MODULE 6: Investigative Journalism

Stage	1
Semester (Semester1/Semester2 if applicable)	2
Module Title	Investigative Journalism
Module Number	6
Module Status (Mandatory/Elective)	Mandatory
Module ECTS credit	5
Module NFQ level (only if applicable)	9
Pre-requisite Module Titles	Writing & Reporting Research Methods
Co-requisite Module Titles	None
Is this a capstone module? (Yes or No)	No
List of Module Teaching Personnel	Barry Finnegan, Ronan Brady

Contact Hours				Non-contact Hours			Total Effort (Hours)
Lecture	Practical	Tutorial	Seminar	Assignment	Placement	Independent work	
24		12		36		48	120

Allocation of Marks (Within the Module)					
	Continuous Assessment	**Project**	**Practical**	**Final Examination**	**Total is always 100%**
Percentage contribution	100				**100**

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Assume employment as an investigative journalist and/or political researcher.

2. Systematically understand the historical background, motivation, moral impetus and unique ethical issues within investigative journalism.

3. Engage in critical evaluation of media industry trends and contextualise the political implications of, and the impediments to, investigative work, while understanding the changing context of investigative journalism within the processes of contemporary globalisation.

4. Critique the role of the state in relation to freedom and access to information and the legal boundaries of personal privacy.

Module Objectives

This module aims to:

- Impart an historical and theoretical understanding of the genre.
- Develop the learner's genre-specific skills.
- Contextualise their investigative writings and those of others within a broader political and economic context.

Module Curriculum

Indicative Syllabus

Introduction: What is Investigative Journalism?

This section examines what investigative journalism is, what it means and its relationship to maintaining and cultivating democratic societies. We also explore investigative journalism methods, for example: sources, structures, people (where to find them), documents, government publications and offices, company reports, NGOs' reports, internet, other media publications, contacts, how to brainstorm and how to create a database of contacts.

Historical Background and the development of Investigative Journalism

In providing an historical context of investigative journalism and tracing its development, this topic examines, in relation to investigative journalism: the evolution and development of consumer demand, sympathy and morality in journalism, the 19th century public sphere, the idea of evidence and investigation, the rise of scientism and the rationalism of intellectual discourse. Issues such as technology, travel, economic development, societal improvement, changing values and politics, and their bearing on investigative journalism are also covered as well as an examination of the work of Russell and Stead.

An Overview of Key Investigative Reports

This section through analysis of Irish investigative journalism cases examines the structural impediments to investigative journalism in Ireland as well as the successes. Case study critiques of historical and contemporary Irish, as well as UK and US investigative reports are analysed in this section.

Ethics & Investigative Reporting

This topics examines how ethics and in particular how motivation and objectivity can impact on investigative journalism. Issues such as media regulation, 'cheque book journalism', confidentiality, sources, deceit, privacy and reconstructions are examined.

Freedom of Information

This section critiques the 'freedom of information' regime in Ireland and in a number of other Western countries.

The Future of Investigative Journalism

In assessing the future of investigative journalism, this module looks at issues such as financial viability and consumer demand as well as the implications and adoption of new technologies and financing initiatives.

Guided Application of Investigative Techniques

Through weekly lecturer-facilitated in-class group discussion, learners outline the on-going developments in their investigative article assignments. Theory and practice is brought to bear in this editorial-style group dynamic. Constructive critical analysis of each other's investigation techniques is encouraged.

Reading lists and other learning materials

Recommended Reading

Brooke, H., 2006, *Your right to know: a citizen's guide.* London: Pluto Press.

Anders Chydenius Foundation (2006) *World's First Freedom of Information Act.* Sweden: Anders Chydenius Foundation.

CPU (2004) *A Short Guide to the Freedom of Information Act*. Dublin: Central Policy Unit, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform.

Coulter, J. (2005) 'The moral reason never to tell', *British Journalism Review*,16(65).

DeBurgh, H., 2008, *Investigative journalism: context and practice*. London: Routledge.

Feldstein, M., 2006. A muckraking model - investigative reporting cycles in American history, *Press/Politics*, 11(2), pp. 105-120.

Guardian (2011) *Phone Hacking*. London: Guardian Shorts, The Guardian, (Kindle edition).

Lynch, L (2010) '"We're Going To Crack The World Open" - Wikileaks and the future of investigative reporting', *Journalism Practice*, March, pp. 1-10.

O'Toole, F. (1995) *Meanwhile Back at the Ranch*. Dublin: Vintage.

Pilger, J., 2004, *Tell me no lies: investigative journalism & its triumphs*. London: Jonathon Cape.

Smyth, S., 1997, *Thanks a Million Big Fella*. Dublin: Blackwater.

Spark, D., 2003, *Investigative reporting: a study in technique*. Oxford: Focal Press.

Lee, G. & Bird, C., 1998, *Breaking the bank*. Dublin: Blackwater.

