

REPORTING CONFLICT JN806 MODULE OUTLINE 2015/2016

Length of module: 12 weeks

Weekly contact hours: two. There may be extra visiting speaker sessions. If you want to discuss essay plans or anything else related to the course, you are welcome to arrange (by email) a private drop-in session.

Convenor:

Richard Pendry
r.pendry@kent.ac.uk
07962 059 874

Books and Reading

It is very helpful if all students read the following books before starting the course. I recognise that some cannot, because for example they only decide on the module at the start of term. If you fall into that category, the quicker you read these books the more you will get out of the course.

Hastings, M (2000). *Going to the Wars*. London: Macmillan.

Knightley, P (2006). *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq*. US: John Hopkins.

Loyd, A (2000). *My war gone by, I miss it so*. London: Anchor.

Loyn, D (2006). *Frontline: The True Story of the British Mavericks Who Changed the Face of War Reporting*. London: Michael Joseph. [Note: it is not necessary to read the last part of the book which is an account of how the author worked with Frontline cameramen.]

Simpson, J (2008). *News From No Man's Land: Reporting the world*. London: Pan.

Waugh, E (2003). *Scoop: a novel about journalists*. London: Penguin.

I will be discussing books in the first class of term, so you may wish to delay any purchase until then. We have a good stock in the library but please do not rely on the set texts always being available at the precise time you need them. Set texts will always have at least one reference only copy in the library.

The module and its programme

Aims, objectives and contents

a. Aims

- To provide a sound grounding in the concepts, principles and rules governing the reporting of war and the restrictions placed on the media by governments.
- To introduce students to the tensions that exist between the desire on the part of news gathering organisations to promote freedom of expression/speech and the recognition that certain controls may be necessary to protect the parties in conflict.
- To introduce students to aspects of the practice of war reporting.
- To consider the effects of the ever more stringent policies enforced by Britain and the United States to exclude, control, and coerce correspondents, for example by the embedding system.
- To consider the implications of the use of new technology and UGC for reporting war.

b. Objectives

After completing the module successfully, students will:

- Have a sophisticated understanding of the evolution of conflict reporting since 1935
- Be able to devise and sustain detailed arguments concerning issues including the roles of censorship, propaganda and embedding
- Be capable of advanced comment upon aspects of current professional practice in conflict reporting
- Be capable of sophisticated comment upon aspects of current research in conflict reporting
- Show sophisticated and detailed insight into the range of attitudes and values arising from the complexity and diversity of contemporary conflict reporting

c. Contents

We focus on six conflicts. I will deliver a lecture on each. These lectures are called “conflict timelines” in the module schedule and outline the wars in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia (including Bosnia), Northern Ireland and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Further lectures and seminars explore issues related to contemporary conflict reporting.

Week	
1	<p>Introduction to module. How to read and research</p> <p>Lecture: The changing identity of the war reporter</p> <p>Seminar: themes in contemporary war reporting</p> <p>Seminar questions: What is the traditional foreign correspondent? Who are the new war reporters? How is war changing? What has changed in war reporting? What hasn't? How does technology impact modern war reporting?</p>
2	<p>Lecture and seminar. Useless idiots: Sources and Reporters at war</p> <p>Seminar questions: What is the nature of the journalist-source relationship? How is this relationship changing? Why might "boundary work" be a good way to analyse journalist-source relations? How do the people formerly known as sources use journalists? How do the people formerly known as sources use journalists in areas of conflict? How do war reporters respond to increased source power?</p>
3	<p>Lecture and conflict outline: The Troubles in Northern Ireland</p> <p>Seminar: Witnessing and "being there"</p> <p>Seminar questions: Why is witnessing the "best of what we do"? How does witnessing relate to the political impact of war reporting, in these examples? How is witnessing changing? Who are the new eye witnesses? Does witnessing necessarily solve all reporting problems?</p>

4	<p>Lecture and conflict outline: Conflicts in Yugoslavia and Chechnya</p> <p>Seminar: Impartiality and objectivity</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Grossman, V. S., Beevor, A. and Vinogradova, L. (2006). <i>A writer at war: Vasily Grossman with the Red Army, 1941-1945</i>. London: Pimlico.</p> <p>Seminar questions:</p> <p>Situate Politkovskaya and Grossman within the political and journalistic worlds they each occupy, and explain how the latter relate to each other.</p> <p>Were Politkovskaya and Grossman either impartial or objective, and does it matter?</p> <p>What is the difference between impartiality and objectivity? Is it possible to be either in the real world?</p> <p>How does transparency relate to these laudable journalistic ambitions (impartiality and objectivity) today?</p>
5	<p>Reading week</p>

6

Lecture: Embedding

**Seminar: Embedding; identifying with the troops;
and Too Close for Comfort Report**

Recommended reading:

Cockburn, P (2010) Embedded journalism: A distorted view of war. *Independent*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/opinion/embedded-journalism-a-distorted-view-of-war-2141072.html> [Accessed 10 December 2013].

Tumber, H , (2004) Prisoners of News Values. In: Allen, S and Zelizer, B, *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*. UK: Routledge, pp 190-206.

