

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Overview and Aims

This module aims to enable the student to:

- Grasp an historical and theoretical understanding of the genre of investigative journalism.
- Initiate and conduct investigative news reports using genre-specific skills.
- Contextualise investigative journalism within a broader political and economic context nationally and globally.
-

On successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Understand and express what investigative reporting is and the unique ethical and professional conduct issues which arise for investigative journalists.
- Display a solid grasp of the motivation and moral impetus behind investigative reporting from both a contemporary and historical perspective.
- Express confidently an understanding of the changing context for investigative journalism within the overlapping processes of the forces of contemporary globalisation.
- Exercise appropriate judgment to propose, initiate and conduct investigative news reports and critically analyse same.

Indicative Module Content

- **Introduction: What is 'Investigative Journalism'?**: Dissenting journalism: a higher kind of loyalty, relationship to news reporting and the news agenda, the moral impetus and motivation. Exploring the methods and techniques. Scepticism, not cynicism. Freedom of information.
- **Historical Background and Development of Investigative Journalism**: The nineteenth century evolution and development of the public sphere, consumer demand, sympathy and morality in journalism, the idea of evidence and investigation, the rise of scientism and the rationalism of intellectual discourse. Cultivating and nurturing democratic societies.
- **Motivation, Objectivity and Ethics in Investigative Reporting**: Making further distinctions between standard news reporting and investigative reporting. The issues of personal safety, objectivity, accuracy, impartiality, balance, taste and decency. The ethical issues of regulation, cheque book journalism, confidentiality, sources, deceit, privacy and reconstructions.
- **The Changing Context for Investigative Reporting**: The historical resilience and financial viability of investigative journalism as a consumer product in advanced capitalist societies. The overlapping processes of the forces globalisation, freedom to own the press versus freedom of the press. The impact of deregulation and cross format mergers, technology, the internet, fluctuating economic fortunes and new opportunities of international co-operation.
 - ~ Lowry, Haughey and Dunne - origins of, and fallout from, the tribunals.
 - ~ 'The Connection' - lessons to be learned.
 - ~ National Irish Bank: the work of Bird and Lee.
 - ~ Veronica Guerin and Others - their careers and the physical dangers faced by investigative reporters.
 - ~ 'Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely' - Greg Palast and the 2000 US presidential election.
 - ~ RBGH Milk, Monsanto and News International - the investigations of Jane and Paul Akre.