

## MJD Senior Seminar

Research: Untold Stories and Beyond the Mainstream

Here's the assignment due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, Sept. 15.**

The focus of this assignment is for you to track down and begin researching a minimum of **3 socially significant "untold stories" or issues**. These "untold" stories or issues should be of national or international importance, **BUT** for one reason or another, they have **not** been covered or communicated **effectively** (if at all). Perhaps they have been **overlooked**? Perhaps they have been **avoided** because of their complexity or emotional impact? Perhaps they don't see the light because an organization with **vested interests** wants them not to? Or perhaps they have tended to be **marginalized** or **under-reported**, or brushed aside in favor of other obvious or sexy issues? In all cases, these untold stories should go beyond the mainstream.

In order to do this, you'll need to do **THREE** things:

**First**, you'll need to read, navigate, and screen the following pieces below with an eye toward story conceptualization and approach. Look at these pieces carefully and take notes on **what** the untold issues appear to be and **how** the author/producer connects you to the subjects and ideas. These are strong examples of book, web doc, and doc film productions. For each one, write at least two substantial paragraphs in which you explain what the untold stories are and how the author/producer connects you to the subject matter.

- **Read:** *Pinpoint: How GPS is Changing Technology, Culture, and Our Minds* (by Greg Milner)
- **Read:** *Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History* (by Dan Flores)
- **Web Navigate:** Planet Money Makes a T-shirt (npr) <http://apps.npr.org/tshirt/#/title>
- **Screen:** Chasing Water (Pete McBride) <https://vimeo.com/216565463>

**Second**, spend at least **5-7 hours during the week** digging through a variety of media (books, magazines, newspapers, doc films, web sites, etc.) in search of what **IS** and what is **NOT** covered. Read **between** the lines. Search around the events, issues, or types of people you repeatedly see in the media. Look behind the curtain.

**Then**, for Wednesday's class, write up a profile of **3 different issues** (one page single-spaced per issue). Each of your profiles should contain the following.

1. A synopsis/summary of **WHAT** the **untold** or underrepresented issue is and **WHY** it matters
2. **WHY** is it of **national** or **international** significance?
3. **HOW** does it tend to get presented or covered when it is addressed (people, sources, perspectives, ideological stances, etc.)?
4. **WHY** you think it is not covered or adequately conveyed?
5. **Full bibliographic citations for the stories and sources that you consulted.** Important note: cutting and pasting a URL address is not acceptable. You should be using the MLA style guide. A resource on that style guide can be found here:  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

Think **BIG PICTURE!!!** Cast your net widely at first. Challenge yourself to break out of typical or mainstream ideas. Challenge yourself to look at and through a range of strong media examples. If you already have a set of ideas that you are gravitating towards, then challenge yourself to think around those topics. (Examine the fringes or put yourself in someone else's shoes to gain a different perspective). You can use this assignment to think around some of the topics you've been considering for senior seminar.

**THIRD, BrainSTORM log/list.** As you are doing this digging, write out a **DESCRIPTIVE** log/list of the various topics which pique your intellectual interests. The list should be a running catalogue of the variety of topics and issues (10-20) that you encounter and some index of what author, book, or article stimulated the entry. **You will be turning in a copy of this this Brainstorm log/list. Keep the original for yourself.** Make sure that it is comprehensible to you and others.