

## **Entrepreneurship in the New Media:**

*The new financial models and leaders that are changing what journalists do and what people know*

This course will examine the rapid changes affecting the news media, news media business and the jobs they produce in journalism. It will examine the ways in which new forms of news are changing what we know as a society, and will also help prepare aspiring journalists to be successful entrepreneurs in a world in which the sole-proprietorship, not the Fortune 500 giant, may emerge as the dominant business structure. The course will trace the causes and arc of these changes; examine case studies of new-media businesses and non-profits; bring in guest speakers who exemplify these changes; and provide a primer on the various skills needed to be successful as a journalism entrepreneur. The class will also examine the way new business models are changing the work that journalists do, the kind of news and information they disseminate, and the messages that news consumers are receiving.

The basic framework of the course will be case studies of new-media business models and the various themes and trends these models represent. Often, we will have the operators of these sites meet with the class. This survey of the most recent models adopted by entrepreneurs will give students a strong background in the current new-media environment, and help prepare them for beginning their own journalism entrepreneurship.

The course will build toward students' creation of a feasibility plan for a new-media business – one that they might actually implement after graduation, or one that they might aspire to. The business plan might be a non-profit, a for-profit or a hybrid. Students will also keep class blogs tracking developments in the world of entrepreneurial journalism.

## **Instructors**

Geoffrey Cowan and David Westphal.

## **Course Objectives**

At the end of the semester, students in the course will know:

1. How and why the economic model of mainstream media like newspapers and broadcast has declined, and how that decline has yielded an innovation cycle denoted by very small operations.
2. The range of new skills needed by entrepreneurial journalists, and the new ethical dilemmas that are arising.
3. The range of new-media models being developed by entrepreneurial journalists – from nonprofits to for-profits to citizen journalism models.
4. What it takes to prepare a new-media feasibility plan.
5. What new forms of news and information entrepreneurial journalists are creating and what impact their journalism (for better and for worse) has on what citizens know in our democracy.

## **Required texts**

Jarvis, Jeff, *What Would Google Do?* Harper, 2009.

O'Malia, Thomas, and Whistler, Margaret M., *The Entrepreneurial Journey*, Southwestern Publishing, 2008 (selected chapters).

Waldman, Steve, *The Information Needs of Communities*, Report to the FCC, May 2011.

## **Class assignments**

1. Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and then are expected to participate actively in discussions.
2. Students must launch and keep a class blog in which they write (at least once a week) about developments in entrepreneurial journalism, about class discussions and readings, and about their class projects.
3. Students must complete a 20-page paper that describes a feasibility plan for a hypothetical new-media startup. Plan will be for a startup students might create after graduation, or one they might aspire to someday. Model could be for-profit, non-profit or hybrid.

4. Students will be responsible for one 15 to 20-minute oral presentation describing their feasibility plan.
5. Students will participate in a small-group research project in which they profile an entrepreneurial news media company. They will present their findings in a 15 to 20-minute presentation to the class.
6. Students will profile an entrepreneur (deceased or living) and make a 10 to 15-minute presentation to the class about him or her.

### **Grading:**

Final exam paper and related presentation: 40%

Blogs: 20%

Class presentation on entrepreneur: 10%

Group presentation on entrepreneurial company: 10%

Class participation: 20%

The course measures an “A” as 94% or higher, an “A- ” as 90-93%, a “B+” as 87-89%, a “B” as 84-86%, and so on.

### **Schedule of Classes**

(Note: Many of the readings for this class will be time sensitive, due to the nature of the course. Check Blackboard for additional readings.)

#### **Week 1**

Course and class introduction. The digital revolution turns the media industry upside down. The role of entrepreneur takes center stage as the revolution plays out. The transition of journalist from institutional team player to entrepreneurial soloist.

#### **Week 2**

A classic case of disruption. The high-margin news media business is thrown for a loop, and its near-monopoly power has fallen apart. How has this happened? How is it responding?

Waldman, Steve, *The Information Needs of Communities*, Report to the FCC, Executive Summary and Chapters 1, 2, 4, 20, 21, 25, 35. May 2011.

Rosenstiel, Tom, and Mitchell, Amy, *The State of the News Media 2011*, Pew Research Center, 2011.

Edmonds, Rick, *Gannett Layoffs Are a Leading Indicator of a Permanently Shrinking Newspaper Business*, Poynter Institute, June 2011.

### **Week 3**

What does it take to be an entrepreneur in the media business in 2011? How are journalists faring in becoming more entrepreneurial?

O'Malia, Thomas, and Whistler, Margaret M., *The Entrepreneurial Journey*, Southwestern Publishing, 2008. (Chapters 1-3).

Jarvis, Jeff, *What Would Google Do?* Harper, 2009.

Sonderman, Jeff, *What Goggle+ Can Teach News Organizations about Innovation*, Poynter Institute, July 2011.

### **Week 4**

Starting with the basics: How to identify a market problem that needs solving. How to build an audience. How to assemble the building blocks of a business plan.

O'Malia, Thomas, and Whistler, Margaret M., *The Entrepreneurial Journey*, Southwestern Publishing, 2008. (Chapters 3-6).

Picard, Robert G., *Journalism, Value Creation and the Future of News Organizations*, Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, 2006. <http://tinyurl.com/bzvc4g>

Scocco, Daniel, *How to Find Advertisers for Your Website*, DailyBlogTips, Undated.

