

Newsroom Readiness Certificate: Course Details

This course is designed for use by newsrooms (professional and collegiate) to train interns or beginning staffers.

The course offers basics in five key areas:

1. Newsgathering
2. Interviewing
3. Ethics
4. Media law
5. Diversity

Poynter has identified these as gap areas that students might not yet have studied in the classroom or had experience with in student media.

This outline should help educators and editors to decide if this course is right for their staff before purchase.

Section 1: Newsgathering

This makes clear what news values are, what makes a story newsworthy, and how to go about gathering information to start to build your news story.

1. Building blocks of news and news values overview
2. The basics of beat reporting
 - a. Starting cold
 - b. Writing your first story
 - c. Finding sources

Section 2: Interviewing

This section centers on interviewing — the art of getting people to tell you their stories and give you information. You'll also hear from two nationally renowned journalists with their interview tips and techniques.

1. [The Interview](#)
 - a. Students take this entire course, which teaches how to be a better interviewer; examines how the kinds of questions you pose can stop or start an effective interview; the power of listening; and how to deal with a source who spills the beans and then says it's all off the record.
2. Excerpts from [Conducting Interviews that Matter](#) with Joshua Johnson
 - a. How do you push people to talk about what they don't want to talk about?
 - b. How much of yourself do you bring to your journalism?
 - c. How much do you deviate from prepared questions?
3. Excerpts from [The Art of the Interview](#) with Lane DeGregory
 - a. Make Your Move: How you approach people to set up an interview.
 - b. Actionable, practical tips to put people at ease

Section 3: Ethics

This section will help you make tough decisions on deadline. We'll explore modern journalism ethical theories and case studies.

1. Why ethics matters
2. Decision-making process: Doing ethics
 - a. Competence and confidence
 - b. Beyond the gut
 - c. Questions for ethical decision-making
3. Guiding principles
 - a. Seek the truth
 - b. Be transparent
 - c. Engage community
 - d. Ethics in practice
4. Case studies
 - a. Bullying and oversimplification (suicide coverage)
 - b. Streets of Despair (coverage of drug abuse)
 - c. Covering victims (when to show graphic photos)

Section 4: Law

This section should empower students with the fundamentals of media law, a firm grasp of which can help you succeed in journalism and keep you out of trouble when it's publication time.

1. Newsgathering: Legal issues at play when using technology, conducting interviews, collecting information, promising confidentiality and doing research.
 - a. Who collects news
 - b. Where it's gathered (public vs. semi public vs. private forums)
 - c. How it's gathered (audio/video, drones, records, polling places)
2. Defamation and Privacy
 - a. The basics
 - i. Falsity
 - ii. Injury to reputation
 - b. Who's defamed? (public person vs. private figure)
 - i. Defending against defamation (negligence and actual malice)
 - ii. Other defenses (fair report, neutral reporting privilege)
 - iii. Other safeguards
 - iv. Invasion of privacy
 1. Top four: **Publication** of **private facts** that are **embarrassing** or offensive and **not of legitimate** public concern
 - c. Consent
3. Copyright and fair use
 - a. Purpose of the law
 - b. Avoiding the copyright problem (public, creative commons)
 - c. Fair use terms and legal concepts

- d. Protecting online copyright (linking, screenshots)
- e. Social media and copyright
- f. Handling a claim
- g. Debunking Myths

Section 5: Race and Diversity

This section will help you understand the importance of diverse sources and give you some insight into how to find and incorporate them.

- 1. Awareness
 - a. Race/ethnicity quiz
 - b. Look at ethnicity
- 2. Resources