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Office Hours: As arranged
Schedule: Thursdays, 6:15-9:15p.m., Sept. 3-Dec. 17
Room: Stokes 133S.

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits
itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs
and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the
achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to
bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic
intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a
Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all
human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live
justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value
systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive
intellectual heritage.

Course Description
ADJO 229001 Investigative Journalism

Whether your interest lies in the human interest story, breaking news, the expose or in honing your critical
thinking and writing skills, this course offers the practical skills necessary for mastering journalistic form,
drawing on credible sources, reporting the facts and sharpening your inquiry and interpretive skills. This
course introduces the public documents on which investigative reporters depend and the various locales,
City Hall, State House, courthouses, where such records reside. Students learn how to access, read, and
interpret records which inform decision making.

Course Objectives
1) This course will introduce students to the skills involved in doing investigative reporting, the resources
that it draws on as well as the many benefits and few perils that come with it. Investigative reporting has
been a staple provided by our daily newspapers and television stations for nearly 40 years when a reporter
for The New York Times exposed a massacre by American soldiers in My Lai, Vietnam and two reporters
for the Washington Post refused to accept statements of non-involvement coming out of the Nixon White
House about a break-in at the Democrats' national headquarters at the Watergate Hotel complex in
Washington, D.C.
2) The course will familiarize students with public records needed to make essential decisions, where to
access the records and how to read and analyze them for information. The records include court files;
property records; inspection reports; etc. Data measuring the performance of schools, police departments,
hospitals and other public agencies will also be reviewed.
3) The course will instruct students on how to write more clearly, concisely and dramatically from the
coverage of on campus events and other assignments.
4) The student will demonstrate competency in attending on-campus events, to make inquiries of speakers
whose lectures are being attended and relate to audiences diverse in their age, gender and culture who are
attending such events.
5) The student will demonstrate ethical standards in fulfilling their assignments fully and independently.

Grading
WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories:  A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33),
B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but
unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00),
official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B
(3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.
Grade Reports. All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.

Text(s)/Readings (Required)
The Investigative Reporter’s Handbook, 4th edition, by Brant Houston, Len Bruzzese and Steve Weinberg. We will use this text to learn the various resources that are publicly available for information necessary for researching investigative stories. REQUIRED.

Text(s)/Readings (Recommended)
The Boston Globe (Daily & Sunday)

Important Policies
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance
Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.
Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays. There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the WCAS at 617-552-3900 for consultation.

Deadline - Everyone must complete every assignment. No exceptions.

Course Assignments (readings, exercises and/or experiences)
The class will meet for three hours every week and students will be expected to devote another two hours by reading from the assigned text and writing papers on the assignments given on nearly a weekly basis. Students will keep Prof. Kurkjian abreast of their progress in meeting their assignments via emails and/or phone calls. In addition, Prof. Kurkjian expects he will be meeting with students individually at the WCAS office to advise on their progress in writing about the events they are covering and selecting topics for their final papers.

Since students are expected to learn the basics of writing in newspaper-form, they are expected to read The Globe on a daily basis (preferably, the newspaper rather than online).

