

CO-CONVENED GRADUATE CLASS GUIDELINES

When journalism courses include graduate students and upper-class undergraduates, both instructors and master's students need to be aware of their heightened expectations. Instructors are expected to provide graduate students with opportunities to explore the course subject at an intellectual level commensurate with their advanced academic status. Conversely, academic expectations of graduate students are significantly higher than for undergraduates in co-convened classes.

Faculty can enhance the graduate student experience in co-convened classes in several ways. Generally, the course workload should be a quarter to a third heavier for graduate students. This strategy involves demanding more critical thinking and in-depth intellectual exploration on the students' part, including the incorporation of academic theory when appropriate. The goal is to increase the quality and complexity of grad students' intellectual endeavors rather than just to increase the quantity of assignments.

Faculty should work with graduate students individually to determine what kind of assignments or research directions will best benefit their intellectual and professional goals. The syllabus should reflect academic expectations of graduate students in the course. When feasible, the instructor and grad student should create an academic contract that specifies both parties' responsibilities and the criteria for successful completion of course requirements at the graduate level.

Here are some suggestions for enhancing course requirements and assignments so that they challenge graduate students and intensify their academic experience:

- Write a research paper of publishable quality.
- Research a relevant topic and develop a lecture and in-class exercises to teach a class on the material.
- Conduct a content analysis of news coverage.
- Follow a journalist and their reportage over an extended period and evaluate his or her effectiveness on a beat.
- Create a web site related to course content.
- Read additional or alternative readings that demand more critical thinking of the student; write reflective essays or discuss them with the professor in special graduate meetings.
- Create well-researched multimedia group presentations on issues in journalism such as alternative business models or new media.
- Analyze the ethical decision-making in a journalism case study through the lens of a major ethical principle.
- Include additional sources or citations in assigned articles and papers; increase length and/or depth of assignment.
- Apply scholarly theoretical frameworks and/or research methods to analyze course-related material.