MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM

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Welcome and Introduction

The faculty of the School of Journalism welcomes you to our Master of Arts degree program. We are among the top graduate programs in the nation. Our faculty of outstanding professionals and scholars has made important contributions in both the academic and media worlds. We are committed to doing all in our power to make your graduate program successful.

A successful graduate program requires students who are both committed to excellence in their work and knowledgeable about the requirements for the degree. This handbook is meant to help graduate students in the School of Journalism to know, understand and complete the requirements of their master’s degree program.

The information below complements university regulations. Students must meet all university as well as School of Journalism requirements. Students should also consult the following publications:

- Academic Programs Catalog
- Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities in “Spartan Life Student Handbook”
- MSU/Graduate Employees Union Contract (if applicable)
- Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships
- Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activity

Students are also encouraged to consult their assigned academic advisor and faculty on the Graduate Affairs Committee for advice and interpretation of the requirements and information in this handbook.

Special Programs

In addition to the regular master’s degree, the School of Journalism offers two special programs related to master’s-level work – the Linked Bachelor’s-Master’s program and the Journalism Graduate Certificate.

Linked Bachelor’s-Master’s Program in Journalism

The linked bachelor’s-master’s program allows undergraduates to use 9 credits of qualifying 400 level courses toward the 30 credits required for a master’s degree. No 400-level courses with a grade lower than 3.0 will count toward the master’s degree. Credit obtained from 400-level pass/fail courses and internships will not count toward the degree. Undergraduate students who apply to the linked program must have at least 86 credits and apply prior to their final semester as a journalism major.

Admission to the program requires the following:

- A minimum MSU cumulative grade-point average of 3.5
- A statement of goals for the master’s degree,
- A statement of the applicant’s background,
• Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores
• At least three letters of recommendation
• An approved program of study for the master’s degree at the time of admission.
• Applicants must have already completed JRN 108, 200, 203, 300, 400 and 430 with a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 in these courses.

Students interested in this program should contact the Journalism Graduate Studies Director Geri Alumit Zeldes.

Journalism – Graduate Certificate

The Graduate Certificate in Journalism is designed to help students understand the fundamental processes of gathering, organizing, presenting and disseminating news and information in various text and visual forms for different news media platforms. Students learn about the newest innovative media technology and develop an understanding of the influence and effects of media in society.

Admission

To be considered for admission into the Graduate Certificate in Journalism, applicants must have completed a bachelor’s degree. The Certificate can be earned by students who are enrolled in a graduate program at MSU or by students who take the credits through Life-Long Education. For information about applying, contact Nancy Ashley at ashleyn@msu.edu

Requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Journalism

Students must complete all of the following courses (9 credits):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JRN 800</td>
<td>Multiple Media Reporting I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRN 815</td>
<td>Media, Society and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRN 821</td>
<td>Social Media News and Information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Overview

Program Goals

The master’s degree program is designed to serve students who want scholarly training for an academic career and those students who want applied professional training for communications-related employment. The program, therefore, provides academic courses that stress research and skills courses that give practical training and experience. However, these two types of courses can be applicable to both approaches. Both scholars and professional journalists need an understanding of the best practices of journalism and the social and economic forces that shape the institution of journalism.

Role of Graduate Studies Director and Committee

The master’s degree program of the School of Journalism is administered by the Graduate Studies Director and Graduate Studies Committee; together they recommend graduate program policy and curriculum to the faculty. The Director of the School of Journalism designates
the Graduate Director who oversees the day-to-day operation of the program.

The Graduate Studies Director and Committee select students for admission into the program. The Committee assigns each accepted student a temporary advisor who consults with students, as they work toward their degree. The Graduate Studies Director and Committee informs students annually of the progress they have made toward their degree and approve student proposals and committees for theses and professional projects (see below).

**Core Requirements**

One course, JRN 815, Media, Society and Theory, in the School of Journalism is required for ALL students, with additional courses required for either the Plan A (research) and Plan B (professional). The core course is meant to help students develop a broad understanding of the process and effects of mass media in the nation and world.

**Overall Degree Requirements**

The program requires that students earn 30 credits in 400-level and 800-level courses. Master’s degree students may also satisfy the credit requirement with 900-level doctoral courses appropriate for their programs.

Students take a specified mix of 800- and 400-level courses in the master’s program. Eighteen of the 30 credits required for the master’s degree must be at the 800 level in courses offered in the School of Journalism. The four required courses in Plan A (with thesis) and the four required courses in Plan B (without thesis) count toward the 18 credits. The requirements are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Journalism

A minimum of 30 credits is required for the master’s degree in journalism in either Plan A or Plan B.

**Requirements for Plan A (with thesis)**

1. All of the following courses (13 to 15 credits):
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JRN 815</td>
<td>Media, Society and Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRN 825</td>
<td>Journalism History and Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM 803</td>
<td>Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRN 899</td>
<td>Master’s Thesis Research</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Complete 15 to 17 additional credits of elective course work approved by the program plan committee, faculty members that include the advisor and other faculty picked by the student and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. The additional credits may include a 9-credit transcriptable concentration in Environmental, Science, and Health Journalism; Scholastic Journalism; or International Journalism.

**Requirements for Plan B (without thesis)**

1. All of the following courses (12 credits):
JRN 800* Multiple Media Reporting I 3
JRN 801 Multiple Media Reporting II 3
JRN 815 Media, Society and Theory 3
JRN 816 Applied Research Methods in Journalism 3

*Journalism 800 may be waived for students with appropriate background.

2. Complete one of the following courses (3 credits):
   JRN 808 Journalism Education Visual Topics 3
   JRN 821 Social Media News and Information 3
   JRN 873 Environment, Science and Health Journalism Seminars 3
   JRN 875 Global Affairs Reporting 3

3. One of the following courses (3 credits)
   JRN 493 Journalism Professional Field Experience 3
   JRN 896 Journalism Professional Project 3

4. Complete 12 additional credits of elective course work approved by the program plan committee, faculty members that include the advisor and other faculty picked by the student and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee. The additional credits may include a 9-credit transcriptable concentration in Environmental, Science, and Health Journalism; Scholastic Journalism; or International Journalism.

Optional Concentrations
The following concentrations will fulfill elective requirements in either Plan A or Plan B.

Environmental, Science and Health Journalism
All of the following courses (9 credits):
   JRN 872 Environment, Science and Health Reporting Topics 3
   JRN 873 Environment, Science and Health Journalism Seminars 3
Any advisor approved environmental, science, health or risk course.

Journalism Education
All of the following courses (9 credits):
   JRN 808 Journalism Education Visual Topics 3
   JRN 809 Journalism Education Advising Topics 3
Any advisor approved education course.

International Journalism
Select 9 credits from the following:
   JRN 475 International News and Government Regional Dynamics 3
   JRN 875 Global Affairs Reporting 3
   JRN 887 Journalism Study Abroad Topics 6
Any advisor approved international course.

