



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D C

Journalism and Public Affairs (M.A.)

Department Website: <http://www.american.edu/soc/journalism/>

1. Learning Outcomes

Graduate students will be able to:

1. Define the key ethical issues and legal guidelines facing journalists.
2. Describe the role and context of media in democracy and in global society, including the rapidly changing industry and the impact of emergent media.
3. Demonstrate multiple digital skill sets and can apply them across varied platforms
4. Publish or air professional quality work in the news industry through internships and/or a deadline-driven news outlet.
5. Report, write, and edit an accurate, balanced and complete news story in long-form print, online and radio style.

2. Assessment Plan

Measures	Target	Learning Outcome(s)	Cycle and Reviewers
Portfolios of student work including news, feature and investigative projects in digital, video, audio, broadcast, multimedia and print formats. (Direct)	Students must demonstrate the outcomes that are relevant to each particular piece in the portfolio.	All	Annual or every two years – This direct measure has not as yet been implemented due to resource issues (technology, faculty time and coordinating outside reviewers).
Comprehensive Exams (Direct)	All students must pass the comps to get their degree	All	Annual – Day-long exams include two components: a news-writing skills test (Outcomes 3, 4, 5) and two essays on issues involving journalism ethics and law (Outcomes 1 and 2). Each exam is reviewed by at least two faculty members.
Capstone Projects – Seminar in Public Affairs and Seminar in Journalism, TV Documentary (Direct)	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	All	Annual – Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching these seminar courses and discussed in curriculum/syllabus reviews
Course assignments. (Direct)	Grades of B or higher on most tests and assignments	All	For each course – Reviewed by division faculty and discussed in syllabus and curriculum reviews.
Awards – The Journalism Division looks to several awards, both internal and external, as measures of the achievement of outcomes.	Only high achieving students get awards.	All	Annual – Assessment is determined by both the number of awards received by students but also by the quality of the

(Direct)			submissions.
Graduating Student Survey – assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect)	On average students will rate their academic career at least “very good” or “excellent.”	All	Annual – The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.
Surveys among internship supervisors (Indirect)	On average, internship supervisors will rate students’ performance “very good” or “excellent” in all categories. The categories directly address the learning outcomes.	All	Each semester – Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/evaluation form will be developed in 2009-10. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.
A survey of 3-5 year alumni. (Indirect)	On average, alumni will rate their academic career “very good” or “excellent.”	All	Every five years – To assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession. Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education
Faculty Retreats and Ad Hoc Curriculum/ Syllabus Reviews (Indirect)	To ensure that curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	All	The Journalism Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculty (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean’s Advisory Council – a group of high level alumni who are professionals in the field).
Ad Hoc Research Studies – SOC	Surveys conducted	Various	Occasional – Studies have been

Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, Alumni Survey (Indirect)	occasionally to address specific issues.		conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular – the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey – provided useful data to evaluate student perceptions toward our programs.
Institutional research – Student Evaluations of Teaching, Campus Climate Survey, Graduation Census, National Survey of Student Engagement (Indirect)	To add context for the evaluation of other data	As context	Annual – The School of Communication and Journalism Division routinely analyze other data available in order to provide the background by which to understand more specific data.