

NSC 192 Section 1

1 Credit

Fall 2000

**Reporting on the Society of Environmental Journalists' 10th
National Conference in East Lansing, Michigan**

Meets Wednesdays from 4:10 to 5 p.m. Room 242 Communication Arts Building. Computer Lab sessions are in Room 237.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Or call for an appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Ivona Lerman. 340 Communication Arts Building. **Phone:** 353-5425 **E-mail:** lermani@hotmail.com **Office hours:** Wednesday's from 3 to 4 p.m.

This RISE course will focus on a special event – the 10th national conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists – that will be held Oct. 19 to 22, 2000 at the Kellogg Conference Center on the MSU campus. Students in this course will assist in a number of ways on this conference. They will help write material to be given out to journalists. They will report about and cover events at the conference. They will shoot photographs. They will create and publish a web-based magazine during the SEJ conference and later publish stories and photos in a special issue of the EJ News. They also will visit some news organizations (such as WKAR Radio, Michigan Out of Doors and the Great Lakes Radio Consortium) to observe environmental journalists in action.

Many top journalists, executives, government leaders and environmental experts are scheduled to speak at this year's conference. Among them are: William Clay Ford, Jr., chairman of Ford Motor Company; Katie McGinty, Vice President Al Gore's top environmental advisor; Christopher DeMuth, George W. Bush's top environmental advisor; Amory Lovins, a visionary expert on energy issues; William McDonough, a noted environmental architect; David Suzuki, a Canadian television host and producer; Joby Warrick, a Pulitzer Prize winning environmental writer for the Washington Post; Eileen Welsome, a Pulitzer prize winning investigative reporter; U.S. Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck; Thomas Baldini, U.S. Chair of the International Joint Commission; Chip Groat, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey; environmental author Bill McKibben; and many, many more. Also included in the conference will be tours to Lakes Michigan, Lake Huron, the Dow Chemical Co. complex in Midland, Mich. and the Upper Peninsula; award-winning films from the International Wildlife Film Festival; the burying of a time capsule to be opened in 2050; a reception at the Michigan Historical Museum; and many other activities.

Since most of the students in this course are not journalism majors, the class will begin with an overview of some basic principles of news reporting, writing, photography and design. The primary goal of this course is to give students experience in covering a major national conference while it happens and in producing a web-based magazine that will be available to people throughout the United States and the world during the conference. We will draw heavily upon the knowledge, interests and abilities of students in the class. For example, if some students are knowledgeable about computers and the web they may help oversee the process of publishing photographs and stories on the web. If others are interested in photography, they may use digital cameras to shoot photos for the web site. Many others will be asked to report and write stories about more than 40 different tours and events at the conference. Still others will be assigned the role of editing stories, writing headlines and designing the web site. How elaborate and sophisticated the web site is will be based upon the creativity, energy and abilities of students in this class. Ivona Lerman, the teaching assistant for this class and the webmaster for the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, will oversee the entire process.

This is an experimental class. We welcome ideas and suggestions from students in the class. Our goal is to produce the best web magazine we can. Please be advised that some assignments may change and that additional speakers and tours may be added. Other modifications may occur as the course progresses.

There is no required text in this class. Students will be given handouts to read and web sites to examine. Students will also carry out journalistic exercises in class. Students are expected to attend classes and to participate fully in the SEJ national conference. Students will be asked to become SEJ members (\$30 a year dues). By becoming a member you will be able to fully participate in the conference and become knowledgeable about SEJ.

Grading:	Class Exercises	25 %
	Journalistic activities for E-zine for conference	40 %
	Article for EJ News	25%
	Attendance and class participation	10 %
	Extra credit will be given for students who assist in other ways at this national conference.	

August 30 – Introductions. Background on the Society of Environmental Journalists, SEJ's 10th national conference and an overview of the fundamentals of good journalism. Examine web sites of SEJ (www.sej.org), Knight Center for Environmental Journalism (<http://environmental.jrn.msu.edu>) and Australia course (<http://australia.jrn.msu.edu>) .

September 6 – Lecture on writing a lede (beginning of a journalistic piece) and covering a speech and conference. In-class exercises. Students must turn in applications for SEJ membership and the conference registration.

September 13 – Lecture on interviewing. In class exercises.

September 20 – Some fundamentals of web design. Guest speaker: Darcy Greene, associate professor of journalism and an expert on the design of new media.

September 27 – Photography. Guest speaker: Howard Bossen, professor of journalism and assistant director of the J-School.

October 4 – Students will be asked to cover an event on campus, write a story about it and bring it to Oct. 11 class.

October 11 – Trial run in creating the conference's web site.

October 18 – Preparations for covering the conference.

October 19 to 22 – SEJ National Conference, Kellogg Center. Students will be asked to participate in and cover tours on Thursday, panel discussions on Friday and Saturday, mini-tours on Saturday, receptions on Thursday and Saturday, the writing workshops on Sunday; and other aspects of the conference.

October 25 – A tour to Michigan Out of Doors magazine is being planned.

November 1 – Article (s) for EJ News are due. A tour to the Great Lakes Radio Consortium in Ann Arbor is planned.

November 8 –Articles will be returned.

November 15 – No class. Work on articles for EJ News

November 29 – Rewrites of articles are due.

December 6 – Final class. Party!