Courses taken at the 400 level also count for the program, as do courses at 400 and 800 levels in other departments. Students may petition the Graduate Affairs Committee for waiver
Options for Completing Program

Beyond specific course requirements, students choose the courses and degree-completion option that best fit their career goals. Students must choose an advisor and committee that approve the coursework.

Master’s degree students who seek teaching and/or research careers following their programs, or whose eventual goal is to earn a doctorate in preparation for university employment, ordinarily take a greater number of 800-level courses both within and outside the department that help them develop a specialization. These students ordinarily are advised to conclude their program with a “Plan A” master’s degree thesis demonstrating the capability to conduct research that contributes to our knowledge of the media-society relationship. A thesis helps to prepare students for actual scholarly research and provides them with a credential that will distinguish them when applying for doctoral programs.

Master’s degree students who seek professional careers following their programs or who seek to enhance the professional skills they already possess ordinarily take a greater number of skills courses that develop their capabilities and experiences in a range of media. These students may be advised to conclude their program with a “Plan B” professional project or internship that demonstrates advanced journalism skills. Students in both “Plan A” and “Plan B” options are urged to demonstrate professional commitment and achievement through internships and publication during their program.

Thesis/Project Options

Students who conclude the program with “Plan A” thesis or “Plan B” professional project options must follow department procedures (see Appendices 1 and 2) for obtaining approval and successfully completing their work. Students taking the thesis option (Plan A) must allocate four to six credits to the thesis, depending on the number needed to reach 30, and students selecting the professional project options (Plan B) must allocate three credits to the professional project. Students must be registered at the time of their thesis or professional project completion. These credits are in designated 800-level thesis or professional project “courses.”

Thesis/Project Advisor Selection

Faculty must supervise the work of students who select the “Plan A” thesis or “Plan B” professional project options. Faculty members who are in the tenure stream may serve as chairs of student thesis and full-time faculty may serve as chairs of project committees. Students who choose to complete their program with a thesis or professional project are advised solicit a faculty chair for the thesis or project committee as soon as possible. Once a faculty member agrees to serve as chair, the student must ask two other faculty members to join the committee in consultation with the committee chair.

The chair of the student’s committee will work with the student on the formation of an acceptable thesis (see Appendix 1) or project (see Appendix 2) proposal. In the event that a thesis or project committee chair cannot serve to the completion of the work, the student may ask one of the other committee members to act as chair. The student may also ask the Journalism Graduate Director to participate in finding a new chair for the committee.
The student’s thesis or project committee meets as a whole to review the proposal, suggest any amendment and give final committee approval. The proposal is then submitted to the Graduate Affairs Committee for final approval. The student may then begin the substantive work under the guidance of the thesis or project committee. When the work has been completed, it will be reviewed by the thesis or project committee to determine if it is acceptable.

**Formation of Thesis/Project Committee**

Thesis and project committees must consist of at least three faculty members but may include more. All full-time faculty members in the School of Journalism may serve as members of student thesis and professional project committees. One faculty member from outside the School of Journalism may also serve on a student’s thesis or professional project committee.

The committee membership must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate Affairs Committee. The thesis or project committee must meet at least twice with the student and committee chair. One meeting will be to consider approval for the student’s proposal for a thesis or project. The second meeting will be to review and consider approval for the completed work. Committees may meet more frequently as necessary or desirable to review a student’s progress toward thesis or project completion.

In the event that a thesis or project committee member cannot serve to the completion of the work, the student should consult with the committee chair in finding a replacement member.

**Thesis/Project Standards**

A master’s thesis and a professional project each must demonstrate excellence that both draws on the courses making up the program and displays the student’s original work. Obviously, each thesis or project will be unique, and the standards for evaluation of its merit will be specific to the goals set out in the approved proposal and the degree to which those goals have been met. In general, a thesis and project will also differ importantly in both focus of that goal and the audience for which they are relevant.

A thesis is ordinarily a more traditional, scholarly work that draws on previous research to define a problem that the thesis can address with new knowledge or insights. Most theses will focus on some aspect of the media-society relationship, attempting to describe that relationship and define influences on it. Consequently, a thesis is aimed at a scholarly audience attentive to research in the field for which the thesis is relevant. Therefore, the standards of evaluation applied to the thesis are those used to assess a work for a peer-reviewed, scholarly convention or publication. Students who plan to write a thesis are strongly encouraged to review the Graduate School’s formatting guidelines (msu.edu/etd) prior to beginning the research project.

A professional project similarly defines a problem, but one relating to social issues or developments that can be explored journalistically through the use of more advanced methods of news-gathering and dissemination. These methods may include research, the use of online databases and document searches, with the goal of interpretation and investigation. Dissemination may be through print, visual, digital or other means that demonstrate a student’s mastery of the chosen medium. Consequently, professional projects are aimed at a wide public audience. Therefore, the standards of evaluation applied to the professional project are those used in a medium to assess whether commitment should be made to disseminate a work because it could importantly influence a potentially wide audience.

**Thesis/Project Defense**
The graduate student will present the results of the thesis or project at a meeting open to the community. The thesis or project must be submitted to committee members at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A public announcement of the thesis or project meeting must similarly be made at least two weeks prior to the meeting. While members of the public may attend the meeting, they may not participate in the discussion or remain for the committee’s decision about the work.

In addition, the dean of the college or the director of the School may designate an “observer” to attend the thesis or project presentation. The observer will review the work, may participate in the discussion, and will report back to the dean or director. The observer, however, will have no part in the committee decision on the thesis or project.

The committee will meet privately following the presentation to decide to accept the work, to accept the work conditionally, or to reject the work. Work that is considered to be acceptable has met the stated goals set out in the thesis or project proposal. Work that is considered to be acceptable conditionally has failed to meet all the proposal goals, but adheres enough to proposal specifications so that the student can revise it successfully by following committee guidance. Unacceptable work has failed completely to adhere to stated proposal goals, and cannot be successfully revised absent major undertakings by the student to bring the work into line with the approved proposal.

The decision will be made by majority vote, with each committee member’s decision recorded. In the event that a majority cannot be obtained for one of the three options, the committee will meet again no later than two weeks later to continue its deliberations.

Should the committee pass the student’s thesis or project, the committee will designate the committee chair to oversee any minor or stylistic revisions before the work is finalized. If the committee gives the student’s work a conditional pass, the entire committee must review the revisions before a final decision is made on approval. If the committee rejects the work, the committee chair will provide reasons in writing within one week, along with options the student has to complete the program and/or challenge the decision. Once the committee approves the thesis, students must adhere to the Graduate School’s formatting guidelines, then submit the finished thesis to the Graduate School electronically. The website for submission is http://grad.msu.edu/etd/.

