion of some of the issues timely or when certain speakers are available. Additional material could be added.
Your Instructor

Nicolás Cassese is a full time journalist who started his career as a political reporter for La Nación newspaper (Buenos Aires) and is now the Editor in chief of Brando, a men’s lifestyle magazine. He has a B.A. in Communication from Austral University (Buenos Aires) and a Master in Latin American Studies from the University of London (London). He is also the author of Los Di Tella, and italian/argentine family saga.