

Solutions journalism: New ways of elevating your reporting and engaging audiences

Course Dates: May 8 - June 4, 2023

Instructor: Hugo Balta

About the course

Welcome to the new MOOC, “Solutions journalism: New ways of elevating your reporting and engaging audiences”, organized by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, in partnership with the Solutions Journalism Network, with funding from the Knight Foundation. During this four-week massive open online course, which will be held from May 8 to June 4, 2023, students will be introduced to the concept and practice of solutions journalism. Watch the video below and read on for more details, including instructions on how to register.

Goal

For the next four weeks, you will learn the key principles of solutions journalism. What is it? What is it not? Why is it important? And how to make it happen, from idea to reporting to completed story.

Who can enroll? (Who is this Course for?)

This course is designed for people who want to learn more about how solutions journalism can enhance their reporting. Media practitioners who are new to solutions journalism are welcome to join,

as well as those who are already practicing solutions journalism and want to elevate their understanding of it.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course you will be able to: Understand solutions journalism and how it can enhance your reporting skills by producing rigorous, compelling coverage of the responses to social problems, incorporating the key elements of response, insight, evidence and limitations.

Tools/Applications Required

Students will need access to a computer and Internet in order to complete the course.

How the course works

First of all, note that this is an asynchronous course. That means there are no live events scheduled at specific times. You can log in to the course and complete activities throughout the week at your own pace, at the times and on the days that are most convenient for you.

Despite its asynchronous nature, there are still structures in place for the duration of the course.

The material is organized into four weekly modules. Each module will be taught by Hugo Balta and will cover a different topic through videos, presentations, readings and discussion forums. There will be a quiz each week to test the knowledge you've gained through the course materials. The weekly quizzes, and weekly participation in the discussion forums, are the basic requirements for earning a certificate of participation at the end of the course.

This course is very flexible, and if you are behind with the materials, you have the entire length of the course to complete them. We do recommend you complete each of the following before the end of each week so you don't fall behind:

- Video lectures
- Readings and handouts/exercises
- Participation in the discussion forums

- Quizzes covering concepts from video lectures and/or readings

Course outline

Introduction Module: Why Solutions Journalism?

Solutions Journalism is a global shift in journalism, focused on what the news often misses: how people try to solve problems and what we can learn from their successes or failures. By covering solutions to local and global challenges, journalists can equip people in all communities with the knowledge to envision and build a more equitable and sustainable world.

This module will cover:

- Telling the whole story
- Enhancing accountability
- Restoring the public's trust

Module 1: What solutions journalism is, and what it is not (May 8 - 14, 2023)

Solutions stories report on efforts to solve problems, but they don't celebrate those efforts. This module teaches you the difference between a solutions journalism story and impostors.

This module will cover:

- How do I know it's solutions journalism?
- How do I know it's NOT solutions journalism?
- The four pillars of solutions journalism

Guest Speaker: Dina Aboughazala, former BBC reporter and the founder of a flourishing media startup, Egab, Egypt

Module 2: Identifying, vetting and reporting solutions stories (May 15 - 21, 2023)

Many people who want to do solutions journalism aren't always sure where to begin. In this module, we are going to help students learn how to cover solutions journalism across different beats.

This module will cover:

- Identifying a social problem
- Looking for the slices of a problem
- The positive deviant — responses that appear to drive better outcomes for one community when compared to other communities with similar challenges
- Leveraging solutions journalism to build trust with their audiences, increase engagement and loyalty, and drive impact and accountability

Guest Speaker: Kavita Chandran, journalism trainer and news content advisor, Singapore

Module 3: Organizing and telling solutions stories (May 22 - 28, 2023)

Solutions stories are often structured differently; there is no one size fits all approach. In this module, we will review fundamental concepts when choosing a narrative.

This module will cover:

- Should I start with the solution or the problem?
- Identifying the characters
- Transparency in unpacking the story
- How to package solutions journalism across different platforms
- Solution journalism best practices from across the globe

Guest Speaker: Chibuike Alagboso, journalist, Nigeria Health Watch

Module 4: Building solutions journalism into your workflow (May 29 - June 4, 2023)

For many journalists, the idea of solutions journalism resonates immediately. But some need clarification on the approach. In this module, we'll discuss how to bring solutions journalism into your newsroom in a sustained way.

This module will cover:

- Dispelling misconceptions about solutions journalism
- The solutions whisperer

- Propose a story/series
- Measuring success

Guest Speaker: Swati Sanyal Tarafdar, freelance, Solutions Journalism Network LEDE fellow, India