

WHAT I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN AS A JOURNALISM MAJOR | WWU JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT

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Settling into a major can be intimidating. It's the answer to every relative's question on holiday breaks, and potentially the career path down which you will spend your foreseeable future. To help ease the stress as you navigate the journalism major, here is some wisdom from a student that came before you:

- If you can, take reporting before you do The Front, even if you're a PR or VJ major. It helps ease the pace of the class and allows you to enter with some of the skills you will need to complete the course. The Front can feel like a lot all at once, so do yourself a favor.
- If you're able, consider taking Mass Media Ethics before the majority of the major. The information you learn there can really inform your future reporting.
- Try out an editorship! Getting to be a part of both the writing and editing process can really inform your perspective as a journalist and make you appreciate all ends of the production process. It's also a great way to make friends within the major.
- The Front is hard! For everyone that takes it. It's meant to challenge you, so it's okay if it feels stressful at times or if you make mistakes. Your editors and adviser are there to support you throughout this process, so use them. This class is a great learning opportunity, and a great way to begin [filling out your portfolio](#).
- Before you commit to an internship, do your research! Make sure you know what your weekly hours will look like, if you can commit to them, and how those factor into the end date of your time there. Use your peers as well to see what others experienced working with a given publication/organization.
- Meet with your adviser yearly, if not quarterly, to go over your schedule and credits as you work through the major. Many students have had to extend their stay due to poor schedule planning, don't let yourself be one of them!
- Your second stint at The Front can also be achieved by taking an editorship for credit, so keep that in mind.
- If you are planning on doing your internship outside of Whatcom, figure things out early and give yourself some wiggle room in case things fall through or plans change.
- Consider joining journalism associated clubs like SPJ/PRSSA. You can make some great connections and build skills in the field.

- Don't be intimidated about starting the track "too late" or being "too old" for the classes you're taking. Some people get an early jump on completing the major requirements, but every person is different. No matter when you take The Front or any other classes, you're sure to find some great people that are in all different stages of the major.
- Even if you aren't on the VJ track, you should take a class in photojournalism at some point during your time at WWU. Knowing how to wield a camera is valuable to EVERYONE in our field.
- Do not take your track's capstone class at the same time as Senior Seminar if you can help it, it'll make for an extremely heavy quarter.
- Choose your 12 upper division credits in another academic area carefully. This should be something you enjoy, as you'll be taking at least three classes in this subject and it can be informative to your work in journalism. If you play your cards right, the completion of these credits can also put you close to achieving a minor.