



# JOURNALISM

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## Introduction to Journalism

The mission of the journalism department is twofold: prepare students for careers in multimedia journalism and offer intensive training in research and communication skills for students who will embark on other careers. Students experience instruction in all media platforms as part of a broad-based approach to emerging forms of journalism.

Journalism students typically share a passion for writing, an earnest desire to tell honest, accurate stories, and a fascination with public affairs.

As Americans continue getting their news from a growing number of nontraditional sources, including some with no tradition of objectivity or truthfulness, journalism education becomes increasingly important even for those who do not intend to make it a career. Our program provides students with the tools they will need to become successful storytellers — no matter what the medium, including traditional print and broadcast outlets.

Many of our graduates find jobs in the news media. Two of our recent graduates have won Pulitzer Prizes.

## Learning Experience

Journalism's first task is to develop writers. Many graduates use their degrees to pursue news writing while others find that the strong writing background is the perfect preparation for public relations, advertising, consulting, marketing, or for attending graduate or professional schools. Writing classes are limited to 16 students. These small classes allow close attention to the development of each student's writing and research skills.

The survey course, News Media and Society, takes a consumer-based view of journalism and highlights contemporary criticisms of the field. Those who wish to explore the major further enroll in News Writing and Reporting. After completing those introductory courses — usually by the end of the sophomore year — students may enroll in other courses in the major, including Public Affairs Reporting, copy editing, documentary film, and

photojournalism. In these courses, students are introduced to the latest computer programs and are taught to apply internet and other computer-assisted reporting techniques.

An essential component of the Public Affairs Reporting class is providing multimedia coverage of the Virginia General Assembly for the Capital News Service. Assigned to a variety of news organizations throughout the state, students produce stories for print, web and other electronic media. Each student is part of a group that offers localized coverage of the assembly for specific publications. Past work has included investigative pieces, video reports on deadline, Spanish-language podcasts, Twitter production, and traditional newspaper articles. The University of Richmond operates a bureau of the Capital News Service, run for more than 10 years through the School of Media and Culture at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Journalism majors are required to complete eleven units of course work. A journalism minor requires seven units.

## Facilities

Writing and graphic design courses are taught in a 17-terminal Macintosh computer lab that rivals the equipment used by the nation's leading news media. In these courses, students are introduced to the latest applications and are taught to use internet and other computer-assisted reporting techniques. Students taking photojournalism are provided with professional-grade cameras. The documentary students use broadcast-quality high-definition video cameras.

The independent, student-run campus weekly newspaper, *The Collegian*, is produced in a separate computer lab. In 2014, *The Collegian* discontinued its print publication and moved into a fully digital news site. The campus radio station, WDCE 90.1 FM, broadcasts to the Richmond community.

## Internships

Though internships are not required, journalism students are strongly encouraged to enroll in internships during their undergraduate years. Our students frequently work in the newsrooms of the three local network television affiliates, at the local daily newspaper, and at other publications on and off campus. Others arrange for full- or part-time internships that they pursue while living at home during the summer.

## On-Campus Experience

Journalism majors and minors enroll in one semester of the Community-Based Journalism course, in which they write and report news stories for *The Collegian* and for Richmond-area publications. The work of the students is appraised independently by editors and by journalism department faculty, giving the advantage of careful editing and immediate feedback from two sources.

## Faculty

**Tom Kapsidelis** is a journalist with four decades of newspaper, wire-service, and teaching experience; author of *After Virginia Tech: Guns, Safety, and Healing in the Era of Mass Shootings* (University of Virginia Press, April 2019). Managed or played a role in the coverage of most major news events in Virginia from 1981 to 2016. Inducted into the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame in 2020.

**Karen Masterson** has been a journalist for over 20 years. She first worked for members of Congress (U.S. Sen. John Glenn and U.S. Rep. Tony Hall), then as a national reporter covering Congress and the White House for the *Houston Chronicle*. She has also covered the New Jersey Pine Barrens and local and state environmental issues as a suburban reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Masterson has also written for a range of other publications, including the *Washington Post*, *Nature*, *Time*, *The Lancet*, *The Baltimore Sun* and the *Hagerstown Herald-Mail*.

She has a master's degree in science writing from Johns Hopkins University, Homewood; a master's degree in journalism from the University of Maryland, College Park; an honour's degree in intellectual history from the University of Cape Town, South Africa; and an undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Tampa.

Before joining the University of Richmond, Masterson was a part-time lecturer at Johns Hopkins and then an assistant professor of science journalism at Stony Brook University.

**Shahan Mufti** has written for a variety of newspapers and magazines as a freelance journalist. His work has been published by *Harper's Magazine*, *WIRED*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *The Atlantic*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *The Nation*, and many other publications.

Mufti was previously a full-time correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor and reported from Pakistan. He later joined the team of journalists that launched GlobalPost.com, a multimedia international news platform based in Boston.

Mufti has a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College and a graduate degree in journalism from New York University. He has also served as a Fulbright scholar in India. In 2013, Mufti published his first book, *The Faithful Scribe*, based on his reporting from Pakistan. His second book is forthcoming.

**Betsy Mullen** is a newsroom veteran who first joined the journalism department as an adjunct instructor before moving into her current position.

Mullen began her journalism career at the Newport News Daily Press while still an undergraduate at the College of William and Mary, from which she graduated with degrees in English and Government. She worked at the Richmond Times-Dispatch while attending graduate school at Virginia Commonwealth University. After finishing her master's degree there, she did freelance writing before joining the staff of The Richmond News Leader.

Mullen's first beat at The News Leader was local sports, which made her the first

female writer in that role. Following that, she was a general assignment reporter and police reporter before moving to cover local government and then education. When The News Leader merged with the Times-Dispatch, Mullen became a feature writer and traveled across the state and region in pursuit of human-interest stories.

Before, during and after her newsroom positions, Mullen continued to produce freelance pieces for newspapers and magazines, as well as a chapter in "The Book of American Traditions" by author Emyl Jenkins.

**Tom Mullen** worked in daily journalism for more than 20 years as an editor and reporter at a variety of newspapers. He has covered police, politics, government, education, features, and religion. He traveled across the country covering religion for *The Richmond News Leader*.

Mullen has been a copy editor, page designer, night editor, weekend editor, assistant state editor, and assistant metro editor. He has taught at VCU and was an adjunct instructor at Richmond before joining the faculty full time and becoming director of public affairs journalism.

Mullen has a bachelor's degree from East Tennessee State University, a master's degree from VCU, and did graduate studies at St. Meinrad Theological Seminary.

Mullen also is an ordained Roman Catholic deacon who assists in campus ministry. He is part of the University's Roadmap team for first-year students, teaches in the First-Year Seminar program, and serves as a President's College Associate in residence life. He received the Advisor Excellence Award in 2019. His teaching and research interests include new media; political journalism; ethics, media, and religion; and newsroom management. He received the Distinguished Educator Award in 2021.

**Mike Spear** has worked as a reporter and editor for a variety of newspapers in the United States and Europe. He was a Vermont Royster Scholar at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he earned a Master of Arts degree in journalism.

Spear's fields of study include copy editing, news writing, literary journalism, and the history of type and typography. His copy editing classes use his online copy editing text, *The Essential Book for Copy Editors*. His research and reporting have appeared in *Editor & Publisher*, *Presstime*, *The Quill*, *Journalism Educator*, *Runner's World*, *The Runner*, *Collegiate Journalist*, and *Design*. He received the Distinguished Educator Award in 2003. He received the Advisor Excellence Award for 2015-2016.



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