

Spring 2020

State of the News Industry Syllabus

Brant Houston

Week one – Overview: Where the news industry is now and how it got here

An overview of the decimation of the traditional news industry, the causes and the impact on local and regional news.

Week two – The News-Gazette

The News-Gazette as a microcosm of what has been happening to local news. How its demise mirrors what has happened nationally. After the bankruptcy and sale, what is left of the staff, and the impact on the community.

Week Three – Maintaining principles and standards during disruption

What are the principles of muckraking and watchdog journalism? When are journalists respected and why? A review of watchdog reporting that mattered over the years. How newsrooms lost respect. The rise of moral equivalency.

Week Four – The challenge of online media and propaganda

The challenge of the Web, social media and propaganda. How newsrooms did not adapt and now are adapting

Week Five – The evolution of news ownership and its impact

Ownership of the news. From families to corporations to raiders and hedge funds. How it changed and what it meant for news for communities

Week Six – Decline of broadcast news

The story of how entertainment won over news at the networks and how local TV became formulaic.

Week Seven – The rise of new kinds of newsrooms

The rise of digital newsrooms and nonprofit newsrooms. Reinventing news coverage, not just replacing it. Getting back into the community and getting news from the community.

Week Eight – The Future

What's next? Mobile news feeds, customized and not. Preserving the watchdog role of journalists. Ensuring independence. What business models may work.