## Reporting Conflict – Fall 2011

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<th><strong>Course ID</strong></th>
<th>JOUR-UA 9204</th>
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| **Instructor Details** | Ilene Prusher  
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02-674-9005  
0545-212-777 |
| **Class Details** | Fall 2011  
Thursdays, 12:15 – 3:15 |
| **Prerequisites** | None. |
| **Class Description** | Reporting Conflict is a course with a strong practical component. Class meetings will include lectures and discussions of issues affecting journalists who cover local, national and international conflicts. The course will include field trips as well as field work, giving students an opportunity to report independently. |
| **Course Objectives** | This course will teach journalism fundamentals as well as more advanced reporting techniques necessary for covering conflict the world over, from domestic issues affecting local communities to some of the most important geopolitical conflicts of our time.  
Alongside reading some of the best writing on contemporary conflict and discussing the difficulties of covering conflict, students will develop reporting skills through individual story assignments for class. With supervision and assistance from the course instructor, students will take advantage of their surroundings in Tel Aviv-Jaffa as well as easy access to Jerusalem and other locations in Israel. Student work will be "workshopped" in class with an eye towards learning to develop a journalistic writing style. |
| **Grading and Assessment** | **Grading:** Grades will be based on in-class/after-class writing assignments (30%), 2-3 stories reported independently (50%), and class participation, including discussions of readings and short presentations (20%).  
Grades include writing second drafts of stories. You will sometimes be asked for more information or additional reporting. |
Students may propose collaborating on projects to make a series or multi-media project.

**Required Text(s)**

*The Taliban Shuffle: Strange Days in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, by Kim Barker (Doubleday, 2011)
ISBN-10: 0385533314

**THE FOLLOWING COURSE READINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD:**

Chapter 3: Jang
Chapter 11: Pearland

*From Beirut to Jerusalem*, by Thomas L. Friedman (Doubleday: 1989)
Chapter 2: Would You Like to Eat Now or Wait for the Ceasefire?

Chapter 1: Versailles on the Tigris

Chapters 14 and 15: (Reporting Overseas I and II)


*War Torn, Stories of War by the Women Reporters Who Covered Vietnam*

**Supplemental Texts (not required to purchase)**

*The Forever War*, by Dexter Filkins

*War*, by Sebastian Junger

*From Beirut to Jerusalem*, by Thomas Friedman

*Scoop*, a novel by Evelyn Waugh

*News Reporting and Writing*, by Melvin Mencher

*Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University*, Mark Kramer and Wendy Call, eds.
**Internet Research Guidelines**

Stories based solely on internet research (as opposed to in-person or over-the-phone interviews) will not be accepted. In journalistic writing, all sourcing must be clearly attributed in the text, in the form of a direct attribution rather than a footnote. Please avoid the use of anonymous sources, and ask for full name, age and profession where appropriate. University policies on plagiarism will be strictly observed. Any student discovered making up sources or quotes will receive an F for the assignment.

**Additional Required Equipment**

- Laptop computer
- Small notebook/journal for field reporting

**Session 1**

**UNIT 1**

Sept. 7, 2011

Week 1: Introduction to reporting conflict, including in-class exercises

Outline of syllabus, course expectations and assignments

**Session 2**

Sept. 15, 2011

**UNIT 1**

Week 2: Lessons learned from covering "Disengagement," Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, the 2009 War in Gaza ("Operation Cast Lead"), and coverage of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What are the challenges of presenting fair, balanced and insightful coverage of two (or more) sides in a conflict?

**Session 3**

Sept. 22, 2011

**UNIT 1**

Week 3: FIELD TRIP to Sderot and the Gaza border: a look at the Israel-Hamas standoff and how it fits into the Middle East conflict. Each student will write a story based on our field reporting, to be submitted by Friday, Sept. 23 at 4 p.m. (the following day).

**Session 4**

Sunday Sept. 25, 2011

**UNIT 1**

Week 4: Review of stories in class

We will discuss different approaches to journalistic writing, including leads, nut graphs, context, quoting and sourcing, and other elements of story structure.

**Session 5**

Oct. 6, 2011

**UNIT 2**

Week 1: FIELD TRIP in south Tel Aviv with Jean-Marc Liling, former UNHCR lawyer and expert on the issues of foreign workers and asylum-seekers in Israel. (Please try to clear your Thursday afternoon.)

Note: No classes on Oct. 13th or 20th due to Sukkot and Fall break

**Session 6**

Week 2: Introduction to community reporting

In this unit we will look at tools for reporting and developing a beat that is useful both in
Oct. 27, 2011  

Students will familiarize themselves with one of Tel Aviv's distinct communities and "adopt" it as a beat. Previous students have covered the following communities in the Tel Aviv area: Ajami/Jaffa, Lod/Ramle, migrant workers and asylum seekers including Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians and Filipinos, as well as immigrant groups in Israel such as Indians and Iranians. Students may also choose a story that involves tensions between two communities, such as between religious and secular Israelis in different parts of Tel Aviv or its environs.

Session 7  
UNIT 2  
Nov. 3, 2011  
Week 3: Brainstorming and narrowing down of topics for community reporting. (Deadline for 1st draft of story is Sunday, Nov. 13th).

In-class discussion of selected readings.

Session 8  
UNIT 2  
Nov. 6, 2011  
Week 4: Field work – day of reporting and simulation of "life in the newsroom."

Session 9  
UNIT 3  
Nov. 10, 2011  
Week 1: Contemporary challenges in covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict  
NOTE: Community story due Nov. 13th

Session 10  
UNIT 3  
Nov. 17, 2011  
Week 2: In-class workshopping of community story drafts, including peer input. Students must come to class having read other students' work.

Session 11  
UNIT 3  
Nov. 24, 2011  
Week 3: The Battle to Spin the Story: Can journalists integrate competing narratives? In a sea of information in the internet age, how do today's reporters make sure they're getting a balanced story? Two sides of the debate on the closure of Gaza explain their viewpoints. Short assignment due after class.

Session 12  
UNIT 3  
Dec. 1, 2011  
Week 4: In-class review of previous week's assignment  
Discussion on topics for final pieces related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or an additional story from the student's community/beat reporting.

Session 13  
UNIT 3  
Dec. 8, 2011  
Week 5: FIELD TRIP. Focus on the conflict over Jerusalem (Date of trip subject to change.)  

Extra-credit option: write a story on deadline based on information gathered in our
Jerusalem seminar, with additional reporting if necessary.

**Session 14**

FINAL CLASS

Dec. 15, 2011

**Final Exam/Project**

In lieu of a final exam, students will submit story as decided on Dec. 1. The "top" of the story (lead plus nut graph) is **due by Dec. 13th**, to enable discussion of these in class on Dec. 15th.

[Enter date]

FINAL version of story due: Dec. 20th.

There will also be a final discussion in which each student will give a brief talk on a conflict reporting-related subject of interest to him or her. Presentations may be based on one of the course readings.

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

Students should keep abreast of the news as reported in local and international media.

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**

[Click here and enter information about suggested activities, societies, lectures, etc.]