Program Timetable

The required core courses are offered annually. JRN 815 and JRN 800 are offered each fall, and JRN 801, JRN 816 and JRN 825 are offered each spring. COM 803 is offered every fall, spring and summer. **Specific course requirements, therefore, should be completed in the student’s first two semesters.**

Students can normally complete the program in three to four semesters. This will depend, however, on the number of courses taken each semester, and on the option selected to complete the program. Program duration also will depend on whether students take courses during summers.

For example, a “regular” student who takes three, 3-credit courses each semester in the academic year would complete the last three credits in the fourth semester. That student who takes four, 3-credit courses each semester in the academic year would complete the last six credits in the third semester in less than a year.

Policies on Academic Performance
Students in the master’s degree program in the School of Journalism are expected to maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average in all courses. Consistent with college policies, a student who obtains a grade of less than 3.0 in more than two courses will be dismissed.

Students are also expected to complete their degree programs in the five-year limit set by The Graduate School. A student who exceeds that time limit must apply for a program extension with the Graduate Studies Director of the School of Journalism. Examples of valid reasons for extending the program beyond five years include family or medical emergencies and extraordinary work or study opportunities that relate to the graduate program. The Graduate Studies Director provides a recommendation on program extension to the associate dean for graduate education in the college, who makes the final decision.

**Annual Evaluation**

The Graduate Affairs Director provides written evaluations annually to every student in the program. Official university transcripts and other information provided by the college and university are used as the basis for the evaluation. The evaluation addresses the number of credits completed toward the degree, the satisfaction of core and provisional course requirements, and the documentation needed for thesis or project options. In addition, the evaluation cautions the student in the event of substandard course performance or failure to make timely progress in the program. The evaluation also notes (and praises) outstanding performance and progress in the program, and calls to the student’s attention options available to complete the degree.

**File Access and Privacy**

Students may be granted access to their files. The student may bring to the attention of the committee any errors in the file or information not in the file at the time the evaluation was made. Letters documenting the error may be addressed to the Graduate Affairs Committee and will henceforth be placed in the student’s file. Recommendation letters that have explicitly mandated confidentiality will be removed from the file before it is examined by the student. In addition, any correspondence in the file concerning the student must be explicitly released to the student by the author(s) of those correspondences.

**Standards for Integrity**


These policies encompass cheating and plagiarism, as well as the expectation and demand that graduate students conduct themselves with respect and consideration for faculty and students in the program. Cheating, plagiarism and conduct that is dangerous to the health and safety of others are all criteria for dismissal from the program.

In addition, students must conform to all college and university policies relevant to privacy, confidentially and concern for harm in any work in the program involving animals, adult human subjects or children. Failure to follow these policies will result in immediate suspension
of the work, the rectification of any harm done, and the review and appropriate revision of the
student’s program. Such errors made in ignorance or good faith are not considered criteria for
the student’s removal from the program. However, willful neglect or violation of such policies
or repeated violations of such policies are considered criteria for removal from the program.

Students should familiarize themselves with the Graduate School’s guidelines for
Research and Scholarly Integrity at http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/. In addition,
MSU has provided access to "Ithenticate," the anti-plagiarism software that is available on
Desire 2 Learn (https://d2l.msu.edu/) as part of the "Turn-It-In" package. Ithenticate is set up
so that faculty, postdocs, and graduate students can check their manuscripts for unintentional
plagiarism before submitting them. Read more at: http://tech.msu.edu/ithenticate/

Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

All university and college policies on resolving conflicts with students are followed by
the School of Journalism. The university policy is detailed in Article 5, Adjudication of Cases
Involving Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, in the document Graduate Student
Rights and Responsibilities at Michigan State University, and can be found at
http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities/article-5-
adjudication-of-cases-involving-graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities. The School of
Journalism policy on graduate student grievance procedures was passed in 2011. The proce-
dures can be found in the Appendix.

In general, the School seeks to resolve disputes as quickly and directly as possible.
However, formal mechanisms can be created if a graduate student believes the informal resolu-
tion is impossible or undesirable.

Informal ways to correct grievances consist of conversations with faculty and/or staff
over the nature and source of the grievance. In addition, the graduate student may talk with
the director of the School of Journalism, with the chair of the graduate affairs committee and the
committee as a whole (if desirable). The student may also talk with the university ombudsman
in an attempt to resolve grievances. None of these options exclude any of the others.

If the student wishes a more formal hearing on grievances within the School of Journal-
ism, the following procedures should be followed:

1. A written request is made to the director of the School specifying the grievance by
the middle of the semester following the semester during which the alleged violation
occurred.
2. Within 10 days of receiving a written request for a grievance hearing, the director
will form a hearing board of tenure faculty and students and appoint a chair.
3. During the hearing, the committee will hear from all the parties involved and the
hearing will be taped.
4. A majority of the committee will determine the outcome, which will be that a viola-
tion of the complainant’s academic rights occurred or that no violation occurred. In
either case, the chair shall write a report that shall be sent to the parties involved, di-
rector, the dean of the College, the Ombudsman and the dean of the Graduate
School.
5. Either party to the grievance may appeal the decision of the J-School board to the
College of Communication Arts and Sciences Hearing Board in writing within 10
class days following notification of the J-School boards decision.
6. CAS College grievance procedures can be obtained from the college associate dean for graduate studies. The full J-School grievance procedure can be found in the Appendix.

Work Related Policies
Graduate students employed in teaching, research or other capacities in the School of Journalism are expected to perform their duties in accord with acceptable standards. This includes meeting all classes or attending all work hours required, handling the work professionally and competently, and providing adequate notice in the event that illness or emergency makes performance of duties impossible.

Teaching assistants are referred to the Graduate Employees Union website [http://geuatmsu.org/] and the current GEU contract [http://geuatmsu.org/geu-proposals/full-contract/] and to GSRR Article 4 [http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities/article-4-graduate-student-support] for work-related policies and details of their health care plan.

Appointments
Any half-time and quarter-time assistantships appointment offers are normally made in Spring or at the time that admission to the program is offered. Research and teaching assistantships are awarded based on merit and departmental research and teaching needs. They are renewable on a semester-by-semester basis depending upon performance, departmental needs, and the availability of funds.

The J-School director will obtain a written evaluation of the student’s assistantship each semester. When a student has the principal responsibility for teaching a course or section of a course, the director shall appoint one faculty member to supervise the teaching assistant each semester of the appointment. The faculty supervisor should visit the classroom at least once during the first semester the student teaches the course. Following the visit, a report should be compiled by the faculty visitor for discussion with the assistant. Whenever a student teaches a course, student evaluation forms are presented to the department chairperson at the end of the term. When a student assists a faculty member in teaching a course, separate written term-end reports by the faculty member should be prepared and discussed by the two.

If an assistantship involves research responsibilities, the student is evaluated by the supervising faculty member. Unacceptable performance can result in loss of a student’s assistantship. Students and departments should consult university guidelines for further information.

