

# Untold Stories and Getting Beyond Mainstream Coverage

## DMC Senior Seminar

Here's the assignment due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>**

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 go to and peruse through the **South End Art Hop** either Friday, Saturday, or Sunday **this weekend (Sept. 6-8)**. Look through the different exhibits and exhibitions with an eye toward interesting and important topics or issues which are brought out through people's art works, **but which might not have been addressed much in mainstream media**. Identify **at least two** which rise to the top. Identify the artist (or artists), take several photos (if allowed) and describe in one or two paragraphs what you think is **SIGNIFICANT** about the issues brought about by the works and how you might approach them as a senior seminar topic further aimed at national and international audiences as a doc film, web doc or E~book.

**Second**, read, navigate, and screen the following pieces below with an eye toward **story conceptualization** and **production approaches**. 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: **Breath** (by James Nestor)
- Web Navigate: **Planet Money Makes a T-shirt** (NPR) <http://apps.npr.org/tshirt/#/title>
- Screen: **Varsity Blues** (Documentary 2022 on Netflix – Directed Chris Smith Written by Jon Karmen)

**Third**, 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.