Hastings, M. (2000). Yom Kippur. In: *Going to the Wars*. London: Macmillan, pp 120-141.

Hastings, M. (2000). Israel's Victory. In: *Going to the Wars*. London: Macmillan, pp 141-170.

Seminar questions:

What are the advantages and disadvantages of embedding?

Why do journalists agree to be embedded?

Why do journalists identify with the troops?

Can journalists be objective if they are embedded?

Does embedding work?

7	<p>Lecture: War in Syria and in Ukraine</p> <p>Seminar: Video Verification</p> <p>Recommended reading:</p> <p>Bennett, D. (2011) A “Gay Girl in Damascus”. In: Mair, J et al ed. <i>Mirage In The Desert? Reporting The ‘Arab Spring’</i>, 2nd Ed., Abramis: Suffolk, pp 187-196.</p> <p>Seminar questions:</p> <p>What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the online world as a news resource?</p> <p>Who are some of the leading figures in verification and how do they work?</p> <p>Is it the message or the messenger that is important in the world of online news verification?</p> <p>How does transparency relate to verification, impartiality and objectivity?</p>
8	<p>Lecture and conflict outline: The Arab/Israeli conflict</p> <p>Lecture and conflict outline: The wars in Afghanistan</p>
9	<p>Lecture and conflict outline: Iraq; Sub-contracting newsgathering</p> <p>Seminar: Outsourcing and sub-contracting newsgathering</p> <p>Seminar questions:</p> <p>How does sub-contracting news gathering in areas of conflict work? Why do people use this technique?</p> <p>What are the advantages and pitfalls?</p> <p>How do sub-contracting and outsourcing relate to recent changes in the news industry, including increased source power?</p> <p>Is a “circle of trust” something a reporter should be proud of using?</p>

10	<p>Lecture: Reporter power in Syria</p> <p>Seminar: Syria, Duty of Care and the news industry</p> <p>Seminar questions: Explain reporter power in the context of duty of care and reporting Syria. Why do news organisations use the wires instead of sending their own people in? Do you think news organisations are right to pass the burden of reporting Syria to freelancers? Local people? Is the public sphere still being properly served by reporting from Syria? Is there a hole in the model for contemporary war reporting?</p>
11	<p>Lecture: From “Bin Laden TV” to Al Jazeera America</p> <p>Screening: “Control Room” documentary</p>
12	<p>Screening: Shooting Robert King documentary</p>

Teaching and Learning methods

These will consist of a combination of lectures and seminars.

Please come and have a chat if you are encountering any kind of difficulty that is hindering your study. If you can't complete an assignment on time because you are sick, or because of circumstances beyond your control, then let me know before the assignment is due. You must complete all work in order to pass the module. Any student who misses a substantial portion of the module will be deemed to have not satisfactorily completed the course.

Classes

Classes will be held on Tuesdays, from 1500 to 1700. All students are expected to attend lectures and seminars. The latter are wide-ranging and offer students the opportunity to discuss current practices in war reporting, and the ethical issues that arise.

If you must miss a class, please email me in advance. It is then essential that you find out what you have missed. Please catch up on the work you have missed before next class. Ask one of your colleagues, or me.

It is important that everyone prepares for classes by completing the required reading. This leads to more interesting and informative classes.

I will keep a record of attendance, as is usual at the CFJ.

The purpose of the lectures is to:

- a. Provide a conceptual framework for the areas of war reporting which we will consider. Lectures are a foundation upon which students build more detailed knowledge, particularly of cases and commentary, through private study.
- b. Provide a fuller discussion of more difficult news gathering concepts.
- c. Introduce students to a range of comments and critiques surrounding the current practice of war reporting.

The purpose of the seminars is:

- a. For students to learn through engaging in argument based on their prior reading in relation to specific questions and set hypothetical scenarios.
- b. To provide an opportunity for students to raise points or clarify issues arising from lectures or reading.
- c. To develop a deeper critical and evaluative understanding of war reporting, by engaging in discussion based on prior reading
- d. To identify learning difficulties in relation to particular topics so that appropriate remedial steps may be taken.

Assessment requirements

Please read this carefully

Essay 1	25 per cent of module marks
Essay 2	25 per cent of module marks
Exam	50 per cent of module marks

The two essays are each 3,000 words, not including the bibliography

Essay deadlines

1500 on 18 December: essay 1. "How does contemporary technology help or hinder the work of conflict reporters?"

1500 on 1 February: essay 2. "How does contemporary war reporting relate to previous notions of journalistic truth telling, objectivity and professionalism?"

Notes on Assessments

- Essays must be submitted by the deadline. Essays that students submit later than the due date will not count towards a student's assessment unless there is a good cause. In all but exceptional circumstances, this will be granted before the deadline by the convenor.
- The essays must be submitted via 'Turnitin' on the Moodle page.

Dishonesty in Assessment

I regard most seriously any acts of dishonesty relating to assessment. Cheating includes plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration, examination misconduct and theft of other students' work.

