JOURNALISM

The Medill undergraduate journalism program offers students a variety of exclusive opportunities, including:

Journalism Residency (Domestic and Global)
In the Journalism Residency program, students immerse themselves in a media outlet in Chicago, across the country or around the world.

They report, write and produce content on multiple media platforms for companies that range from news outlets like CNN to public relations and marketing companies. A faculty mentor will work with students to ensure their time in the program results in development of your career.

Medill in San Francisco
At the intersection of media and technology lies the Bay Area Immersion Experience, a groundbreaking, quarter-long program that gives you the opportunity to learn from and contribute to San Francisco's booming entrepreneurial scene.

The program mixes journalism, engineering, design and innovation. Each winter quarter, 14 Medill and 14 McCormick School of Engineering Segal Design Institute students participate in the program.

Medill on the Hill
Events in Washington, D.C., drive much of the nation's news, and the Medill on the Hill program offers select students the rare opportunity to cover Congress, the White House, federal policy and U.S. politics from our Washington newsroom.

Students uncover news and engage in real-time deadline reporting, updating their stories throughout the day using Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and other social media tools before filing their final stories for the Medill on the Hill website. The most interesting and newsworthy stories are shared with Medill's professional media clients for publication in local newspapers, national outlets and trade publications throughout the country.

National security, the environment, business and technology, education, and health and science are among the beats students focus on during the three days of the week they spend reporting. On the remaining two days, students attend journalism and political science seminars, hearing from professional journalists and learning strategies to cover hot-button issues fairly and accurately.

Global opportunities
Medill offers students both quarter-long and short term opportunities to study and report from another part of the world. From weeklong trips sophomore year to places like Israel, Panama or London, to quarter-long opportunities in places like South Africa or Medill's campus in Qatar, Medill students can report from across the globe.

Program of Study

- Journalism Degree
  (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/journalism-media-integrated-marketing-communications/journalism/journalism-degree)

JOUR 190-BR Crossing Physical and Ideological Borders in Journalism (1 Unit) This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Kerner Report, a government prescription for increasing racial diversity in U.S. newsrooms. This course explores the health of journalism's inclusion rate through an examination how newsrooms have changed since 1968.

JOUR 201-1 Reporting & Writing (1 Unit) This course builds a strong foundation for all Medill classes to follow by introducing students to the essentials of accurate journalism necessary for any platform or storytelling format. This includes news judgment, news and information gathering (including sourcing, discovering and covering different kinds of news, interviewing techniques, practices of inclusion and sensitivity); constructing stories (including leads, story structure, using quotes, using data to tell a story, assessing information); editing and presentation (grammar, punctuation, AP style, voice, tone, clarity, brevity); avoiding libel and other legal pitfalls; and visual literacy and presentation.

JOUR 201-2 Multimedia Storytelling (1 Unit) This course continues on the strong foundation created in JOUR 201-1 and significantly expands the base of multi-platform tools needed for effective, relevant and engaging storytelling for specific audiences. Instructors will guide students in the continued development of reporting, interviewing, writing and researching with a more sophisticated audience understanding using text, audio, video and photos for print, broadcast and the Web. Prerequisite: JOUR 201-1.

JOUR 202-0 Philosophy of Modern Journalism (1 Unit) Ideational survival skills demanded by a fast-changing media industry and an increasingly discontinuous journalism profession. Development of an analytical framework based on theories of human behavior and media consumption as a means to understand new technologies, content opportunities, and audience relationship building.

JOUR 290-0 Building a Visual Brand (Non-Majors) (1 Unit) Introduction to visual communications in print and digital formats and the fundamental skills of design. Visual thinking, composition, color, and typography. In-class presentation and evaluation of design solutions. Lectures, demonstrations, and at least one client-based project.

JOUR 291-0 Podcasting (1 Unit) TBD.

JOUR 301-0 Journalism in Practice (1 Unit) Practice of reporting, editing, and storytelling skills through topical writing and research assignments. Learning to develop diverse sources and incorporate audio, visual, and multimedia elements for news, magazine, and other audiences. Readings, discussion, and experiential opportunities. Prerequisites: JOUR 201-1, JOUR 201-2 and Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 301-1 Journalism in Practice (0.5 Unit) Prerequisites: JOUR 201-1, JOUR 201-2 and Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 302-0 Media History: Power, Protest and Passion (1 Unit) Media history’s influence today’s world: Who has had the power to tell the stories that shape people’s lives? Who has consumed or been affected by those stories? Whose stories have been neglected or distorted? Special attention on journalists who have challenged governments and other powerful institutions; the changing media landscape in the digital age. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 310-0 Media Presentation: News (1 Unit) Essentials of newspaper editing and online production, including headlines, page layout and design, photo editing, information graphics, and appropriate electronic tools. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 311-0 Media Presentation: Magazine (1 Unit) Fundamentals of editing magazine copy and graphics, with emphasis on precision, style, and structure for print and online products. Provides an overview of the magazine industry—both traditional and interactive—and the role of magazines in society. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 312-0 Media Presentation: Video Producing for Broadcast & the Web (1 Unit) Writing and producing broadcasts for television, the web,
and alternative digital platforms, using the appropriate computer and editing equipment, news wires, and video feeds. Emphasis on the editorial decision-making process. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 319-0 Media Innovation and Chicago’s Start-Up Culture (1 Unit) Since the first days of the Internet, Chicago has been home to fascinating startup businesses at the intersection of media and technology. In this course, students will study the pros and cons of locating an innovative new business in the Chicago area; examine products and services that are being built and tested here today; analyze the choices that are being made by media companies, tech entrepreneurs, and investors; and observe how the general public learns about these businesses. Course work includes readings, lectures by faculty and guest speakers, several field trips with associated reporting, and a final team project.

JOUR 320-0 Storytelling: Interactive News (1 Unit) Storytelling: Interactive News explores how storytelling changes across various platforms—and how it must change when interactivity causes narrative to be user-defined. This course builds on the foundations of audio, photo, and video and adds interactivity to the mix, enabling students to create and build dynamic, interactive narratives for news and feature reporting. Students will split their time between reporting, multimedia editing, and learning open-web technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript). Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 321-0 Storytelling: Magazine & Feature Writing (1 Unit) The craft of magazine and feature writing, with emphasis on character, scene and theme development, story architecture, voice, alternative story forms, in-depth reporting, public service journalism, and marketing ideas for articles. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 322-0 Storytelling: Video Reporting, Shooting, & Editing (1 Unit) The craft of audio-video storytelling for television and the web, including practice in field reporting and producing packages ranging from one-to-three-minute television news pieces to longer alternative audio-video formats for the web and other digital platforms. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 331-0 Chicago Speaks: Listening for Power and Place (1 Unit) Exploration of Chicago’s diverse racial and ethnic makeup through oral history and storytelling techniques that engage students with neighborhood residents and stakeholders. May fulfill diversity curricular requirements. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 332-0 Coverage of Gender and Sexual Minorities (1 Unit) Examination of social science research on LGBT communities and translating it for specialized and general audiences. Topics include research aims and limitations; reporting on underrepresented groups; finding fresh angles and credible sources; contextualizing stories of local, national, and international reach. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 333-0 Bilingual Reporting (1 Unit) This will be a bilingual course that will explore the history, current state and future of the English, Spanish and bilingual media that seek to reach the growing Latino audience. Students will immerse themselves in Chicago’s vibrant and diverse Latino community, and write and produce multimedia stories and communications in Spanish and English. This course is designed to empower students to understand and tell the stories of Latin Americans in the United States, as well as in Latin America, and reach these important audiences in the languages that they use daily. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 340-0 Innovation and News in Technology (1 Unit) Students interested in journalism or computer science work together to conceive and build new kinds of tools and technology for distributing and consuming news and information. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 341-0 Journalism in a Networked World (1 Unit) Network science behind today’s media workings. How people find and share content on the web. Practical skills in using web analytics tools, search engine optimization techniques, and social media strategies. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 342-1 Knight Lab (1 Unit) By application only.

JOUR 343-0 The Googlization of America (1 Unit) This will be a bilingual course that will explore the history, current state and future of the English, Spanish and bilingual media that seek to reach the growing Latino audience. Students will immerse themselves in Chicago’s vibrant and diverse Latino community, and write and produce multimedia stories and communications in Spanish and English. This course is designed to empower students to understand and tell the stories of Latin Americans in the United States, as well as in Latin America, and reach these important audiences in the languages that they use daily. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 344-0 Advanced Interactive Storytelling & Design (1 Unit) Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 345-SA Journalism Residency: Argentina (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 346-SA Journalism Residency: Argentina (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 347-0 Journalism Residency (1-2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 348-0 Journalism Residency (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 350-0 National Security (1 Unit) Relationship between the media and the military, especially since 9/11, and impact on public opinion. Topics include field reporting, ethics of reporting classified material, and issues facing the military. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 351-0 Civil Liberties and National Security (1 Unit) National Security Journalism Initiative-sponsored seminar on civil liberties in the post-9/11 world. Government access to personal information; balance between privacy and national security.

