

# NYU COURSE LONDON, SUMMER 2008

## REPORTING LONDON

BY KEITH BOWERS: [keith.bowers@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:keith.bowers@yahoo.co.uk)  
07802 461142 (mobile)

### COURSE AIM

To enable students to develop their reporting and writing skills. Students will use London as a laboratory to gather and report news and feature stories about actual news events for both print and broadcast media.

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

This will be an intensive and challenging course but it is also designed to be fun. There will be in-class writing assignments and discussions, and the opportunity to report out and about in the exciting city of London. You will be expected to bring ideas and suggestions based on your own reading, viewing and thinking. Writing assignments outside the class will include hard news stories, interviews and profiles. These exercises will be graded and must be handed in by the deadlines given. Assignments that miss the deadline will not be accepted.

### GRADING POLICY

Writing assignments	60 per cent
Class participation/attendance	25 per cent
Final in-class assignment	15 per cent

Grading will conform to the NYU Journalism Department policy.

A = publishable as is

B = publishable with light editing

C = publishable with a rewrite

D = major problems with facts, reporting writing

F = missing key facts, containing gross misspellings, plagiarism or libel

### READING

#### Set book:

*The Universal Journalist* by David Randall second edition 2000, Pluto Press, London

#### Other reading:

*Broadcast Journalism* by Andrew Boyd, 2003, Focal Press, Oxford

At least one quality and one tabloid UK newspaper every day plus regularly watch news bulletins on BBC, Channel Four and Sky.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

NB: This schedule is liable to change at short notice to accommodate news-related visits, speakers and events

### **MON JUNE 30 THE LONDON MEDIA SCENE**

Introduction to the course and the London media scene – both mainstream and alternative. Observation exercise outside class.

**Reading:** Randall p 1-13 and 22-30.

**Set exercise:** First impressions of London story. To be handed in on Wednesday July 2.

### **WED JULY 2 GETTING IDEAS FOR NEWS STORIES**

Discussion of the important issues in London and angles to cover. What do Londoners care about? We ask them.

**Reading:** Randall 31-57 and 86-98

**Set exercise:** Find a news story. Carry out basic research and identify which sources to speak to. Hand in outline on Monday July 7.

### **MON JULY 7 NEWS STORIES FORUM**

Discussion of story ideas. Writing for newspapers. Tabloid and broadcast approach. In-class writing exercise  
Writing for broadcast introduction

**Reading:** Randall P 141-185 and Boyd 56-67

**Set exercise:** Find, research and write up a second news story by July 14  
Prepare television exercise for July 9.

### **WED JULY 9 WRITING FOR TELEVISION**

Performing scene setters – on camera exercise

**Set exercise** Write a television script about an actual event for Monday July 14

### **MON JULY 14 GETTING UNDER THE SKIN**

The role of investigative journalists. What can they achieve and where can they go wrong? Session to include talk by Ewa Ewart, award-winning documentary maker at the BBC

**Reading:** Randall 99-111  
De Burgh, H (ed) (2000), *Investigative Journalism, London*: Routledge  
9-23 (to be given as handout)

**Set exercise:** Write up a one thousand word investigation for Monday August 4.

### **WED JULY 16 CELEBRITY OBSESSIONS**

Discussion about the UK media focus on the cult of celebrity. Does this preoccupation mean that reporting about important and serious international issues is going out of fashion?

**Set exercise:** Write a newspaper column piece about celebrity journalism in London. For Wednesday July 23

### **MON JULY 21 INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES**

In-class exercise... interviewing the tough ones and vox pop exercise in Tottenham Court Road.

**Reading:** Randall: 58-71 and Boyd 96-125

**Set exercise:** Conduct a short interview of your choice and write up a newspaper story based on it for Monday July 28

### **WED JULY 23 WRITING PROFILES**

The techniques of profile and feature writing.

**Set exercise:** Write a newspaper profile of 750 words for Wednesday July 30.

### **MON JULY 28 FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS IN LONDON**

Talk by Aisha Labi, freelance writer and former Time staffer and/or Tom Fenton, former CBS correspondent in London.

### **WED JULY 30 CAMPAIGNING FOR TRUTH**

Do polemicists give journalism a bad name or are they its saviours? We examine the work and legacy of those who campaign for their version of the truth.

**Set Exercise:** Write a polemical article about some aspect of British life or policy for

Monday August 4.

Research blogs about London for discussion on August 4.

**MON AUG 4 BLOGGERS AND VLOGGERS**

Discussion about the London blogging scene. Will the new concept of user-generated content transform societies? Are traditional forms of journalism under threat or will there always be a role for the gatekeeper?

**WED AUG 6 FINAL IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE**

Write an article against the clock. Topic to be announced later