The University requires that departments notify their graduate assistants that their appointments either are or are not being renewed for the following semester. The student’s faculty supervisor provides a written evaluation each semester. Assistantships may be terminated at any time and pay reduced for gross negligence, such as failure to perform assigned duties or, for teaching assistants, any serious dereliction of the Code of Teaching Responsibility. Faculty supervisors may require students to keep time cards and/or maintain regular office hours, at their option.

Graduate students may be appointed to assistantships on a quarter-time, half-time, or three-quarter-time basis. Graduate assistants must be registered each semester in which they hold an assistantship. Graduate assistantships are available only to students who are actively pursuing graduate degree programs and who are making satisfactory progress toward their de-
degrees. The determination of what constitutes satisfactory progress is made by the Graduate Affairs Committee or by a student's guidance committee as appropriate. Failure to maintain minimum academic standing requires no committee action to determine if work is unsatisfactory.

Work Rules

**Minimum Work Hours:** Normally during a semester, the weekly hours of graduate assistant duties will average: quarter-time--10 hours/week; half-time--20 hours/week; three-quarter-time--30 hours/week

**Minimum Credit Registration:** for quarter-time, 6 credits; for half-time, 6 credits; for three-quarter-time, 3 credits

**Maximum Credit Registration:** for quarter-time, 16 credits; for half-time, 12 credits; for three-quarter-time, 8 credits

**Registration Standards:** No deviation from minimum registration is allowed except in summer sessions, when students must register for a minimum of three credits. Graduate assistants must be enrolled in graduate level courses unless the Graduate Affairs Committee has granted written permission otherwise. Visitor credits do not count toward the minimum. Any deviation from the maximum credit load rule must have the approval of the graduate affairs committee, the director of the school and dean of the college prior to registration for the semester in which additional hours are to be taken.

Terms of Appointment and Leave

Teaching and research assistants are expected to report for duty one week prior to the beginning of classes and to remain on duty until the day after final grades are submitted each semester. Sick leave requires documentation from a licensed physician and assistants are responsible for arranging, in advance, with their faculty supervisors for the completion of their duties while on sick leave. Permission for late arrival or early departure or for temporary leave must be obtained in writing, in advance, from the student’s faculty supervisor who will forward the request to the director for approval.

University Resources

The college and the School of Journalism have resources that can enrich the graduate student experience, and contribute to making that experience successful and enjoyable. A number of resources also are available for graduate students who are in need of counseling, skills training, and assistance with such issues as housing.

Students are advised of the existence of a number of school and college resources that may support their programs here. In the School of Journalism, these include the Michigan Interscholastic Press Association for those interested in secondary education careers, and the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism for those interested in environmental reporting and research.

In the college, the Comm Tech Lab (CTL) at MSU is a unique association of researchers studying new telecommunication and computer technologies. The Information Technologies & Services Laboratory is an instructional and research facility that supports the programs in the telephony area. The Quello Center conducts research and conferences on telecommunication matters. The Mind Lab conducts research on human computer interaction.
To fulfill the thesis requirements under Plan A, you must:

1. Meet with your academic advisor not later than the second semester of study to review possible thesis topics and thesis committee members.

2. File Form A-1 with graduate secretary after receiving approval from three faculty members to serve on thesis committee. Designate committee chair.

3. File Forms A-2 and A-3 with the graduate secretary upon receiving written approval of the thesis proposal from the thesis committee and final approval of the thesis for the thesis committee. Students may enroll in JRN 899 Thesis credits only after the Graduate Affairs Committee has approved the proposal.

A. Write a thesis proposal that includes:

1) a title page and a statement explaining the proposed study, its significance to the literature of journalism and/or mass media, the availability of primary and secondary research material and sources, and the proposed methods of the study.

2) an outline of the proposed study.

3) a brief explanation of your educational and/or professional background, showing how this background establishes competency for undertaking the proposed research.

4) a preliminary bibliography of research materials and sources dealing with the specific subject matter.

Note: The proposal should conform to the style outlined by the Graduate School http://grad.msu.edu/etd/. Allow two weeks for the committee to review the proposal.
B. Upon approval of thesis proposal (see Form A-2):

1) Conduct thesis research and write thesis under the supervision of your thesis director and Committee.

2) Submit copies of a draft of the thesis and an abstract to the committee members at least two weeks before the oral examination for comments and direction. The draft shall conform to the style outlined by the Graduate School [http://grad.msu.edu/etd/](http://grad.msu.edu/etd/).

3) Select a date, time and place for an oral examination acceptable to thesis committee members. Call the graduate secretary to schedule a room for the oral defense. **Note:** the oral examination deadline is prior to the seventh week of the semester in which you expect to graduate. Public notice shall be given of the defense.

4) Undergo an oral defense of your thesis. The thesis committee may approve or reject the thesis, or approve the thesis on condition that revision be made under the direction of the thesis director. (See Form A-3)

5) Meet the due dates and deadlines for the semester in which the degree is to be conferred. (See *Schedule of Courses* for the appropriate semester.)

6) Register during the semester in which thesis is defended. (You must minimally register for JRN 899.)

7) File an Application for Graduation Form with The Registrar’s Office no later than the fourth week of classes the semester before expected graduation date.

**NOTE:** The School of Journalism subscribes to the university, college and school guidelines on academic honesty as explained in this Handbook. Violation of these guidelines could result in dismissal from the program.

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 1

Form A-1

School of Journalism  
Michigan State University

Designation of Thesis Committee

Student: __________________________________________   Date: ______________

Examining Committee Requested by Student*

Proposed Chair:  __________________________________________  
Approved   __________________________________________  
Signature

Proposed 2nd Reader:  __________________________________________  
Approved   __________________________________________  
Signature

Proposed 3rd Reader:  __________________________________________  
Approved   __________________________________________  
Signature

Graduate Affairs Committee Approval

Chair __________________________________________  
Member __________________________________________  
Member __________________________________________  
Member __________________________________________

* Please attach abstract of research proposal

copies: student file
Appendix 1

Form A-2

School of Journalism
Michigan State University

Approval of Thesis Proposal

Name: _________________________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________

Working Title of Thesis:  _____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thesis Director: _________________________________

Approved  _________________________________

Signature

2nd reader  _________________________________

Approved  _________________________________

Signature

3rd reader  __________________________________

Approved  __________________________________

Signature

Proposed Starting Date:_______________________________

Proposed Completion Date:____________________________

copies:  student file

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 1

Form A-3

Michigan State University

Thesis Defense Report

Student’s name: ______________________________________________

Thesis title: ______________________________________________

______________________________________________________

______________________________________________________

Guidance Committee Signatures:

________________________________________
Thesis Director

_______________________________________
2nd Reader

_______________________________________
3rd Reader

_______________        Pass   ____         Provisional Pass ____   Fail ____
Date of thesis defense

If provisional pass, indicate conditions: ______________________________

______________________________

_______________        Pass   ____   Provisional Pass ____   Fail ____
Date of second defense

Signature of Thesis Director

copies: thesis director
       student file

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 2

School of Journalism
Michigan State University

Instructions
Plan B -- Project Option

To fulfill the project requirements under Plan B, you must:

1. Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor no later than the second semester, to review possible project topics and committee members.

