

# CFJ's "Newsroom" Model Course

## Reorganising J work with an emphasis on digital competences

**Selection criteria:** CFJ's "Newsroom" shows an innovative conception of news production, which appears to be a unique setup in France. Since last year, CFJ's "Print & Multimedia" specialization was completely reviewed in order to put more emphasis on digital competences.

*Centre de formation des journalistes, Paris, France*

**Website:** <http://www.cfjparis.com>

Study program:	Level	ECTS:	Weeks/Topics	Students
Majeur Newsroom	Second Year		16 weeks	18

**Keywords:** innovation, digital competences, newsroom integration, reorganisation of J work

**Short description:** Students at CFJ must specialize by the end of their first year in one of the following topics: TV, or radio, or print & multimedia. The print & multimedia "Newsroom specialization" prepares the students for working in the digital environment of news agencies and newspapers.

This 16-week course is very practical: the first period consists of 6 weeks of introduction to coding, editing, curating, creating multimedia content, data journalism and management, followed by two 5 week periods of newsroom simulation.

The objective is for students to acquire multiple digital competences and to be able to operate in an always-changing market.

Topic	Practical exercise / application	Learning outcome
<b>Introduction to digital competences (coding, editing, curating, creating multimedia content, data journalism and management)</b>	During the first weeks of the 16 week course, students have to create a blog and define an original editorial project to follow for the entire semester. This blog gives a personal platform for each student for experimenting with all of the digital competences they learn about during the first 6 weeks of the course period. These blogs will be integrated at the final site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn the bases of digital journalism, develop a "digital intelligence"; to know how to mutualise a know-how between each member of a newsroom; to be able to integrate any digital newsroom, "online only" or "integrated"; to respond to the new expectations of the market, where J work is reorganised by competences; to be polyvalent.</li> </ul>
<b>Define a project for the final website; work with professionals from the media industry (journalists, technical advisors, developers, etc.).</b>	The first 5 weeks of the 10 weeks professional simulation are dedicated to the definition of the editorial line of the final website. The students work with different professionals who are specialized on digital media and are invited each week. These professionals, developers and a designers help the students to construct the site. They define together which editorial project they will follow, how it will be materialized in the final site, what kind of content they will provide, what will be the place of multimedia formats, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to plan a professional project; to "think" a multimedia project; to organise a newsroom around a project; to use different software in multimedia content creation (for example to do graphics with Infogram, Easily, Piktochart, Datawrapper, Infographics, etc.); to work with databases.</li> </ul>
<b>Newsroom simulation - divided by competences and the information flow (and not by topics)</b>	<p>The last 5 weeks students are working in the conditions of a newsroom divided by competences where each team is in charge for one activity in alternation. This model is abandoning the classical one, where journalists were specialized by thematic areas:</p> <p><b>There are three desks organized by the speed of the news:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the first one is for hot news (agency news, brief news, breaking news)</li> <li>the second one is for analyses, and</li> <li>the third one is for long formats (students have one week to work on a news item).</li> </ul> <p>One team is in charge of editing (layout, correction), a second team is in charge of enriching media content (multimedia creation), and one person is in charge of social media.</p> <p>One editor-in-chief is named each week, and also one referent by desk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn how to organise journalistic work around (digital) competences; to work in teams; to manage a team; to adapt to a rapidly changing news environment.</li> </ul>

### Suggested readings

Author	Title/Description of content	Year
There are no suggested readings; the course is based on immersive work.		

### Assessment criteria:

Students are evaluated every week but only receive one note at the end of the semester. The evaluation is based on the quality of the project (can be published = A; can be published with small changes = B; has to be reworked = C; important gaps = D; not evaluable = E), and also their personal investment. Three individual debriefings take place during the year, where the students have to present their projects and developments, and professionals can advise them. These debriefings are very practical, and "is an exchange off the cuff," according to C. Rouquette (a French expression; the debriefing discussions are direct and hands-on . It is all adapted to J-work, which is a "craft".

### Production examples:

Students work for one common project, a news site, alimented updated day by day with multi-media content. 3millions7 (<http://3millions7.com>) is dedicated to the thematic of "After Charlie", which is influenced by the attack against Charlie Hebdo and the social movement that emerged following the attack, the CFJ's 68th promotion students decided to analyse the consequences of these events.

### Contact:



### Instructor/Contact person:

Cédric Rouquette, e-mail: [crouquette@cfjparis.com](mailto:crouquette@cfjparis.com)

### Bonus material:

#### Short quote from instructor

"You can't be an airplane of everything, but you have to have a digital intelligence."

"I obligate them to touch everything.

I can't imagine them working in a newsroom and not to know what the boss is asking them when he wants them to curating in the Ebola virus. If he wants a video, I want them to be able to do something funny and pedagogic. If he wants a dataviz, I want them to be able to do something. I want them to know the minimum. I insist on the word 'minimum' because it's impossible to be an airplane in everything. In 16 weeks it's impossible.

Every function has its particular mentalities, its very precise way to function, and the precise technical competences.

Instead, they have to have a digital intelligence, making them comfortable."

Cédric Rouquette, 2014

### Teaching environment:

#### Testimonial from a student



*Somehow in contradiction with the course's purposes: "for doing this course, there is no need for special technical competences, there is only a need for palatability for writing."*

*"The physical newsroom has the particularity to connect via a broadcast infrastructure to the cameras and the registered material of the TV studio to its computers four floors up. So this interactive newsroom makes it possible to integrate the students' content from their computers and the content running from the studio. But this infrastructure makes it also possible to control lights and sounds in the studio from the newsroom. The two screens in the two extremities of the classroom allow to synchronize the workflow in real time, and to work in a team. However, in the context of the 'Newsroom' course, and because of the preeminence of digital news production, students work (edit, cut, etc. material from digital camera) only on their computers. Seats around the table function as a real online newsroom."*

For more details see: <http://www.mediakwest.com/broadcast/item/newsroom-collaborative-au-centre-de-formation-des-journalistes.html>