Assignments will include: coverage of two on-campus events, attending of a district court criminal court hearing and examining of court documents, researching a land transaction on a particular residence or commercial property, and coverage of human rights lecture. Each of these papers will consist of minimum of 800 words. Final paper of a minimum of five pages on an agreed upon topic.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic Reading/Exercises/Experiences</th>
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<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Introduction. What the course will cover, what will be expected of students and history of the importance and relevance of investigative reporting/critical thinking for both newspapers and our lives.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>The court system - Part One: The criminal side. Will cover how to gain information on the prosecution of crimes from police reports, court documents and decisions, from neighborhood district courts to the US Supreme Court. How the information provides the underpinning for all crime stories yet may lead to wrong assumptions about the guilt of those arrested. Students expected to visit on their own a local courthouse and attend a criminal court session.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>The court system - Part Two - The civil side. Will cover how to gain information from civil lawsuits that are filed at both district court and superior courts in Massachusetts. Also, what information is available concerning divorces and other family-related issues at county probate courts and the federal bankruptcy court. How this information can provide valued information on individuals who are being profiled or caught up in a public controversy in the papers.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>Where's What - From who really owns your apartment building to what the seller of the house you're hoping to buy originally paid for it, we'll learn where the information is available and how to access it. From the cleanliness of your favorite neighborhood restaurant to the purity of your tap water, we'll also learn how to access these records and compare with those of our friends in neighboring towns. Just about everything we pay for or consume is inspected and evaluated by local, state and/or federal governments. We'll learn how to find those records and make the necessary comparisons which make us better consumers.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td>Interviewing Techniques - We take a break from searching of public records to improve our interviewing skills. Gaining information, whether in person or over the phone, is an integral part of a reporter's job and we will learn about the importance of the task and how to improve those skills from one or two of The Globe's best, including, hopefully Ric Kahn, retired Globe reporter.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>Politics - After BC football, politics is the most popular contact sport in this city and state. This semester presents a political junkie's dream season as candidates seeking nomination for the Republican or Democratic nomination for the US Presidency flock to New Hampshire for the 2016 primary. We'll talk about what are the key issues on which voters will decide their choices as well as how campaigns are run.</td>
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We will explore how the billions that will be spent this year in the US federal elections is coming from and how to judge if candidates are being swayed by the money they're receiving or voting their conscience. Globe political columnist, Joan Vennochi, who has worked both at the paper's State House and City Hall bureaus, as well as its Spotlight Team, will be our guest.

**Week 7** - Government's Most Important Services - From the schools that teach our children, the hospitals that treat our families, the nursing homes that care for our parents and grandparents, to the police and fire departments that ensure our safety - we pay dearly for these valuable services and we have grown to expect optimum performance. Have we been getting our money's worth? Public agencies must maintain data to answer those questions and like your local reporters you can gain access to that information and how to interpret it.

**Week 8** - HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURE at Faneuil Hall.

**Week 9** - Newspapers & Investigative reporting - How investigative reporting became hallmark of both good newspapers but also protecting the public from excesses of government and private industry. Also, how the privileges that are afforded to newspapers and journalists have evolved since the adopting of the First Amendment and the responsibilities that are attendant to those privileges. How to access public information through the Freedom of Information Law/Public Records Law.

**Week 10** - The Internet - More than 30 years after I broke into the business, now everyone can be an investigative reporter and gather the information necessary that improves our communities and makes each of us better consumers, voters and citizens. From the sites that will show our own and our neighbors' tax assessments to those that will give you some idea of your financial credit rating, we will explore the ever-widening world of the web.

**Week 11** - Legislation - From our utility rates to whether ticket scalping should be allowed, every year the Massachusetts Legislature makes scores of decisions that impact our lives and our pocketbooks. We look at the legislators spend their time on Beacon Hill, whether someone's pet project is getting special treatment while the state's larger problems are ignored or passed on. The Globe's coverage of recent scandals at the State House and elsewhere will be examined.

**Week 12** - Ethics and the Protection of Privacy - What right do newspapers and reporters, especially investigative ones, have to pry into people's lives and judge whether a person, company or agency has performed poorly. What are the standards and who sets them in deciding to criticize the performance of a politician or public official, and are those standards the same for judging the performance of teachers, police officers or private citizens. We will review this week and next the explosive details of the illegal telephone hacking scandal that has consumed Rupert Murdoch's media empire and doomed the British tabloid *News Of The World*.

**Week 13** - Boston 2024 - How to make up your mind on whether Boston improves by hosting a Summer Olympics in 2024. Is this another Big Dig in the making, with taxpayers expected to bail out the next great boondoggle for developers and the politically-connected or does Boston finally get a boost in affordable housing and a transportation system it deserves.

**Week 14** - Judging the Messenger. How good a job is your local newspaper or television and radio stations doing in covering your community and the issues that are important to it and you. How do these media outlets make their decisions in what is news and what to cover with their precious resources, and what does their decline in readership and revenue portend for the future?

**Week 15** - How to make the research skills you have learned in our class work for you in the outside world? Whether advocating for a stop sign near your kids’ school to filling a public records request to determine if a community board has been meeting behind closed doors - how to use these sharpened reporting skills to your advantage.

In addition, students are expected to complete the following out-of-class course assignments:

At least two of the papers will involve attending an on-campus event (nonathletic and nonmusical) and writing about the event in a minimum of 800 words.