2. File Form B-1 with graduate secretary after receiving acceptance from three faculty members to serve on your project committee. Designate a committee chair.

3. File Forms B-2 and B-3 with the graduate secretary upon receiving signed approval of the project proposal by your committee and final approval of the project from the Project Committee. Students may enroll in JRN 896 project credits, only after the committee has approved the proposal.

A. Write a project proposal that includes:

1) a title page and a statement explaining the proposed project, its significance to a definable public, the method that will be used and the media through which the work would be disseminated.

2) an outline of the proposed project.

3) a brief explanation of your educational and/or professional background, showing how this background establishes competency for undertaking the proposed project.

4) a preliminary bibliography of research materials and sources dealing with the specific subject matter.

Note: The proposal should conform to the style outlined by the Graduate School http://grad.msu.edu/etd/. Allow two weeks for the committee to review the proposal.

B. Upon approval of project proposal.
1) Conduct project research and write project under the supervision of your project director and committee.

2) Submit copies of a draft of the project and an abstract to the committee members at least two weeks before the oral examination for comments and direction. The draft shall conform to the style outlined by the Graduate School http://grad.msu.edu/etd/.

3) Select a date and time acceptable to the project committee members, for an oral examination. Call the graduate secretary to schedule a room for the oral defense. Note: the oral examination deadline is prior to the last class week of the semester in which you expect to graduate. Public notice shall also be given of the defense.

4) Undergo an oral defense of your project. The project committee may approve or reject the project, or approve the project on condition that revision be made under the direction of the project director. (See Form B-3)

5) Meet the due dates and deadlines for the semester in which the degree is to be conferred. (See Schedule of Courses for the appropriate semester.)

6) Register during the semester in which project is defended. (You must minimally register for one credit of JRN 896.)

7) File an Application for Graduation Form with The Registrar’s Office no later than the fourth week of classes the semester before expected graduation date.

NOTE: The School of Journalism subscribes to the university, college and school guidelines on academic honesty as explained in this Handbook. Violation of these guidelines could result in dismissal from the program.

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 2
Form B-1

School of Journalism
Michigan State University

Designation of Project Committee

Student: _____________________________ Date: ______________

Examining Committee Requested by Student*

Proposed Chair: __________________________________________
Approved __________________________________________
Signature

Proposed 2nd Reader: __________________________________________
Approved __________________________________________
Signature

Proposed 3rd Reader: __________________________________________
Approved __________________________________________
Signature

Graduate Affairs Committee Approval

Chair __________________________________________
Member __________________________________________
Member __________________________________________
Member __________________________________________

* Please attach abstract of project proposal for Graduate Committee’s review.

copies: student file

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 2

Form B-2

School of Journalism
Michigan State University

Approval of Project Proposal

Name: _________________________________________   Date: __________________

Working Title of Project:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Project Director: _________________________________

Approved  _________________________________
Signature

2nd reader  _________________________________

Approved  _________________________________
Signature

3rd reader  _________________________________

Approved  _________________________________
Signature

Proposed Starting Date: ____________________________________________________

Proposed Completion Date: ________________________________________________

copies:   student file

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 2

Form B-3

School of Journalism
Michigan State University

Project Defense Report

Student’s name: ________________________________________________________

Project title: ________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Guidance Committee Signatures: ________________________________________

Project Director

_______________________________________
2nd Reader

_______________________________________
3rd Reader

__________    Pass ____    Provisional Pass ____    Fail ____
Date of project defense

If provisional pass, indicate conditions: ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

__________    Pass ____    Provisional Pass ____    Fail ____
Date of second defense

_____________________________________
Signature of Project Director

copies:  project director
         student file

Revised 8/2012
Appendix 3

Grievance Procedures
for Undergraduate and Graduate Students
in the
School of Journalism
College of Communication Arts & Sciences
Michigan State University

The “Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University” (AFR) and the “Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities at Michigan State University” (GSRR) documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures for resolving allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the AFR and the GSRR, the School of Journalism, College of Communication Arts & Sciences, has established the following procedures for adjudicating student academic grievances, including non-disciplinary hearings regarding allegations of academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards and falsification of academic records when a failing grade has been issued. [1]

I. JURISDICTION OF THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM HEARING BOARD:

A. The School of Journalism (J-School) Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing board for students seeking redress for grievances that originate in this school, including alleged violations of academic and professional rights set down in the AFR or the GSRR. The hearing board also serves as the initial venue for students to contest allegations of academic misconduct. (See AFR 2.4.2, 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2; GSRR 5.3.2, 5.3.6, 5.3.6.1 and 5.3.6.2)

B. A student who believes his/her rights have been violated shall first attempt to resolve the dispute in an informal discussion with the appropriate party. If after this discussion the dispute remains unresolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student should meet with the Program coordinator (if there is one), then J-School Director and/or the University Ombudsman to seek a resolution. If after this discussion the dispute remains unresolved to the student’s satisfaction, the student may submit a written request for an academic grievance hearing to the J-School Director. The letter must explain the alleged violation in sufficient detail to justify a hearing, the names of the individual(s) against whom the grievance is lodged and the proposed remedy the student seeks from the J-School Director. Normally, the student must submit the request for a grievance hearing by the middle of the semester following the semester in which the alleged violation occurred. (See AFR 2.4.2, 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2; GSRR 5.3.2, 5.3.6, 5.3.6.1 and 5.3.6.2)
II. COMPOSITION OF J-SCHOOL HEARING BOARD:

A. In response to a student request for an academic grievance hearing, the School shall constitute a Hearing Board of tenure-stream Journalism faculty and student majors. Faculty names will be drawn from a pool of tenure-stream faculty with Journalism as their home department. For undergraduate hearings, undergraduate student names will be drawn from a pool of student leaders of JRN student organizations. For graduate hearings, graduate student names will be drawn from a pool of students who are active at the same degree level as the student hearing. Both faculty and student committee members shall not have a conflict of interest. (See AFR 6.I.B, C, and D; GSRR 5.1.2, 5.1.3 and 5.1.6. AFR 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.1)

The Chair of the Hearing board will be the faculty member with rank.

All members of the Hearing Board shall vote, except the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall vote only in the event of a tie.

Prior to each academic grievance hearing, all members of the Hearing Board will have received instructions about these procedures and the applicable sections of the AFT and GSRR (See AFR 7.IV.C; GSRR 5.1.3).

B. For hearings involving undergraduate students, the Hearing Board shall include in addition to the Chair of the Board, two faculty members and two undergraduate majors.

For hearings involving graduate students, the Hearing Board shall include the Director of the School, or a designee, and an equal number of faculty and graduate students. Members shall serve a one-calendar year term.

C. No one involved in the case may serve on the Hearing Board. (See AFR 4.2.7; GSRR 5.1.2 and 5.1.7. See also reference to alternates in footnote 3.)