### **Week 5**

Television rolls on. The digital revolution has swamped the newspaper and magazine business, but television's outlook seems stronger. Why? Will it last?

Waldman, Steve, *The Information Needs of Communities*, Report to the FCC, Executive Summary and Chapters 3, 26, 27, 28. May 2011.

Cole, Jeff, *Digital Future Study*, Center for the Digital Future, June 2011.

Stelter, Brian, *Hulu, Billed as Tomorrow's TV, Looks Boxed In*, New York Times, July 23, 2001.

## **Week 6**

Metro daily's new-media counterpart: Case study of the Long Beach Post, a community news site.

Speaker: Jeffrey Klein.

Klein, Jeffrey, and Vasquez, Maria J., *Online Community News: A Case Study in Long Beach, California*, USC, 2011.

Klein, Jeffrey, *Fifteen Ways to Generate Revenue for a Community News Web Site*, USC, 2011.

Ellis, Paula, *New Site Engages Citizens in Making New York City More Livable*, Knight Foundation, July 2011.

Higginbotham, Keith, *Press-Telegram Newsroom Staff Slashed*, Long Beach Business Journal, June 2011.

Schaffer, Jan, *New Voices: What Works*, JLab, American University, October 2010.

## **Week 7**

The social media revolution. Did Mark Zuckerberg invent the quintessential and durable media business model? How social is revolutionizing the media business.0

*Social Media and Games Dominate Activity*, NielsenWire, Aug. 2, 2010.

Cole, Jeff, *2010 Digital Future Project*, USC Center for the Digital Future, Summer 2010.

*The People Formerly Known as the Audience*, The Economist, July 2011.

Elowitz, Ben, *The Web is Shrinking. Now What?* All Things Digital, June 2011.

## **Week 8**

Mobile grabs the spotlight. Will it also grab the revenue? The iPhone, the Android, the Blackberry move to center stage. The mobile revolution may just be getting started.

First group project presentation on a company's entrepreneurial profile.

Waldman, Steve, *The Information Needs of Communities*, Report to the FCC, Executive Summary and Chapters 5, 29. May 2011.

Sonderman Jeff, *How People Use Smartphones and Tablets...*, Poynter Institute, July 2011.

Schonfeld, Erick, *Mobile Advertising Is Shaping Up to be All Search*, Tech Crunch,

## **Week 9**

Feasibility Plan Workshop. Advanced discussion of the essential ingredients of a feasibility plan. Students will provide an early discussion of their projects and identify problems and challenges.

Second group project presentation on a company's entrepreneurial profile.

## **Week 10**

New practices, models and ethics of journalism. The rise of citizen journalism and advocacy journalism.

Third group project presentation on a company's entrepreneurial profile.

Rosen, Jay, *Progress in Pro-Am Journalism*, PressThink Blog, June 2011.

Rosen, Jay, *The View from Nowhere*, PressThink Blog, November 2010.

O'Connor, Rory, *Word of Mouse: Credibility, journalism and Emerging Social Media*, Shortensen Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/abzx32>

Jacobson, Mark, *Advocating for a Revolution in News*, Media Bloodhound, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/chjxxc>

Seelye, Katharine, *Citizen Journalism Project Gains a Voice in the Campaign*, The New York Times, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/bdwugm>

Perez-Pena, Richard, *News Sites Rethink Anonymous Online Comments*, New York Times, April 11, 2010

## **Week 11**

The non-profit emerges as an alternative. Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. (Plus ProPublica, Kaiser Health News, etc.)

Third group project presentation on a company's entrepreneurial profile.

Lewis, Charles, *The Growing Importance of Nonprofit Journalism*, Shorenstein Center, 2007. <http://tinyurl.com/cqfpgq>

Westphal, David, *A Start-up Treads Where Big Media Retreat*, Online Journalism Review, 2009. <http://tinyurl.com/bs6e3u>

Waldman, Steve, *The Information Needs of Communities*, Report to the FCC, Executive Summary and Chapters 6-19, 22, 23, 30-32. May 2011.

Depp, Michael, *Innovation Key to Funding Nonprofit News*, NewsNet Check, July 2011.

## **Week 12**

The sprawling world of startups. The number of new-media startups has become overwhelming. New operations big and small are springing up every week. What's working? What's not? Is there a future for news?

Shirky, Clay, *Why We Need the New News Environment to be Chaotic*," Shirky blog, June 2011.

*State of the Blogosphere 2010*, Technorati, October 2010.

*Capturing Media Growth Dollars: The Redefiners*, Activate, Undated.

## **Week 13**

Old media that still works. Community newspapers, radio, ethnic media are faring better in the digital revolution? Why? Will it last?

Morgan, Dave, *Why Small-Town, Local Newspapers Will Outlast Many Webservices*, MediaPost Publications, July 2011.

McMahan, Ty, *Hearst Embraces Startups in Shift from Old Media to New*, Wall Street Journal, July 2011.

*A Little Local Difficulty*, The Economist, July 2011.

Wang, Jun, *Shrinking Newsrooms Cause Ethnic Media to Scramble*, New America Media, 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/cz6mmc>

## **Week 14**

Presentation of feasibility studies of new-media startups

**Week 15**

Presentation of feasibility studies of new-media startups

**Final**

Papers due for feasibility study of new-media startup.

**Disabilities Services:**

“Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.”

**Academic Integrity:**

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the campus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student’s expulsion from the school.