**2019**

# COURSE
# OUTLINE

# Reporting on Children in the Media: Wits Accredited Certificate Course

# ABOUT THE COURSE:

Reporting on children presents many legal and ethical challenges. The media constantly has to navigate their way through the murky ethical waters and fight against a general lack of knowledge and sensitivity when reporting on children.The representation of children by the media is often in violation of the very children's rights that they vow to protect. This module aims to challenge the common representation of children and their issues in and by the media, as well as opens up new possibilities for alternative representation of children. In exploring how children are represented, this module ensures that new skills are acquired and demonstrates how children's rights can be respected in the media whilst ensuring journalism of the highest quality.

## Some of the Experts who Lecture & Participate in the Course:

- Mrs Joan van Niekerk, Child Rights Consultant
- Dr Ann Skelton, Director, Centre for Child Law
- Mr George Kalu: Child Participation Expert (Media Monitoring Africa)
- Mr William Bird, Director of Media Monitoring Africa
- Mr Lebogang Montjane, CEO of Isasa
- Diana Schwartz, Attorney and Social Media Law Practitioner

# A. Synopsis of the course:

## A1. Course objectives:

The reporting on children in the media course, ("the course") aims to challenge the common representation of children and their issues in and by the media, as well as open up new possibilities for alternative representations. The representation of children is often in violation of the very children's rights that the media seeks to protect.

The course, in exploring how children are represented, will ensure that not only will new skills be acquired but will also demonstrate how children's rights can be respected in the media whilst at the same time ensure journalism of the highest quality.

## The purpose of the course is to:

- Empower participants with knowledge and skills in children's rights, ethics and the law surrounding children;
- Give participants confidence and skills when reporting on children;
- Help participants to identify and follow best practice when reporting on children;
- Build the expertise of participants by providing them with both the theory and practical input;
- Help participants with their writing skills;
- Contribute to the creation of an ethical media and human-rights centred approach to children's reporting;
- Advance the creation of a media that not only values but also reflects diversity of opinions, including the opinions of children.

# A2. Course themes

The activities also fall under certain broader human rights themes that are of specific concern to children, particularly within an African context.

Children as survivors

Children and developmental issues

Children and their coping strategies and resilience

Children and their context within South Africa's legal framework and within an International Law framework

The rights of the child with specific reference to the right to participate and to be heard

# A3. Course learning outcomes

Through seminar based discourse, interactions with school-going learners and expert guidance, you will be able to understand and critically assess issues related to reporting on children by the media. This will be assisted by examining the impact of the media on children's lives.
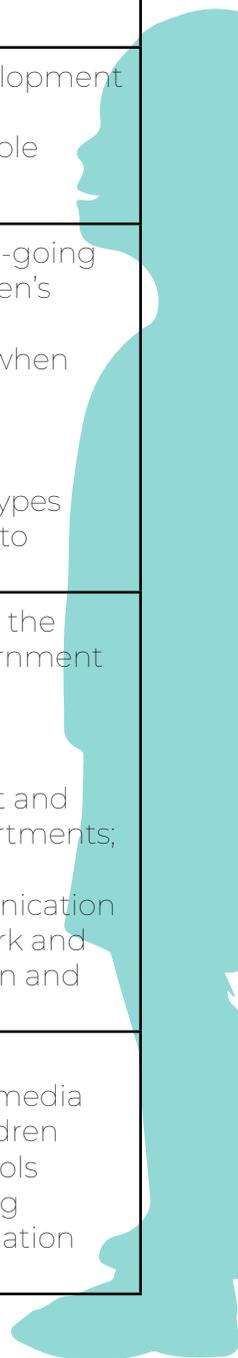
## By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Access experts (in a wide field) as well as children to ensure a diverse and informed perspective on issues that affect children; Integrate the learnings and experience of other journalists and expert into the way in which participants report children's stories;
- Identify and unpack the effect that poor media coverage of children can have on children and their issues;
- Develop practical strategies when reporting on children and ensure a human rights centred approach to their reporting;
- Present events in terms of issues and human interest to engage journalists;
- Write clearly and effectively on children's issues.

# B. COURSE CONTENT & SCHEDULE:

| COURSE OUTLINE | |
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| **1. Children and the Media and Making a Business Case for Covering Children** | · Introduction into the course and its requirements.<br>· Seeing children- Examine the visual representation of children in the news.<br>· Setting the context about the dominant visual? Stereotypes in the media regarding children and gender, race, HIV/Aids, poverty and crime.<br>· Involvement in children's media projects, making a newsroom child friendly, and reaching new audiences.<br>· Consideration of the new Press Code. |
| **2. Media Ethics and Children** | · Media Ethics: The ethics and general principles of reporting for the media and of reporting children in news.<br>· Importance of context, inclusion and adherence to legislation.<br>· Self-regulatory mechanisms within the media. Consideration of the role of the Press Ombudsman. |
| **3. Children and the Law** | · The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.<br>· South African Law including: the Bill of Rights, the Criminal Procedure Act, the Children's Act and the Child Justice Act.<br>· Issues of Divorce and Child Maintenance.<br>· Various case studies.<br>· The Criminal Justice System and child offenders/victims. |
| **4. Human Trafficking: Women and Children** | |

| COURSE OUTLINE | |
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| **5. Children and Early Development** | · Looking at Early Childhood Development issues in South Africa.<br>· Considering problems and possible solutions. |
| **6 & 7. Children's Participation Workshop** | · Practical session involving school-going learners from participating Children's Media Monitoring schools.<br>· Development of interview skills, when interviewing children.<br>· Age appropriate questions.<br>· Informed consent.<br>· Breaking down fears and stereotypes that journalists have with regards to interviewing children. |
| **8. Engaging with Government** | · Assisting Journalist in navigating the challenging environment of government communication.<br>· Engaging with governmental spokespeople.<br>· Obtaining meaningful comment and response from government departments; and<br>· Understanding how the communication structures within government work and who has the necessary information and authority to share it. |
| **9. Media Tools, Disinformation, the Media and Children.** | · Unpacking concepts around Disinformation and Media/Social media and looking at the impact on children<br>· Considering all Media Related Tools including Wazimap, the Real411.org Webportal for reporting disinformation and a range of others. |

| COURSE OUTLINE | |
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| **10. Understanding Child Abuse** | · Understanding child abuse – What are some of the root causes underlying the scourge of child abuse? Examination of its forms, societal responses and investigations.<br>· Common myths and misrepresentations in the media when reporting child abuse.<br>· Statistics, research and under-reporting of Child Abuse.<br>· Responsible reporting.<br>· The Law and Children Abuse, legal obligations and new legislation.<br>· Case studies.<br>· An in-depth consideration of the "Sexual Predator" and social context.<br>· Rehabilitation of the Sex Offender – a possibility? |
| **11. Writing Children** | · Finding ways to include children's voices.<br>· Engaging on issues around child participating and writing stories for and about children.<br>· Is there goodwill and support for a child's right perspective in the current and future political dispensation? |

| COURSE OUTLINE | |
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| **12. Children and the Education System** | · Children and education – South Africa's state of affairs when it comes to the education system. Root causes and contributing factors to this situation and the provisions in the Constitution.<br>· The media's reporting on some of the challenges besetting South Africa's educational environment. (school violence, corporal punishment; teenage pregnancy).<br>· The failure of the OBE Education System and the new system that is currently being implemented.<br>· Private School/Government School Debate. |
| **13. Social Media Ethics and the Law** | |
| **14. Children and Innovation** | · Looking at innovations in technology, science and media and the impact on children.<br>· Innovation for and by children. |
| **15. Children and Social Welfare & Development** | · Examination of issues around identity, poverty and child care grants.<br>· Looking at Disabled Children in the South African Context.<br>· An examination of the Social Welfare System in South Africa.<br>· How has the media been covering these issues? |
| **16. Social Networking and Media** | · What is it and why is it important?<br>· What are some of the dangers of operating in this arena?<br>· What steps are being taken to protect children? |

# B.2 Duration of the Course

The course is a 2 week block release course comprising of 16 Seminars, which take the form of interactive lectures and self-directed activities. The course will introduce you to some of the human rights and children's rights theory with the hope of developing a framework for analysis of articles and bulletins in the media. The course will encourage both exploration of different themes related to children's rights and application of this new learning to practice.

The course's building blocks should, by the end of Seminar 16, bring you to the point of being able to show insight into the media's representation and portrayal of children and their issues. You should be able to identify the media's violation of children's rights, identify the relevant legislation and guidelines, press codes and ethical considerations that have been violated and be able to suggest corrective measures.

**Assessment:** Participants are required to attend 100% of seminars and contribute to class discussions.

| DESCRIPTION | WEIGHT |
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| Take part in a diary meeting and present a story idea about children | 20% |
| Submit a long piece of work (created for the course and based on your diary meeting story idea which will be externally moderated. | 40% |
| Open-book online examination to test knowledge and application of what has been learnt during the course to facts presented as a real-life case study which will be externally moderated. | 40% |

# B.3 Date of the Course

The Course is scheduled to run as follows:
Week 1: 18 June – 21 June 2019.
Seminars run from 08:15am until approximately 4pm each day.

Week 2: 24 June to 28 June 2019.
Seminars run from 08:15am until approximately 4pm each day.

Entrance requirements: a minimum of 2 years reporting experience or a degree/diploma in journalism with a minimum of 6 months reporting experience.

## TO REGISTER:
## Contact Taryn Hinton at Media Monitoring Africa 082 940 6188 or tarynh@mma.org.za before 31 May 2019