Plagiarism and collusion are defined as including any of the following five types of behaviour, and apply to work in any medium (for example, written or audio text, film production, computer programs):

- Inappropriate/inadequate acknowledgement — material copied word-for-word which is acknowledged as paraphrased but should have been in quotation marks, or material paraphrased without appropriate acknowledgement of its source.
- Collusion - material copied from another student's assignment with her or his knowledge.
- Verbatim copying — material copied word-for-word or exactly duplicated without any acknowledgement of the source.
- Ghost writing — assignment written by third party and represented by student as her or his own work.
- Purloining — material copied from another student's assignment or work without that person's knowledge.

For more information please see:
<http://www.kent.ac.uk/socsci/studying/general/plagiarism.html>

Essays

You will need to submit your essay on Moodle and also as two hard copies, to be handed in at the Gillingham building reception.

Please make sure you adopt the following format for your essays. If you do not adopt the following format I may hand back your assignment and ask you to resubmit it after making the necessary changes.

- Title page
- Your name
- Accurate page numbers
- Double-line spacing
- Text must be left justified
- Font must be 13 point
- Assignment is securely fastened

Your assignments will be assessed on both the quality of the content and on the structure and writing style of the assignment. I will use this as the basis for their marking of your assignment.

Essay content

- Demonstrates depth of analysis exceeding superficial descriptions
- Defines key terms and provides accurate understandings of those terms
- Demonstrates good understanding of relevant module references and demonstrates evidence of independent research
- Supports theoretical discussion through reference to relevant examples
- Answers the question and makes conclusions based on clearly identified observations and interpretations of reference and other source material

Essay Structure and Style

- Progresses logically, with a coherent structure
- Essay written to correct word length
- Clearly defined introduction and conclusion
- Conclusion summarises main points/arguments
- Style is clear and consistent
- Sentences are complete, fluent and well-written
- Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
- Citations and bibliography relevant and correctly referenced

A note on plagiarism – Please read the appropriate section in the student handbook. If you have any queries at all about referencing your written work please come to talk to me.

Examination

The Examination counts for 50 per cent of the overall final mark. It will take the form of a 2 hour unseen paper and will contain a range of questions across the syllabus. There will be six essay questions and students will be expected to answer four of them.

IT

- a. Email – All students registered for the module will be contacted via email through the listings on the student data system. Please check your emails frequently.
- b. You will find this outline and lecture/seminar notes on the
- Centre's Module Notes page.

Other recommended reading

The reading pack contains the minimum necessary texts to pass the course. Top marks are more likely to be available for those who read widely. Other books and journal articles listed below provide more detail on specific topics. The books are in the library, and we have electronic subscriptions to journals listed.

- Copies of the main texts and others are available in the Drill Hall Library Medway.
- It is essential that you undertake the required reading for each class.
- Try to read a variety of texts and commentaries as this will help you to absorb information and ideas more readily and will aid your understanding of the concepts and the different arguments surrounding a topic.

Several feature films and documentaries tie in with the module, and we will refer to these during the course. All such films can be borrowed from the library or are available online.

Abdul-Ahad, G. (2012). *Unembedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq*. UK: Chelsea Green. [reference only]

Allen, S and Zelizer, B. (2004) *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*. UK: Routledge

Babchenko, A. (2006) *One soldier's war in Chechnya*. London: Portobello Books.

Bell, M (1996). *In harm's way*. London: Penguin

Crawford, A (2012). *Colonel Gaddafi's hat*. London: Collins

Deuze, M. 2008, "The Changing Context of News Work: Liquid Journalism for a Monitorial Citizenry", *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 2, no. 0.

Dillon, M (1999) *The dirty war*. UK: Routledge

Fenton, T (2005) *Bad News*. New York: Harper Collins

Gellhorn, M (1989). *The view from the ground*. UK: Granta Books

Gourevitch, P and Morris, E (2008) *Standard Operating Procedure* Basingstoke: Picador

Herr, M. (1978). *Dispatches*. London: Picador.

Keeble, R and Mair, J (2010). *Afghanistan, war and the media: deadlines and frontlines*. UK: Arima

Keeble, R and Mair, J (2011). *Mirage In The Desert? Reporting the Arab Spring*. UK: Arima

Ledwidge, F (2012) *Losing Small Wars. British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan*. US: Yale University Press

Lewis, S. C. and Usher, N. (2013). Open source and journalism: toward new frameworks for imagining news innovation. *Media, Culture & Society* [Online], 35(5), 602-619.

Matheson, D and Allan, S (2009) *Digital war reporting*. Cambridge: Polity Press

McNair, B. (2006) *Cultural chaos: journalism, news, and power in a globalised world*. Routledge, London.

Morozov, E (2012). *The net delusion: how not to liberate the world*. London: Penguin

Owen, J. (2012). *International news reporting: frontlines and deadlines*. UK: Chichester

Pedelty, M. (1995). *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents*. New York, London : Routledge.

Politkovskaya, A (2010). *Nothing but the truth*. London: Harvill Secker.

Rodgers, J. (2012) *Reporting Conflict*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan

Sambrook, R., (2010). *Are foreign correspondents redundant? The changing face of international news*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism