

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

Code: 36643
Name: Theory and history of journalism
Cycle: Undergraduate Studies
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2026-27

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1334 - Degree in Journalism	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	2	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1334 - Degree in Journalism	Evolució del periodismo y de la comunicació	COMPULSORY

COORDINATION

MARTINEZ GALLEGO FRANCISCO ANDRES

SUMMARY

The objective of the course is to introduce students to the knowledge of news production, preferably from contemporary centuries, although some aspects of early journalism and from the 18th century to the present are also introduced. The approach prioritizes the social construction of reality through journalistic discourse as a historical public discourse of the present in each era, thereby also helping to understand the function and use of journalism today. The content refers comparatively to Spain and especially to some Western European countries and the United States.

Regarding the theoretical aspect, the so-called journalistic field is introduced and analyzed, as well as the concepts and main theoretical currents of journalism. At the same time, the most significant media of each era are considered, all with reference to the professional status and production routines of the different periods. All of this is used to conduct debates and practice sessions with students to encourage collective reflection on journalism and journalists in terms of past and present. The goal is for students to acquire the ability to relate facts and phenomena and to be able to draw comparisons with similar aspects of current journalism.

SDG 4: Quality Education: The course promotes a critical and contextual understanding of journalism as a way of constructing the present and as a vehicle for social influence. Historical knowledge of the media



and its relationships with power structures and democratic processes directly contributes to the development of critical and global citizenship. Skills are cultivated to reflect on press freedom, censorship, and the shaping of public opinion: all of these are pillars of a transformative and critical education.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: The course's historical approach emphasizes the processes of institutionalization of journalism, the struggle for press freedom, censorship (especially during the Franco regime), and conflicts between the media and political power. All of this impacts the understanding of fundamental freedoms, especially the right to information and the need for independent media institutions within a democracy. The public function of journalism as a guarantee of transparency and accountability is also addressed.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

It is convenient to take advantage of the first year History of Communication assignment. A basic knowledge of English and elementary knowledge of French, Italian and Portuguese is recommended, so that some documentation and hemerography in these languages, as well as in Catalan and Spanish, can be useful.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

1334 - Degree in Journalism

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

Students should be able to search for, select, read, interpret and analyse both written and audiovisual texts and documents (analytically, synthetically and critically).

Students should have an understanding of own and other social, historical, economic and cultural aspects within their relevant contexts.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS



Introduction and background. What is the theory and history of journalism: conceptual approaches and keys to the evolution of journalism

The theory and history of journalism constitute interdisciplinary fields that address the study of the forms, functions, practices, and material conditions of information production in different historical contexts. From a conceptual perspective, journalism can be defined as a social and institutional practice oriented toward the production and public dissemination of current information, generally mediated by technical devices and conditioned by political, economic, and cultural structures. Its evolution has been marked by the development of communication technologies, transformations in the relations between state and society, and the consolidation of the public sphere as a space for deliberation. In historiographical terms, a distinction is made between a pre-modern journalism linked to power and propaganda, and a modern journalism oriented toward professionalization, autonomy, and critical thinking.

Toward the configuration of contemporary journalism. The Beginnings of Modern Journalism: The Growing Importance of Information, Public Opinion, and Freedom of the Press

Modern journalism began to take shape between the 17th and 19th centuries, parallel to the rise of enlightened public opinion and the struggles for freedom of expression and the press. During this period, information ceased to be a restricted privilege and became a public good, associated with political debate and the construction of citizenship. The periodical press took on new functions: monitoring power, informing the public, and fostering critical thinking. The Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolutions (American and French) promoted the idea of journalism as a guarantee of civil rights, which strained state control and laid the foundations for the liberal model of the press.

The Development of Modern Journalism. The Popularization and Consolidation of the Press. French Journalism, English Journalism, and North American Journalism

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, journalism underwent a process of institutionalization and mass adoption. In France, the press became closely linked to republican politics and culture, developing a polemical and ideological writing style. In England, the model shifted toward objective reporting and respect for facts, associated with the growth of a literate middle class and the professionalization of the profession. In the United States, the press rapidly industrialized, promoting a business-like and pragmatic model, with major publications, professional journalists, and a broad audience. This period consolidated journalism as a mediating power in public life.

