

Final Project

Hastings, Wagner
J335 Spring 2018

For the final project, the two sections of J335 will work together to create a website dedicated to the covering of one specific topic. In the next week, each class will discuss topics they have brainstormed with the goal of selecting one. At that point, Wagner, Hastings and Benn will discuss the top options and make the final selection.

The general topic area must be related to Madison in some way and can be related to the university in some way, though it does not have to be.

The work you will produce will be the best work you have ever done. For inspiration, see past work from J335: <https://whywiidea.journalism.wisc.edu>, <https://thearc.journalism.wisc.edu>, <https://evolution.journalism.wisc.edu>.

Your Work

Your work is divided into two broad areas: content and web design/development.

Content

You will produce three pieces of news content.

- The first is a 1,000-to-1,500 word feature story. This story is written and must be accompanied by photos and one graphic/map/table of some kind. You must have at least five primary sources and one secondary source in this story. You will also write a 150-300 word sidebar.
- The second is either a 2-to-3 minute long Wisconsin Public Radio/NPR-style radio package with natural sound and soundbites from at least three sources OR a 120-second long video package with one stand-up and interviews from at least two sources.
 - This story will be done with one partner.
- You will also produce one alternative story form/multimedia feature. The alternative story can take whatever form you'd like it to take — photo essay, slideshow, audio slideshow, graphic, video, timeline, map. These also must be original — you can't simply take charts created by someone else and use them as your own — and your sources must be credited. We should be able to easily embed them into our WordPress site.
- Before you conduct your interviews, you will turn in a list of people you want to talk to and
 - 3 questions you are curious about
 - 3 questions that came from research about your subject

When all stories and multimedia pieces are submitted, they **MUST INCLUDE** a list of sources for follow-up fact checking if necessary.

You can check out video, photo and audio equipment from the Journalism Reading Room.

Site development

Here's how the teams and their workload will shape up:

Editorial (12, 6 per J335 section)

This team consists of a series of editors. Jesse Benn is Editor-in-Chief. There will be an Managing Editor in each J335 section. There will be two copy editors in each J335 section. There will be a multimedia editor in each J335 section. There will be a web editor in each J335 section. There will be one promotion editor in each J335 section.

The Managing Editors and the EIC will work with Hastings and Wagner (the publishers) to ensure the mix of content is appropriate, to help coordinate content and multimedia and to be involved in decisions made about the site development. The Managing Editors will also write the introductory copy about what story the overall site is aiming to tell.

The copy editors will develop copy for the whole site, including writing headlines, subheads and the “about us” section, as well as editing staff bios. Once the drafts of stories are submitted, the copy editors will read them for AP style, grammar and punctuation.

The multimedia editors will coordinate multimedia stories across labs and provide feedback to their section’s multimedia stories. The multimedia editors will also lead the Multimedia team’s super-sized multimedia content (see below).

The web editors will be in charge of the Web team. They will choose the site’s style, format, navigation, etc.

The promotion editors will be in charge of the promotion team

Multimedia (6 + editors, 3 per J335 section)

As a group, you’ll work to produce a super-sized piece of multimedia content for the site. This may be a combination of text, video, graphics and interactive content. This is an opportunity to do something really *cool*. The multimedia group’s social media coordinator will develop a plan for pushing out the content of the site — reaching out to influencers and working to be sure the site is being publicized — and help other teams as necessary.

Web design (6 + editors, 3 per J335 section)

The web team will be in charge of developing the website, including choosing a WordPress theme, developing the site architecture, creating templates and standards for the rest of the group to use in creating multimedia content, working with the editorial team to develop plans for text, images, audio and video, and posting all content.

Promotion (6 + editors, 3 per J335 section)

The promotion team will create a Facebook page and Twitter account for the project, promote the project, push specific stories on social media and craft a plan to earn attention from organizations such as *Columbia Journalism Review*, Media Shift, Poynter, and local news coverage.

Behind the Scenes Documentarians (8-10, split between J335 sections)

The behind the scenes documentarians will produce a 5-8 minute documentary about the making of the site. They can interview J335 instructors, the TA, students, other J335 faculty, reporters around town, and more.

Here are a few things to think about:

You'll want to start gathering information, doing background research and getting interviews set up as soon as possible. Begin drafting lists of questions you want to have answered.

Remember to be thinking about an anecdotal or straight lead as you're reporting. Don't wait until you get into your notes and start writing to think about how you are going to lead the story. This advice applies for audio and video stories, as well, because in those story forms, you need to find a character to be the center of your story.

And, finally, this may be the most important thing to note: you'll have until the last week of the semester to work on this assignment, but **YOU SHOULD NOT** wait until the last minute. Work as you go. Your editors will create deadlines to meet so that we can stories copy edited and assemble the website.

Grades

In these final weeks, we'll be using much of our class time for reporting on your individual projects and working on the different parts of our final project assembly. It's going to be like a working newsroom, and we're going to need everyone one of our team members there to help.

The feature and audio/video stories will be 30% of your grade each. The ASF and team assignments will be worth 20% each.

Here's the rough grade scale we'll use when evaluating your final project work:

A	93-100	publishable in current form with few revisions
AB	88-92	close to publishable with minimal work
B	80-87	strong story, needs rewriting to be publishable
BC	75-79	mix of strengths and flaws, needs work
C	67-74	major flaws, needs major work
D	59-66	critically damaging flaws, needs overhaul
F	0-58	work not done