III. REFERRAL TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM HEARING BOARD:

A. Upon receipt of a written request for a grievance hearing from an undergraduate student, the Director of the J-School shall promptly form a Hearing Board. The Director will forward the complaint to the Hearing Board members, the respondent and complainant. (If the request is received between May 16-August 15, the hearing will not occur until early in the fall term. This will be considered “promptly” for purposes of these procedures.) (See AFR 2.4.2.3.)

Upon receipt of a written request for a grievance hearing from a graduate student, the Director of the J-School shall promptly form a Hearing Board. The Director will forward the grievance to the Hearing Board members, the respondent and complainant within 10 class days. (See GSRR 5.4.3.) [4]
In limited situations, the J-School Director, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for a hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See AFR 2.4.2.2, and 2.4.6; GSRR 5.3.6.2.)

B. The Chair of the J-School Hearing Board shall then promptly convene a meeting of the Hearing Board to review the request for a grievance hearing for jurisdiction and judicial merit. The panel may request a written response from the respondent. After considering all submitted information, the Hearing Board may:

1. Decide that sufficient reasons for a hearing do not exist and dismiss the grievance, with a written explanation provided to all appropriate parties. The student may appeal this decision to the College Hearing Board.

2. Decide that sufficient reasons for a hearing exist and accept the request, in full or in part, and proceed to schedule a hearing.

3. Invite the parties to meet with the Hearing Board for an informal discussion of the issues. Such a discussion shall not preclude a later hearing.

(See AFR 4.4.2; GSRR 5.4.6.)

C. If the J-School Hearing Board decides to schedule a grievance hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date with the parties and schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board in the event that additional deliberations on the findings become necessary.

At least five class days before a scheduled hearing involving an undergraduate student, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of (1) the time, date and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) the names of the Hearing Board members, including alternates; (4) the names of the witnesses and counsel, if any; and (5) the right to challenge Hearing Board members because of a conflict of interest. (See AFR 4.2.7; 4.4.3.)

At least ten class days before a scheduled hearing involving a graduate student, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of (1) the time, date and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) the names of the Hearing Board members, including alternates; and (4) the names of the witnesses and advisors, if any. Witnesses cannot be compelled to participate. (See GSRR 5.4.7.) This notification should also remind the parties to the grievance of their right to challenge the membership of the Hearing Board, both for and without cause, under the rules prescribed in GSRR 5.1.7.
At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case and must inform the parties of the time limit in the written notification of the hearing.

D. Should the respondent fail to acknowledge the notice of a hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone or proceed with the hearing. (See AFR 4.4.5.)

If the complainant fails to appear at the hearing, the J-School Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case. (See AFR 4.4.7a; GSRR 5.4.9a.)

If the respondent fails to appear at the hearing, the J-School Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or hear the case in the respondent’s absence. (See AFR 4.4.7b; GSRR 5.4.9b.)

In unusual circumstances, the J-School Hearing Board may accept written statements from either party to a hearing in lieu of a personal appearance. These written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least two class days before the scheduled hearing. (See AFR 4.4.7c; GSRR 5.4.9c.)

Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The J-School Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See AFR 4.4.6; GSRR 5.4.8.)

Members of the J-School Hearing Board must not talk about the hearing with either party before the scheduled hearing.

IV. J-SCHOOL GRIEVANCE HEARING PROCEDURES:

A. General procedures:

1. The Chair of the J-School Hearing Board shall convene the hearing at the designated time, date and place. The Chair will ensure that a collegial atmosphere prevails. (See AFR 2.4.4, 2.4.4.2; GSRR 5.4.10.) During the hearing, parties to a grievance shall have an opportunity to state their cases, present evidence, designate witnesses, ask questions and present a rebuttal. (See AFR 2.4.4; GSRR 5.4.10.1.) The procedures may be taped.

2. To protect the confidentiality of the information, the Chair of the J-School Hearing Board may limit attendance at the hearing to the Hearing Board members, the complainant, the respondent, the witnesses for either party, if any, and the counsel/advisor for each party, if any. (See AFR 4.2.3 and 8.1.6; GSRR 8.1.4.)

3. All witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. (Parties are not considered witnesses for purposes of this section.) Witnesses must confine their testimony to their own independent recollection and may not speak for others. The J-School Hearing Board may
limit the number of witnesses. Unless otherwise approved by the Hearing Board, counsel/advisors and witnesses shall be limited to members of the MSU community (faculty, students or staff). See AFR 4.3.5 and 8.1.6; GSRR 5.4.10 and 8.1.4.)

4. Involvement of counsel/advisor normally should not be required. Each party must present her/his own case, and counsel/advisors may have a voice in the hearing. (See AFR 2.4.4.2, 4.3.5 and 4.4.8d)

5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the J-School Hearing Board shall recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have the right to speak without interruption. Each party has the right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. The Chair of the J-School Hearing Board will enforce any announced time limits on each party to present its case and, if necessary, extend equal time to each party.

B. Hearing procedures:

1. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the J-School Hearing Board: The Chair introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and counsel/advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including time restraints, if any, for presentations by each party and witnesses. The Chair explains that the burden of proof rests with the complainant, with the exception of cases involving allegations of academic dishonesty, in which case the instructor bears the burden of proof, which must be met by a “preponderance of the evidence.” If the proceedings are to be taped, the Chair must inform the parties. (See AFR 2.4.9 and 8.1.16; GSRR 5.5.1 and 8.1.16.)

2. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant’s case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent’s counsel/advisor, if any.

3. Presentation by the Complainant’s Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant’s witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement relevant to the complainant’s case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent’s counselor/advisor, if any.

4. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent’s case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant and the complainant’s counsel/advisor, if any.
5. **Presentation by the Respondent’s Witnesses:** The Chair recognizes the respondent’s witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement relevant to the respondent’s case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant and the complainant’s counsel/advisor, if any.

6. **Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant:** The complainant may refute statements by the respondent and the respondent's witnesses and counsel/advisor, if any, and present a summary statement.

7. **Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent:** The respondent may refute statements by the complainant and the complainant’s witnesses and counsel/advisor, if any, and present a summary statement.

8. **Final Questions by the Hearing Board:** The Hearing Board may ask questions of all parties to the grievance.

C. **Deliberations by the J-School Hearing Board:** After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair will excuse all parties to the grievance and meet in executive session to determine its findings. When possible, deliberations should take place immediately following the hearing. If the J-School Hearing Board is unable to complete its deliberations and reach a decision at the meeting, the Hearing Board should reconvene at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See III. C. above.)

D. **Outcome:** If a majority of the J-School Hearing Board finds, based on a “preponderance of the evidence,” that a violation of the complainant’s academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall direct the Director of the J-School to implement an appropriate remedy and may recommend a remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Director and the Dean. (See AFR 2.4.5; GSRR 5.4.11.)

