



Journalism History – 2024-25 Essay Competition Call

The Journalism History journal calls for scholarly essays that explore the development of journalism’s norms and practices – those subtle but significant values and beliefs that define journalism within and across national and cultural contexts.

Journalism’s professional norms and practices are understood to be culturally constructed. Matt Carlson¹ describes the product(s) of this construction as “metajournalistic discourse,” which helps to structure what Barbie Zelizer² calls the “interpretive communities” that produce journalistic meaning-making for societies.

Journalistic norms and practices can be constructed through tradition and might accelerate from a significant historical event or individual’s influence. They endure and evolve through communication from one generation of journalists to the next, constituting a professional “field.”³

This year’s competition seeks essays that explore the historical construction and development of the mosaic of professional norms and practices across cultural, generational, or national contexts around the globe. This exploration can be done through a significant historical event or individual within a specific national context, or it can be an examination of a norm or practice’s evolution over time or across cultural contexts in a given era.

Essay topics could include, but are not limited to, the development of norms, values, and practices around or in:

- Source relations and confidentiality

- Reporting methods
- “Objectivity”
- Journalistic activism
- Unique national or cultural contexts
- Emergent post-colonial contexts
- Media forms (newspaper, magazine, radio, television, early digital, etc.)
- Professional specialties (sports, politics, lifestyle, visual journalism, etc).

The winning essay will receive a \$100 (US) prize. Top essay(s) will be published in the Journalism History journal; runners-up will be published on the Journalism History website.

To be considered for inclusion in the essay series, please submit the following to jhistoryjournal@gmail.com by 11.59 p.m. Pacific time December 15, 2024:

- A brief CV (including publications).
- A 100- to 200-word synopsis of the topic you plan to discuss in your essay, along with a short list of key primary and secondary sources you plan to draw from.
- An affirmation that the essay has not been proposed or published elsewhere.

Essay selection and the schedule for publication will be decided by January 15, 2025. Completed essays accepted for online publication will be due approximately two weeks before their scheduled publication date. The essays to be published in the journal will be due by March 15, 2025.

Completed essays will be 1,000 to 1,500 words, excluding citations. Authors should cite primary and/or secondary sources to support their arguments. Both abstract and full essay submissions must be in English. The Chicago Manual of Style must be used for accepted essays.

Questions may be directed to Josie Vine, online content coordinator for Journalism History, at jhistoryjournal@gmail.com.

Notes

1 Matt Carlson, "Metajournalistic Discourse and the Meanings of Journalism: Definitional Control, Boundary Work, and Legitimation," *Communication Theory* 26, no. 4 (2016): 349-368.

2 Barbie Zelizer, *What Journalism Could Be* (John Wiley & Sons, 2017).

3 See Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, eds., *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*, (Polity, 2005).