

# COURSE SYLLABUS



## Reporting in Conflict Zones

JRN 301 / POL 501

Spring 2014

Monday, 18:30 – 21:15

Lecturer: Duncan Mclean / Iva Roze Skochova

Lecturer contact: iva.skochova@aauni.edu

Office hours: by appointment

<b>Semester Credits</b>	3	<b>Language of Instruction</b>	English
<b>ECTS</b>	6	<b>Level</b>	
<b>Length</b>	15 weeks	<b>Pre-requisites</b>	
<b>Contact hours</b>	42 hours	<b>Course type</b>	JS, PS, PP, IRD elective

### 1. Course Description

This course aims to make students more aware of the role of media in conflict zones, by examining journalism in areas of political and religious turmoil from a variety of historical and contemporary perspectives. The goal is to offer students a better understanding of the responsibilities and performance of the news media during periods of unrest, and provide a perspective about how coverage of global conflict zones can be improved. Guest speakers will include war correspondents, photographers, as well as other experts working in some of today's most dangerous places in the world. Special attention will be given to current as well as on-going areas of conflict and the ethical, philosophical, cultural, religious, military, national and human-rights points of view in each particular case.

### 2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a clear and comparative understanding of the role of media in a diverse array of conflict zones.
- Identify those key elements that contribute to both the challenges and outcomes of reporting in conflict zones.
- Critically evaluate the performance of news media in the case studies presented.

### 3. Course Materials

Handouts will be provided directly or online each week leading up to the following lecture.

### 4. Teaching methodology

This course is based on the study and discussion of basic principles of reporting in conflict zones, demonstrated through the in-depth analysis of multiple case-studies. Each session

will begin with a traditional lecture outlining the broader contextual elements of a specific location/region and the associated role of the media. The second half of each session will focus on debate and discussion within the class, facilitated by guest speakers and documentaries. As the course is based on current events, the schedule will remain flexible and subject to change.

## **5. Course Schedule**

As noted above, the co-lecturers have the prerogative to alter the course topics, depending on the evolution of current events and availability of guest speakers.

### **Class 1** (10 Feb)

Course aims, structure and methods of evaluation; introduction of basic elements of working/reporting in conflict zones, role of media in such contexts.

### **Class 2** (17 Feb)

Case Study: Somalia / Kenya

### **Class 3** (24 Feb)

Case Study: Afghanistan

### **Class 4** (3 March)

Case Study: Pakistan

### **Class 5** (10 March)

Case Study: Kyrgyzstan / Central Asia

### **Class 6** (17 March)

Case Study: Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory

### **Class 7** (24 March)

Case Study: Sudan / South Sudan / Chad

## **MIDTERM BREAK (March 31)**

### **Class 8** (7 April)

Case Study: Nepal

### **Class 9** (14 April)

Case Study: Haiti

### **Class 10** (28 April)

Case Study: Nigeria / West Africa

### **Class 11** (5 May)

Case Study: Great Lakes / Democratic Republic of Congo

### **Class 12** (12 May)

Case Study: Iraq

### **Class 13** (19 May)

Case Study: Syria

**Class 14** (26 May)  
Case Study: Papua

**6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Workload (average)</b>	<b>Weight in Final Grade</b>	<b>Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes</b>
Participation	45	20%	Ability to actively question course material and contribute to weekly debates
Presentation	15	30%	Ability to demonstrate an understanding of issues discussed in class, respond to questions with detailed answers
Research Paper	90	50%	Ability to research and write an essay on a set question that is persuasive and logically structured, using evidence from related course material and relevant academic sources
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150 hours</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**Presentation:** A twenty-minute oral presentation, including questions from the audience. Content of the presentation will focus on a summary of the case-study from the previous week, outlining the problematic of reporting in the specific context described. A one-page written summary should be submitted by each student on the day of their presentation.

**Research Paper:** A 3,000-word essay is to be submitted in week 13. Topics will be discussed in class well in advance, but will essentially focus on a case study not included in the syllabus. Students will be expected to outline the context and role of media, highlighting challenges and constraints (pragmatic and theoretical) in reporting on an international conflict. Grades will be awarded in equal parts on 1) Presentation / style; 2) Structure; 3) Content; 4) Research /sources.

**7. General Requirements and School Policies**

- All coursework is governed by AAU academic rules, and students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. All students are expected to be familiar with the AAU academic rules available in the Student Handbook.
- **Communication:** The university and lecturers will use only the student’s university email address for communication. Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts regularly.
- **Attendance** is required. Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Absences above this number may result in failure of the course.
- Mobile phones should be on silent; no calling or texting during class meetings (wait until the break).
- **Late work:** Not accepted.
- **Missed exams:** N/A
- **Cheating and plagiarism:** AAU strictly enforces its policy against cheating and plagiarism. Full policy is available in the Student Handbook.

Briefly: Cheating and plagiarism results in the failing grade from the assignment at minimum, it may lead to suspension from the university.

To prevent any misunderstanding, plagiarism is defined:

**PLAGIARISM** – “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.”

- Taken from the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Random House, New York, 1993.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities are asked to contact their lecturer as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

## 8. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A	95 – 100	<b>Excellent performance.</b> The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	<b>Good performance.</b> The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	<b>Fair performance.</b> The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 70	<b>Poor.</b> The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 - 59	<b>Fail.</b> The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

**Approved by:**