   In cases in which the J-School Hearing Board is asked to resolve an allegation of academic dishonesty and finds for the student, the Hearing Board may recommend to the Director that the penalty grade be removed, the written record of the allegation, if any, be removed from the student’s records and a good faith evaluation of the student’s academic performance in the course take place. If the J-School Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and any written records of the allegation may remain on file. (See AFR 8.1.15 and GSRR 8.1.15.)

E. **Written Report:** The Chair of the J-School Hearing Board shall promptly prepare a written report of the Hearing Board’s findings, including redress for the complainant, if applicable. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and
the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board’s decision. (See AFR 2.4.5; GSRR 5.4.11.)

The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within ten class days following notice of a decision. (See AFR 2.4.7, 2.4.7.2, 2.4.7.3; GSRR 5.4.12 through 5.4.12.3.) The Chair shall forward copies to the parties involved, the Director of the J-School, the Dean of the College, the Ombudsman and, in cases involving graduate students, the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report. (See AFR 2.4.5; GSRR 5.4.11.)

V. APPEALS:

A. Either party to a grievance may appeal the decision of the J-School Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board. The request for a hearing on appeal must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Dean of the College within ten class days following notification of the J-School Hearing Board’s decision. While under appeal, the decision of the initial Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See AFR 2.4.7 and 2.4.7.3; GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.) [5]

B. A request for an appeal must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial J-School Hearing Board had failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the initial J-School Hearing Board were not supported by a “preponderance of the evidence.” The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally is inappropriate. (See AFR 2.4.7.2 and 8.1.16; GSRR 5.4.12.1 through 5.4.12.2.)

VI. RECONSIDERATION:

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the J-School Hearing Board reconsider the case within 60 days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the J-School Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See AFR 4.2.6; GSRR 5.4.13.)

Developed October 2003; modified May 20, 2005.
Approved by the School of Journalism faculty August 24, 2006. Based on the MSU Ombudsman’s Model Grievance Procedures.
Revised and Approved May 16, 2012.

Appendix 4/
J-SCHOOL STUDENT CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARDS

Preamble
The faculty of the Michigan State University School of Journalism hold to the highest professional standards of journalism—truth, fairness and accuracy. For this reason and for the compelling needs of the profession, the School expects its students to adhere to these same standards. Accordingly, the faculty of the School developed this “Code of Ethics and Standards,” composed of fundamental journalistic best practices as well as a description of potential consequences for serious Code violations. This Code applies to students in the School of Journalism while engaged in activities related to the mission, values, processes and functions of the School, including participation in journalism courses, J-School-sponsored organizations and external journalism assignments.

As you progress through the J-School program, you will learn the complexities of ethical behavior; for example, some conduct is legally permissible but ethically wrong. We encourage you to ask us about any of the following practices. By the time you graduate, it is the faculty’s expectation that you will have developed a sound foundation to prepare you for the ethical, moral and legal challenges of the profession. This Code is intended to serve as a guide and a foundation for you as a working journalist.

This document will be available on the School of Journalism website. Undergraduate students will be introduced to and will review this code in JRN 108: The World of Media and JRN 200: Writing and Reporting News I. Journalism instructors will also refer to this code in their syllabi and students agree they have read and understood this code before taking an internship for credit. Graduate students will be given a copy of the code upon acceptance to the master’s or Ph.D. programs.
BEST PRACTICES IN JOURNALISM

REPORTERS and PERSONAL CONDUCT

1. ADVOCACY AND OPINION Clearly distinguish advocacy from news reporting by labeling articles that include your point of view as analysis and/or commentary.

2. ATTRIBUTION Attribute all material obtained from sources in stories, columns, editorials, photos and illustrations.

3. AVOIDING BIAS Keep an open mind. Do not begin your reporting knowing what you want to come out of it.

4. COURSEWORK HONESTY The School strongly discourages submitting the same or similar work for credit in two or more courses. In a case where you are reporting on the same story for two different classes using two different media, you must seek prior approval from the instructor(s) involved.

5. FACT CHECKING Always double and triple check facts, spelling, addresses and titles for accuracy.

6. GRATUITIES Do not accept “freebies”—gifts or favors. Coffee at a press conference is not a freebie. A lunch at a speech is a freebie. If freebies are sent to you, donate them to a charity.

7. PERMISSION In public places or events such as a park, press conference, rally or protest, it is not necessary to obtain permission from a source to photograph, tape record or videotape. However, in private places, like residence hall rooms, homes, funerals and churches, you should obtain permission to do so. However, if either a tape recorder or a camera is clearly visible and operating, no notification is required. Also, do not use cell phones equipped with cameras to take “undercover” shots, but use them for breaking news photos of newsworthy events you witness.

REPORTERS and THEIR SOURCES

8. ACCURATE QUOTES When using indirect quotes or paraphrasing, strive to represent the source’s words and meaning accurately. Use a tape recorder or read the quotes back to the source to ensure accuracy. When using direct quotes, you must quote the source accurately.

9. APPROPRIATE SOURCES Avoid using classmates, friends, roommates, family members, etc., as sources for stories. If you are unable to avoid such an interview, you must obtain your instructor’s approval and, whenever possible, be clear when you have used a friend or family member as a source and identify them as such.

10. DIVERSITY Seek diverse sources. Diversity considerations include race, ethnicity, class, physical ability, geography, gender, religion, political orientation, sexual orientation, social status, age, educational background and economic standing.

11. IDENTIFICATION Identify yourself clearly to sources. You should identify yourself as a student reporting or completing an assignment for class, an MSU project, publication or outlet.

12. MULTIPLE SOURCES Do not use single source stories. Always use information from multiple sources from multiple sides of a story. Always make several attempts to contact all key sources, especially those who might come across in a bad light in the story, for the chance to offer their side.

Continued on the next page
13. NAMING SOURCES Using an unnamed source requires constant consultation with editors. Such sources should be included only when there is no other way to obtain the information and the information is vital to the story.

14. OFF THE RECORD Make every effort to find someone who will go “on the record” with the information. If you agree to go “off the record,” you must respect confidences. (Students should be familiar with the meaning of terms such as “off the record” and “background information,” as defined in these guidelines.)*

15. RESPECT Be respectful when seeking and using interviews or photographs.

16. NEWS RELEASES Although it is a news release (printed, video, digital, etc.), students/reporters cannot cut and paste a news release into their stories—they must rewrite the material. Their work must be their own—otherwise, they are passing off someone else’s work as their work. Information, including that from a news release, must be clearly attributed. News releases should be submitted as a news source.

17. ETIQUETTE A word of advice… sources often ignore emails when the writer fails to adhere to basic email etiquette. When you contact a source, or your instructor, you must follow a protocol before pressing the SEND button:

- Provide an appropriate heading in the SUBJECT line of the email that can be keyworded easily later—e.g., “Jane Smith’s Grade” or “Coal Use Question”

- Begin with a courtesy greeting, called a SALUTATION. Use a title and last name. Unless your recipient has already given you permission to use their first name or signs off with a first name in their emails to you, your salutation should be formal with correct punctuation—e.g., “Dear Dr. Ogundimu,” or “Hello, Professor Ogundimu:” or “Professor Ogundimu.”