The Evolution of Journalism After World War II: From the Democratic Ideal to Instrumentalized Journalism in Cold War Contexts

After World War II, journalism took on a key role in the consolidation of liberal democracies, reinforcing the ideal of the fourth estate. International regulatory bodies emerged, the training of journalists became professionalized, and a normative model based on objectivity, verification, and neutrality spread. At the same time, during the Cold War, the media were instrumentalized as tools of propaganda and ideological control. In countries of the socialist bloc or under dictatorships such as Franco's, journalism operated under censorship, while in Western democracies, criticism of media concentration and its subordination to economic power began to emerge.



Transformations in Journalism in Recent Decades: Digitalization, the Crisis of the Traditional Model, and New Forms of Information Production

From the end of the 20th century to the present, journalism has undergone profound structural transformations. Digitalization and the rise of the internet have eroded traditional business models, altered professional routines, and blurred the boundaries between senders and receivers. Social media and digital platforms have multiplied the channels of information, but have also generated phenomena such as misinformation, polarization, and the discrediting of conventional media. At the same time, new forms of independent, collaborative, and investigative journalism have emerged that seek to recover the critical function of the profession. Today's journalism is therefore at a crossroads between its democratic vocation and the logic of the market and technology.

¿These contents will be reflected in the following learning outcomes:

Distinguish the main Western journalistic traditions and their evolution through their most significant elements.

Explain the fundamental journalistic modalities and their specific media or supports to understand the journalistic field in different historical periods.

Identify relevant journalists and place them in their social context.

Critically distinguish between different journalistic discourses and their relationship with contemporary hegemonic cultural/political discourses.

Distinguish historical documentation, especially that of a newspaper and archival nature.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	60,00
Total hours	60,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	33,00
Independent study and work	32,00
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	25,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	90,00



TEACHING METHODOLOGY

A certain knowledge of the history of journalism and its significance throughout different historical periods is not only essential for the training of future professionals in this sociocultural field, but also for fostering awareness of the role that journalistic production has played, and continues to play, as a historical discourse with profound social influence, contributing to the development of democracy and freedom. This specific knowledge is also socially valuable for journalism students, as it enables them to improve and even innovate, either by drawing on their own journalistic traditions or by comparing them with other international models and practices.

In times of transformation or metamorphosis in the media landscape and the meaning of information, as is currently the case in an open and global society, historical knowledge becomes crucial for developing critical thinking and for engaging with the interplay between diachronic and synchronic dimensions.

- **Theoretical sessions:** Lectures aimed at explaining the main topics of the course syllabus, alongside the discussion and commentary of selected key issues.
- **Practical sessions:** Students will present their assigned projects and participate in applied learning activities.
- **Other non-classroom activities:** Independent reading of the selected materials.

EVALUATION

First call

- Theoretical exam (50%): an exam based on the contents presented and worked on in the course sessions.
- Work (30%): practical work related to the theory and history of journalism.
- Practicals (20%): practice and exercises based on the contents presented in class, reading texts or watching audiovisual products related to the subject.

In order to pass the course, it will be necessary to obtain at least a five in each of the sections that make up the evaluation of the course. The general grading system will follow the regulations of the University of Valencia approved by the Governing Council on May 30, 2017. ACGUV 108/2017.

Second call

In the second call of the course, only those items (exam, work or practices) that were failed (or not presented) in the first call will be recovered, and the grade of those that were already passed will be kept.



Academic honesty

Intellectual honesty is vital in academic communities, and for the fair assessment of student work. All work submitted for this course must be original authorship. Papers that make use of fraudulent collaboration or composition with the help of artificial intelligence (ChatGPT or others) will not be accepted.

In the case of plagiarism in a student's assessment work, this may be marked with a numerical grade of zero and lead to the suspension of the course, regardless of the disciplinary procedure that may be initiated and, if applicable, the appropriate sanction in accordance with current legislation.

The following will also be considered serious misconduct and, therefore, may result in immediate suspension from the exam session: copying or facilitating the copying of work among undergraduate students; irregularly accessing or appropriating in advance the content of a test or exam; facilitating or procuring the appropriation, alteration or subsequent destruction of the content or results of an assessable activity and impersonation of the person in exams. When the serious misconduct mentioned in this point is detected, the teacher must notify the Grade Coordination.

The presentation of work and/or exams with spelling or typographical mistakes and/or errors in syntax, coherence or writing will be penalised and may lead to the suspension of the exam.

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