



COURSE OUTLINE

CMN302 Investigative and Data Journalism

Course Coordinator: Peter English (penglish@usc.edu.au) **School:** School of Business and Creative Industries

2021 Semester 1

USC Sunshine Coast

ON CAMPUS

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE 1

You can do this course without coming onto campus.

Please go to the USC website for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course provides a detailed exploration of the research and reporting practices for in depth investigative reporting. It canvasses major database sources, contemporary case studies, key institutions, and legal framework in this field. It focuses on the internet and statistics to expand the information that a journalist or researcher can employ to increase the depth and efficiency of their reporting and writing. You will learn to use software to extract meanings from raw data which might not have been evident otherwise, and how to find and access relevant, accurate information online.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
ON CAMPUS			
Lecture – 1 hour online lecture content for 12 weeks (or equivalent).	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop – On campus tutorial/workshop for 12 weeks (or equivalent).	2hrs	Week 2	12 times
ONLINE 1			
Online – 3 hours online content for 12 weeks (or equivalent).	3hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Module 1 – Data and visualisations

Module 2 – Investigating sources

Module 3 – Statistics and news stories

2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Identify and explain the capacities, limitations and socio-professional implications of reporting practices in investigative and data journalism.	Knowledgeable
2 Examine, interrogate and research an investigative story, through the use of advanced research methods.	Creative and critical thinker
3 Explain and justify the selection of investigative and journalistic methods including their limitations.	Empowered
4 Identify and describe the key ethical and legal obligations associated with investigative and data journalism.	Ethical

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [USC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Prior knowledge equivalent to the developing-level journalism subjects, is essential and assumed. This includes being able to write news stories, interview high-level sources, undertake detailed research, understand legal and ethical issues, and be able to operate across media platforms.

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Formative feedback on your academic progress will be provided in tutorials throughout the semester. An early formative assessment will also occur in Week 3 through an online quiz that will help with preparation for Assessment Task 1.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	20%	500 words	Week 4	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Written Piece	Individual	45%	2000 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Written Piece	Individual	35%	750 words	Exam Period	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Data journalism visualisation and minor essay

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is to produce a visualisation and then identify, explain and reflect on it in relation to its importance as a work of data journalism.													
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece													
FORMAT:	Professional/industry format and academic format Employing data journalism methods, create a visualisation to enhance and help explain a newsworthy issue. In essay form, respond critically to this visualisation. The response will also engage with the strengths and weaknesses of your particular example of data journalism.													
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Use of technology to create data journalism</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Appropriateness of news selection</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Critical analysis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Communication</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Assessment criteria are mapped to the course learning outcomes. 1 2 3 4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.	Learning Outcome assessed	1	Use of technology to create data journalism	2	Appropriateness of news selection	3	Critical analysis	4	Communication	5	Assessment criteria are mapped to the course learning outcomes. 1 2 3 4	
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All - Assessment Task 2: An investigative news feature article based on the use of investigative methods

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is for you to examine and interrogate the use of investigative methods and identify and explain the uses and limitations of these methods.
PRODUCT:	Written Piece
FORMAT:	<p>Topics will be assigned in Week 5 tutorials for the 1500 word investigative news feature article. The article should be based on accurate and verified information gathered through a variety of investigative methods. You must interview at least two relevant sources.</p> <p>A 500 word explanation and justification of the investigative methods used to produce the feature article is also required. It should include a description of how the information the article was based on was verified, limitations to the chosen methods and details of any obstacles encountered in the research, and how they were overcome.</p>

CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Quality of article (structure, interest to readership, suitability for publication)
	2	Clarity of expression
	3	Depth of research
	4	Use of interviews/ quotes and credible hyperlinks
	5	Demonstrated understanding of investigative methods
	6	Demonstrated understanding of limitations
	7	Clarity of explanation

All - Assessment Task 3: News story based on statistics

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is for you to examine and interrogate the use of data journalism techniques								
PRODUCT:	Written Piece								
FORMAT:	Professional/industry format You will write a 750 word news story based on an interpretation of statistics gathered from the web and subsequently sorted, grouped and displayed in a spreadsheet. You will enrich your story by incorporating at least two interviews with expert sources. Spreadsheets should also be submitted as part of the assessment requirement.								
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7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Directed study hours may vary by location. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Blackboard site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

This course requires some commercial software or hardware which is provided at USC campuses for student use. If you elect to do this course online, you may either; attend a campus at which it is available, discuss alternative open source solutions with your course coordinator that would enable you to demonstrate the learning outcomes, or if you prefer you may acquire this software and/or hardware at your own expense.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Blackboard, are electronically checked through SafeAssign. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work that SafeAssign has access to.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct.

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.

- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.6. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.7. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Administration of Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Academic Misconduct
- Students with a Disability

Visit the USC website: <http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.8. General Enquiries

In person:

- **USC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **USC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **USC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **USC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **USC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **USC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au