- Say why you are writing in the BODY of the email.

- End your message by signing off with a CLOSING and your name, on two separate lines: “Thank you, Jane Smith” or “I appreciate your time, Jane Smith”

18. IDENTIFYING JUVENILES AND VICTIMS Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims and about identifying victims of sexual assault of any age.

19. IDENTIFYING ALLEGED PERPETRATORS Do not use the name of an alleged perpetrator until the prosecutor issues an arrest warrant.

*The definitions below are from the University of Queensland’s School of Journalism’s Code of Ethics: “On the record” means the information may be broadcast or published with attribution. “Off the record” means the information given by a source may not be used—either with or without attribution. Should another source offer the information on the record and independently of the first source, it would okay to use that information. “Background information” means the information may be used but without attribution to the source. Entering into an “off the record” relationship with a source should be treated with great caution because of the ethical problems involved. You should be very wary of stories that cannot be sourced. A source will sometimes attempt to apply an “off the record” discipline retrospectively. You are not obligated to accede to such an instruction/demand/request. Be sure to clarify the status of the remarks when the source uses terms like “off the record.” Meanings vary, and it is possible a source may mean “background” or “not for attribution” when using the term “off the record.” Seek a clear understanding of the meaning intended.
CODE VIOLATIONS

SERIOUS CODE VIOLATIONS

1. Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism occurs when you fail to attribute information, passing it on as your own work.

2. Do not fabricate information.

3. Do not practice "checkbook journalism." Do not pay for information other than fees required by local, state or federal authorities, such as materials obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

4. Do not go "undercover" or misrepresent who or what you are without your instructor’s and the Director of the School of Journalism’s prior approval.

5. Do not alter or distort the content of news photos or video. Image enhancement for technical clarity, however, is permissible. Label photo illustrations, staged photos or re-enactments as such.

PENALTIES FOR CODE VIOLATION(S)

Students who commit ethical offenses while enrolled in a journalism course may receive one of the following grade penalties, as determined by the instructor in consultation with the Director of the School of Journalism:

- A failing grade on the assignment
- A failing grade in the course.

In addition, the instructor, director or dean may call for an academic disciplinary hearing to impose a sanction in addition to a penalty grade, in accordance with Articles 2.4.6 and 4.3.1.1 of the Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University document. Sanctions include, but are not limited to:

- Denial of admission to the School of Journalism as a major. (Journalism preference students who violate the Code may be denied admission to the School as a junior.)
- Dismissal from the School of Journalism as a major.
- Suspension from Michigan State University.

In addition to the Code, students in the School of Journalism are expected to comply with other University policies regarding academic integrity, such as General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and the University policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grade. (See Spartan Life: Student and Handbook and Resource Guide.)

OTHER CODES OF ETHICS

The Independent Press Council compiled about 370 journalism codes of ethics adopted by news organizations and societies worldwide. While codes vary, most share these concepts: “truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and public accountability.” Students are encouraged to review professional codes of ethics authored by the following organizations:

- American Society of Newspaper Editors
- Journalism.org Professional Guidelines and Tools
- Poynter Institute
- Radio-Television News Directors Association and Foundation
- Society of Professional Journalists
10 TIPS TO GUIDE SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The faculty of Michigan State University's School of Journalism extend the highest standards of professional journalism—truth, fairness and accuracy—to the use of Social Media (SM) in gathering, reporting and disseminating news created for J-School courses and J-School sponsored organizations. We recognize the powerful role SM has in mass communication. Thus, we encourage students to use these sites, but only after you have tried to interview multiple sources.

Realize that when you are using these sites for personal and professional reasons, you represent the School of Journalism. General guidelines to follow as you use SM: Think of SM sites as tip generators, not as the only source of information; "Do no harm" and "Avoid the appearance of bias."

Aided by guidelines written by The Associated Press, NPR, Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, students and faculty in MSU's School of Journalism and others, we've provided '10 Best Practices to Guide Social Media Use' as an addendum to the J-School Code of Ethics and Standards:

1. Never lift quotes, photos or video from social media sites and attribute them to the website address or owner of the site. Do some digging. Most SM sites provide contact information: use the information to email, call or set up a face-to-face interview with the site's owner to explain your story and get new information.

2. When using photos, videos or other multimedia content from social networks in news stories, determine who controls the copyright to the material and get permission from that person or organization to use it. If appropriate, link the content to the original site.

3. Be transparent with your instructors, supervisors, editors and audience when using information drawn from an SM site or via an email from the site's author. Let them know in the story how and in what context you contacted sources and gathered information and how you verified that information or sought to verify it.

4. Make corrections quickly and be transparent, admitting to and explaining the mistake, and why it needed to be corrected. If you misunderstood something, acknowledge it.

5. Remember that messages on the Internet are public, permanent and Re-Tweet-able. Don't put anything on the Internet that you'd be embarrassed to see on the front page of The New York Times, i.e. inappropriate images or accusations without verified support. Also, assume that your post will be seen by the target of your criticism and know that like other media, Tweets can give rise to a defamation lawsuit.

6. Avoid the appearance of bias. Friend, liking and following sources are necessary to get information for your stories. If you think it might make you look like a partisan, indicate that you are a (student) journalist on your page/bio.

7. Obtain consent from sources, disclosing who you are, what you are

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seeking and where your story will and/or could run. The informality of social networking sites makes it easier for potential sources to misunderstand your intentions and the impact of cooperating.”

8. Be cautious when dealing with minors and other vulnerable people who might not fully understand the consequences of cooperating with a journalist. If contacting a child through an SM site, make sure he or she connects you with a responsible adult.”

9. Report improper online behavior. It is important for you to engage with those who consume your content. However, if it becomes abusive, bigoted, obscene and/or racist, contact your instructor and campus police immediately.”

10. Protect yourself. If you find it necessary, you may want to manage more than one SM account, one for professional and the other for personal use. Also, consider customizing your privacy settings on your accounts to determine what you share and with whom.”

REFERENCES


4 Elliott, “Social Media Guidelines for Student Journalists.”


6 “Social Media Guidelines for AP Employees.”

7 Tessa Card, feedback from a student in JRN 400 Spartan Online Newsmagazine, spring 2012.

8 Jenkins, “Social Media Guidelines for Student Journalists.”

9 Jenkins, “Social Media Guidelines to Live By.”


13 Jenkins, “Social Media Guidelines to Live By.”

14 Elliott, “Social Media Guidelines for Student Journalists.”

15 Elliott “Social Media Guidelines for Student Journalists.”

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17 “Social Media Guidelines for AP Employees.”

18 “NPR Ethics Handbook: Social Media.”