JOUR 352-0 Politics, Media and The Republic (1 Unit) This seminar examines the most challenging period for American political journalism since Watergate and the Vietnam War. Few in the news media recognized the political forces that led to Donald Trump’s election and energized Republican efforts to reshape the national landscape. At a time when facts themselves often seem up for grabs, the new president labeled the press an “enemy of the American people” and dismissed unfavorable reporting as “fake news.” Expect to go beyond the news of the day to develop your own understandings of how the country reached this point, what role journalism plays and what happens next as Trump fights for his agenda, progressive Democrats resist and the 2018 midterm campaign gets underway.

JOUR 353-0 Dilemmas of American Power (1 Unit) It isn’t easy being a superpower. For the past 50 years, U.S. policymakers have struggled to define America’s role in an ever more complex world where threats multiply and challenges morph and endure. The period beginning with the Vietnam War traces an arc that reaches from Soviet nuclear arsenals to Islamic suicide bombers, from a fear of falling dominoes in Southeast Asia to hopes for a wave of democracy in the Middle East. And now the rise of right-wing populists in Europe, a newly activist Russia and the presidency of Donald Trump. This course uses an engaging set of examples and materials to chart one of the most intriguing stretches of
international engagement in U.S. history. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.

JOUR 354-0 Sports and Society (1 Unit) Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 355-SA Journalism Residency: Qatar (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 356-SA Journalism Residency: Qatar (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 357-0 Sports Commentary (1 Unit) The goal for each student in this course is to develop a distinctive voice that stands out from the cacophony of opinions in the sporting world, to create commentary that is informative, thought-provoking and entertaining and to adapt those messages for delivery across multiple media platforms: the written word, television, radio, podcasts and social media. Sports are more than just home runs and touchdowns. Collectively, they’re part of a $200 billion industry. And within this realm all of the elements of our society are displayed: heroism and failure, racial harmony and discrimination, drugs, religion and crime. That’s why it’s so important to be aware of and capable of weighing in on all current issues, not just the latest sports results. Students will learn to coalesce their observations, opinions and experiences into compelling arguments that reflect the essence of the sports column: "I'm right, and this is why."

JOUR 356-SA Journalism Residency: South Africa (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 365-SA Journalism Residency: South Africa (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 366-SA Journalism Residency: South Africa (2 Units) By application only.

JOUR 367-0 Native American Environmental Issues and the Media (1 Unit) Native American Environmental Issues and the Media introduces students to indigenous issues, such as treaty-based hunting, fishing, and gathering rights; air and water quality issues; mining; land-to-trust issues; and sacred sites. These issues have contributed to tension between Native and non-Native communities and have become the subject of news reports, in both mainstream and tribal media. We will focus on the media's role in covering these issues and how that coverage contributes to the formation of public opinion and public policy. Students will read and analyze newspaper and on-line news reports and view and critique broadcast news stories and documentaries about Native environmental topics.

JOUR 368-0 Documentary (1 Unit) Comprehensive overview of HD video production geared to short documentaries that tell human stories, with emphasis on character, conflict, drama, and surprise. Different documentary styles. How narrative structures are implemented. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 369-0 Audio Documentary (1 Unit) Different forms of audio documentary production for radio and web-based multimedia distribution. Emphasis on radio reporting techniques, including interviewing, writing to tape, compelling storytelling, and integration of sound and music. Teams produce 7-to 10-minute audio documentaries to be broadcast, quality permitting, on WBEZFM. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 370-0 Media Law & Ethics (1 Unit) The legal and ethical framework defining media freedoms and constraints in the United States, including copyright and trademark issues. Historical context and focus on the evolution of constitutional, statutory, judicial, and ethical standards. Prerequisite: sophomore standing. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing and JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 371-0 Journalism of Empathy (1 Unit) Exploration of writing and reporting about people and places neglected and misunderstood by mainstream America. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 372-0 International Journalism: South Africa (1 Unit) Introduction to South Africa, with a focus on the country’s newspapers, magazines, and broadcast outlets. Students compare and contrast various aspects of South African and US life—especially the history of the HIV/AIDS pandemic—and explore historical, political, and cultural connections between the two countries. Required for South Africa Journalism Residency. Prerequisites: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1 and junior standing.

