

Examination guidelines 2024

MEVIT4420– Journalism: Theory, Practice, Dilemmas

See course [website](#)

This course aims to challenge the clichés and commonplace assumptions we often hear about journalism in a democracy, particularly the notion that journalists are "independent" and "objective." It examines the way in which news is constructed and how both journalists and media organizations, inescapably, operate under a range of social and political influences. It questions the notions of "truth" and what it means, in practice, to be "ethical." Among other topics, it also explores journalism outside the Western world. In doing it will compare the definitions and assumptions about journalism we can find in textbooks and in research within Journalism Studies to the actual practice of journalists working in the field, struggling with deadlines, shrinking budgets, precarious contracts and many other constraints.

Exam type: Term paper (about 10 pages)

Grades are awarded on a A to F scale.

EXAM QUESTION (students were given the exam question on day 1 of the course)

"To what extent do theories and concepts in journalism research reflect the actual practice of journalism today? In other words, do current theories and concepts fully capture what journalism is *in practice* (across different outlets, journalistic cultures, countries in the world, in its evolution as a result of technological developments...) or do they have some limitations (i.e. they overlook some aspects/dimensions or present bias)?

To answer the question please select from the syllabus at least one reading which outlines a theory (for example the article by Deuze [2005] on the professional identity of journalists) or a key concept (like "objectivity," or "truth," for instance) related to journalism and use that as a starting point for your analysis.

In developing your answer, you are required to refer to additional sources from the course syllabus and to use practical examples.

Please note that you are not required to collect any new data or refer to any full-scale case study. You can use practical examples you might find in your reading, that we discussed in class, or that you have come across in accessing news or consuming other journalistic products."

As a preparation to submit their exam students were required to submit the following obligatory assignment:

The obligatory assignment is a short draft of the semester paper. You need to get this approved (godkjent) to qualify for the exam. The draft should be maximum 3 pages long (excluding bibliography). It must include the following:

- The source you have selected as a starting point of your analysis
- The theory and/or concept you want to discuss
- What your overall answer to the question is (i.e. your argument)
- What materials/ideas/points you will be using to develop your answer (what sources and examples will you rely on?)
- How you will structure your answer

The briefing is the same as for your term paper.

EXAM Evaluation criteria

Students have chosen different theories and texts as starting points for their analyses. Since each exam paper is different, there are no fixed specific topics or issues they are expected to address. In line with the learning objectives of the course, what I am looking for as examiner are the following aspects: Evidence of critical, independent thinking and reflection, the ability to relate what they have learned in the course (theories, concepts, arguments in the academic literature) to the actual reality of journalism.

A

Excellent/strong essay. Wide reading (or very good use of few yet very relevant sources), firm understanding of the sources used. Well-focused on a clear question/topic and well structured. There is an independent argument. This is reasonably well supported by the analysis, including some examples and/or empirical evidence. The text shows reflection on the topic.

B

Very good. Critical and perhaps showing some independent thinking, but not as convincing or well supported as an A. Alternatively it is based on less-than-wide reading, the analysis could have gone more in depth, or it is not as clear as it could be.

C

OK essay that ticks all the main boxes (there is an argument, there is focus, it is structured, there is evidence of some reading) but remains quite on the surface of the issues, it does not show much independent thinking and/or a critical approach. The literature might not have been understood in depth, the language might be unclear. It would have needed more reflection.

(D)

Includes relevant material (evidence of some reading), there is some focus, but lack of clear sense of direction or structure. Alternatively, it overall ticks all the boxes of a C, but it remains on the surface of the issues and/or the language is unclear or inaccurate.

(E)

Includes relevant material. Superficial, unstructured, difficult to read.