Secondary Reading

Davies, N., 2009, *Flat earth news: an award-winning reporter exposes falsehood, distortion and propaganda in the global media.* London: Random House.

Palast, G., 2002. *The best democracy money can buy*. New York: Plume.

Hollings, J., 2010, Best practice for journalists engaging with reluctant and vulnerable whistleblowers', paper from *Media, Investigative Journalism and Technology Conference*, AUT University, Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, 4-5 December.

HLRG (2003) *High Level Review Group Report on the First Freedom of Information Act*. Irish Government Publications: High Level Review Group.

Kiberd, D., 2002, *Media in Ireland*. Dublin: Open Air.

Klosek, J., 2009, *The right to know.* New York: Praeger.

Knightley, P (2003) 'A permanent casualty: The death of investigative journalism and who killed it?' paper from The Death of Investigative Journalism seminar, Seymour Centre, Sydney. Available at: http://phillipknightley.com/2003/02/a-permanent-casualty-the-death-of-investigative-journalism-and-who-killed-it/ [16-01-12]

Nord, L. W. (2007) 'Investigative journalism in Sweden - A not so noticeable noble art', *Journalism*, 8(5), pp. 517–521.

Prall, K (2011) *Rupert Murdoch & the Hacking Scandal*. Kevin H. Prall: ebook (Kindle)

Websites and Journals:
British Journalism Review http://www.bjr.org.uk/

Columbia Journalism Review http://www.cjr.org/

Democracy Now: A daily radio and TV news programme on over 350 stations, pioneering the largest community media collaboration on the U.S. http://www.democracynow.org/

Glasgow Media Group: The Media Research Group of the University of Glasgow.

http://www.gla.ac.uk/departments/sociology/units/media.htm

Investigative Reporters and editors, Inc. ["IRE provides educational services to reporters, editors and others interested in investigative journalism and works to maintain high professional standards."] http://www.ire.org/

To get back issues of their journal see: The IRE Journal, at: http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3720

OhMyNews: Profit-making citizen journalism. http://english.ohmynews.com/

Project Censored: The News That Didn't Make The News. http://www.projectcensored.org/

Salon.com. http://www.salon.com/?x ["Salon Media Group, Inc. (OTC: SALN.0B) is an Internet media company that produces 7 original content sections as well as two online communities. ... Founded in July 1995 by David Talbot, Salon has been called "intriguing and intelligent" (Washington Post), "truly compelling" (Time) and "smart and provocative" (Forbes). Salon.com has been featured on ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, NPR, CNN, MSNBC, CNBC."]

The New Republic: http://www.tnr.com/ "When The New Republic was founded in 1914, its mission was to provide its readers with an intelligent, stimulating and rigorous examination of American politics, foreign policy and culture. It has brilliantly maintained its mission for ninety years."

Films:

All The Presidents Men (1976). Dir: Alan J. Pakula. Run Time: 138 min. Warner Studios. [Staring: Robert Redford & Hoffman, Dustin.] GCD code: M DVD PAK.

The Insider (1999). Dir: Michael Mann. Run Time: 157 min. Walt Disney Video. GCD code: M DVD MAN

Under Fire (1983). Dir.: Roger Spottiswoode. MGM, Europe. GCD code: M DVD SPO.

Eric Schlosser's 'Fast Food Nation.'

Module Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to both engage learners and to encourage their critical thinking in relation to the module. This is achieved through lecturers, case studies and practical examples which are designed to stimulate discussions and questions. As this module covers practical application of investigative techniques, time is available for in-class 'editorial meetings' regarding learners' progress.

Learners are also supported with resources to offer structure and guidance. This includes lecture notes, reading materials as well as a detailed module curriculum which includes the learning outcomes, a class schedule, the necessary reading material and the assignment strategy. Participants also have access to Moodle, the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Module Teaching and Learning Strategy

This module is supported with structured web-based resources and applies the use of the programme Teaching Learning and Assessment methodologies. Specifically, the module is delivered using:

- Case Studies
- Formal Lectures
- Participative Lectures
- Workshops / Tutorials

Module Assessment Strategy

Learners are required to conceive of, research and produce an investigative journalism news report or feature and complete a critical analysis of same. Learners are also required to research and write a series of essays (chosen from a list) on topics *such as* freedom of information, the 'phone hacking scandal', the democratic essentiality of investigative journalism, and/or critiquing investigative case studies.

Element Number	Weighting	Type	Description
1.	30%	Investigative News Project: in-class pitch, production and analysis	Conceive of, pitch and then research and produce an investigative journalism news report or feature
2.	20%	Essay	Indicative topics: the implications of new technology; relevance to democratic societies
3.	25%	Essay	Indicative topics: freedom of information; phone hacking
4.	25%	Essay	Indicative topics: broadcast journalism (coups and pitfalls); critical overview of 20 years of Irish investigative journalism