JOUR 373-0 Investigative Journalism (2 Units) Students enrolled in this class, supported by the Medill Justice Project, investigate and report on cases of prisoners who may have been wrongfully convicted. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and by application.

JOUR 374-0 Investigative Reporting (1 Unit) Examines the methods and techniques of investigative reporting through hands-on practice—brainstorming, framing the reporting, digging through documents, analyzing numbers, tracking down sources, writing, and rewriting. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and by application.

JOUR 375-0 Literary Journalism (1 Unit) A survey of the work of several print and broadcast journalists to explore the intersection of journalism and literature; analysis of the relationships between form and content within the historical contexts in which pieces were produced. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 376-0 Media Design (1 Unit) Advanced tools of layout, typographic contrast, and color theory, including creating infographics, with a focus on current approaches to newspaper, magazine, web, and newsletter design. Prerequisite: JOUR 301-0 or JOUR 301-1.

JOUR 377-0 Data Analysis and Visualization (1 Unit) Static and interactive presentations of statistical data are transforming how readers experience the news. The best data journalism pieces engage readers by combining compelling narratives with interactive representations that make it easier to identify trends and make comparisons. Designing and assessing data representations for communication requires diverse skills, including knowing how to analyze and present data using available tools, being able to anticipate how readers will visually perceive and make inferences from data graphics, and recognizing where they may be prone to misinterpreting statistics. In this course, we will learn techniques and theory for analyzing, visualizing, and communicating structured data for journalism contexts. Students will be exposed to ideas and techniques from diverse fields like cognitive science, statistics, and perceptual psychology, and learn how to take an empirical approach to the design and evaluation of data representations like visualizations.

JOUR 378-0 Introduction to Photojournalism (1 Unit) Advanced skills and practice in telling stories with photographs, photo slide shows, photo galleries, and audio slideshows. Ethics as it applies to photojournalism. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 379-0 Connecting with Immigrant Communities (1 Unit) Multimedia reporting on immigrant experiences. Developing a forum for community-based personal narratives. Creating a social network across ethnic lines. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 380-0 Legal Reporting (1 Unit) Students gain in-depth knowledge of legal issues while covering and writing stories related to the courts and the law. Students are encouraged to take this course in conjunction with a non-Medill course complementing the subject matter. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 381-0 Business Reporting (1 Unit) Students gain in-depth knowledge of business and economic issues while covering and writing stories related to business. Students are encouraged to take this course in conjunction with a non-Medill course complementing the subject matter. Prerequisite: Medill sophomore standing.
JOUR 382-0 Environmental Reporting (1 Unit)  Students gain in-depth knowledge of environmental issues while covering and writing stories related to the environment. Students are encouraged to take this course in conjunction with a non-Medill course complementing the subject matter. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 383-0 Health and Science Reporting (1 Unit)  Health and Science Reporting teaches students both how to think about science writing and how to write about science and medicine. In this combination writing workshop and seminar we will read some of the best of the best science and health journalism; meet with expert scientists on campus; and meet the editors and writers from leading scientific journals and publications. Students will learn what makes good science writing, how to find sources, how to evaluate information and how to sort out science from pseudo-science. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing.

JOUR 384-0 Covering Washington, D.C. as a Mobile Journalist (2 Units)  Hands-on experience as a mobile journalist on a beat, producing up-to-the-minute political stories for the Medill on the Hill website. Focus on instant news gathering and multimedia reporting, especially for a young audience. Practice meeting deadlines and applying innovative storytelling skills. Prerequisite: By application only.

JOUR 388-0 Internship (0 Unit)  Student-initiated internships in journalism. Supervised by Medill Career Services. Prerequisites: Sophomore standing and consent of Medill Career Services.

JOUR 388-1 Undergraduate Research (0 Unit)  Student initiated research projects.

JOUR 390-0 Special Topics (1 Unit)  Specialized experimental courses offered from time to time by faculty. Topics may include journalism in a networked world and depth reporting using documents and databases. Prerequisites: Vary depending on the course.

JOUR 391-0 Special Topics (0.5 Unit)  Courses, such as Strategies for Career Success, offered for one-half of a quarter.

JOUR 391-1 Special Topics (0.5 Unit)

JOUR 391-2 Special Topics (0.5 Unit)  Special Topics.

JOUR 392-0 Washington D.C. Practicum (2 Units)  By application only.

JOUR 394-0 Politics and Presidential Elections (1 Unit)

JOUR 399-0 Undergraduate Independent Study (0.5-1 Unit)  Academic work sponsored and supervised by a faculty member working one-on-one with the student. By application.