

**Advanced Studies in Journalism: Journalistic Courage**  
**The 2017 McGill Program**  
**Lauren Herbert**

**Journalism Courage: A New Media and President Donald Trump**

**PART ONE**

Courage. Courage is a word that each and every journalist needs to contemplate in the next era of media. An era, where news is being claimed as fake, sources are being challenged and voices aren't being heard. In a landscape where people expect subjective, opinionated, half hearted information from the media, certain journalists are standing above it all. With diligence to provide objective, clear, and honest reporting, they are upholding a standard that should be the institutional norm. Many journalists are doing what needs to be done by asking the hard questions.

However, journalists are now faced with higher levels of scrutiny with the new President of the United States. It has only been 100 days since President Donald Trump went into office, and according to CNN's President, Jeff Zucker, "It's unfortunate that the most powerful person in the world is trying to delegitimize journalism and an organization that plays such a vital role in our democracy," Zucker [told New York Magazine](#). "I think he's entitled to his opinion, but it's to use one of his favorite words — sad." Those remarks came in response to Trump calling CNN "fake news" after the cable news network published a [report](#) showing U.S. intelligence officials had briefed the President on claims that the Kremlin had collected compromising information about him. On his very first day in office, President Trump called journalists "Among the most dishonest human beings on earth." Journalist have to show courage now more than ever and tell the truth. The editorial board members of Los Angeles Times wrote [Trump's War on Journalism](#), in which the piece explains how journalists' have a new reputation since Trump. The article begins with, "In Donald Trump's America, the mere act of reporting news

unflattering to the president is held up as evidence of bias. Journalists are slandered as enemies of the people.”

- How can a journalist stand up for themselves when many Americans view he or she as an enemy?
- Trump has been referring to many journalists’ work as “fake news,” therefore, how can a journalist stay confident in their work?
- Does a journalist leave a publication if it is deemed “fake news” by the most powerful man in the country?

## **PART TWO**

### Journalist Response

On February 24, 2017, President Trump turned away reporters out of the briefing from from The Times, BuzzFeed News, CNN, The Los Angeles Times, Politico, the BBC and The Huffington Post. According to Julie Davis at The [New York Times](#), “This was a highly unusual breach of relations between the White House and its press corps.” Trump continued to speak out against the news media on his [twitter](#) writing: “FAKE NEWS media knowingly doesn’t tell the truth. A great danger to our country. The failing @nytimes has become a joke. Likewise, @CNN. Sad!”

In response, [The New York Times](#) wrote, “The First Amendment can be inconvenient for anyone longing for power without scrutiny. Mr. Trump might want to brush up on what it means, and get used to it.” The New York Times editor, Dean Baquet said in a statement after publishing the response article, “Free media access to a transparent government is obviously of crucial national interest.” CNN’s Sara Murray went on the air and described how it felt to not be allowed in the White House and she explained how Trump will now make it harder for her to

stand up to the truth. Many journalists responded to Trump with the idea that America needs great journalists now more than ever.

In October of 2016, [Donald Trump](#) threatened to sue The New York Times for libel in response to an [article](#). The article told the story of how two women were accusing Trump of touching them inappropriately many years ago. However, reporter Megan Twohey, wrote the article and stood up for her reporting's even when Trump was threatening to sue. Twohey, told "[CBS This Morning](#)" that she would never publish the story without talking with the presidential candidate (at the time) - so she did. She then stated, "He insisted that all of allegations were a fabrication and that the New York Times was making them up and he got increasingly agitated as I continued my questions and started to yell at me he told me that I was a disgusting human being." Twohey said she knew the implications of publishing the story, but it was the truth and she stands by it.

- How does a journalist cover Trump fairly if he is backlashing their work?
- How do you cover Trump's tweets?
- Why is it important for a journalist to stand up for their work and themselves?

### **PART THREE**

#### Future of Journalism

With so many disruptive forces changing the way people work, live and exercise their choices on how they spend their time - one constant remains true, the need for information.

Journalists' roles as information conveyors will become even more important, regardless of the multitude of delivery platforms that will be available. The [Los Angeles Times](#) editorial board stated in an article, "The fundamentals of journalism are more important than ever. With the

president of the United States launching a direct assault on the integrity of the mainstream media, news organizations, including The Times, must be courageous in our reporting and resolute in our pursuit of the truth.”

In a [Pointer](#) article written by Benjamin Mullin, he explains how there is a need for more investigative journalists. He states, “In the months since the election, America's major newsrooms have been recruiting investigative journalists with the knowledge and skills to dig into government institutions at the federal, state and local levels.” Publications need courageous journalists to get the information, the right information and to stand up for the truth.

- How can a journalist be courageous in their reporting?
- Will the need for information always be as important? What if it is not? How will that shape the future of journalism?
- How is President Donald Trump changing journalism?