

Документ подписан простой электронной подписью  
Информация о владельце:  
ФИО: Ястребов Олег Александрович  
Должность: Ректор  
Дата подписания: 31.08.2026 15:04:44  
Уникальный программный ключ:  
ca953a0120d891083f939673078ef1a989dae18a

**Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education  
PEOPLES' FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY OF RUSSIA  
RUDN University**

### **Faculty of Philology**

---

educational division (faculty/institute/academy) as higher education programme developer

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **Investigative journalism**

---

course title

### **Recommended by the Didactic Council for the Education Field of:**

---

42.04.02 Journalism

field of studies / speciality code and title

### **The course instruction is implemented within the professional education programme of higher education:**

---

Global and Digital Media

higher education programme profile/specialisation title

**2026**

## 1. OBJECTIVE OF THE DISCIPLINE

The aim of the course is to develop students' ability to plan, conduct, and present journalistic investigations based on systematic research, critical analysis, verification of information, ethical decision-making, and responsible work with sources. The course focuses on investigative methods applicable to contemporary print, broadcast, and digital media, including open-source research, document analysis, interviewing, data analysis, and multimedia presentation.

The main objectives are:

- to introduce students to the principles, functions, genres, and professional standards of investigative journalism;
- to develop students' ability to identify socially significant topics, formulate investigative hypotheses, and design feasible investigation plans;
- to provide practical training in searching for, collecting, comparing, and verifying information from documentary, human, digital, and open sources;
- to develop skills in conducting investigative interviews and working responsibly with confidential, vulnerable, and reluctant sources;
- to enhance students' ability to analyse documents, databases, public records, digital traces, and other forms of evidence;
- to introduce methods of open-source investigation, fact-checking, geolocation, image and video verification, and digital source assessment;
- to develop students' ability to evaluate legal, ethical, professional, and security risks at different stages of an investigation;
- to improve skills in structuring and presenting investigative material in clear, evidence-based, and audience-oriented formats;
- to develop collaborative project management skills required for planning, producing, editing, and presenting an investigative journalism project.

## 2. REQUIREMENTS TO STUDENTS ON FINISHING THE COURSE

Students are expected to master the following competencies:

*Table 2.1. The list of competencies formed in the mastering of the discipline (the results of the discipline)*

| Code | Competence                                                                                                           | Indicators of competence achievement<br>(within the discipline)                                                          |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UC-1 | Able to critically analyze problem situations on the basis of a systematic approach, to develop a strategy of action | UC-1.1 Knows types, methods, and concepts of critical analysis                                                           |
|      |                                                                                                                      | UC-1.2 Can apply types, methods, and concepts of critical analysis to develop a plan of action in problematic situations |
|      |                                                                                                                      | UC-1.3 Knows the basic principles that define the purpose and strategy for dealing with complex situations               |
| UC-4 | Able to use modern communication technologies in the state language of                                               | UC-4.1. Knows the basic principles and rules of business, academic and professional ethics;                              |

| Code | Competence                                                                               | Indicators of competence achievement<br>(within the discipline)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | the Russian Federation and foreign language(s) for academic and professional interaction | basic means of information and communication technology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|      |                                                                                          | UC-4.2 Can present scientific and professional information in Russian and foreign (-s) languages intelligently, clearly and accessible in written and/or oral form; create texts of official and scientific style of speech in Russian and foreign (-s) languages when presenting professional issues; edit and proofread official, scientific and professional texts in Russian and foreign (-s) languages; use modern information and communication technologies for academic and professional interaction |
|      |                                                                                          | UC-4.3 Knows the skills of effective oral and written communication in the process of academic and professional interaction in Russian and foreign language(s), including the use of modern information and communication technologies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

### 3. THE DISCIPLINE (MODULE) IN THE STRUCTURE OF EP HE

The discipline “Investigative journalism” belongs to the Part formed by participants of educational relations of Block 1 of the curriculum. Table 1 shows preceding and subsequent subjects aimed at forming competence discipline in accordance with the matrix of competencies.

*Table 3.1. The list of components of the EP HE, contributing to the achievement of the planned results of the discipline*

| Code | Name of competence                                                                                                   | Previous discipline                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Subsequent disciplines                                                                                                                                                               |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UC-1 | Able to critically analyze problem situations on the basis of a systematic approach, to develop a strategy of action | Modern mass communication theories /<br>Современные теории массовой коммуникации<br>Methodology and methods of media research /<br>Методология и методика медиаисследований<br>Professional workshop /<br>Профессиональная мастерская | Professional workshop /<br>Профессиональная мастерская<br>Research practice /<br>Научно-исследовательская практика<br>MA Qualification Thesis /<br>Выпускная квалификационная работа |

| Code | Name of competence                                                                                                                                              | Previous discipline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Subsequent disciplines                                                                                                     |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |                                                                                                                                                                 | Academic writing /<br>Академическое письмо                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                            |
| UC-4 | Able to use modern communication technologies in the state language of the Russian Federation and foreign language(s) for academic and professional interaction | Modern media text /<br>Современный медиатекст<br>Foreign language (Russian as a foreign language) /<br>Иностранный язык (русский язык как иностранный)<br>Mobile journalism /<br>Мобильная журналистика<br>Sports reporting /<br>Спортивная журналистика<br>Social marketing and journalism /<br>Социальный маркетинг и журналистика<br>Data journalism /<br>Журналистика данных | Research practice /<br>Научно-исследовательская практика<br>MA Qualification Thesis /<br>Выпускная квалификационная работа |

#### 4. THE SCOPE OF THE DISCIPLINE AND TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

The overall workload of the discipline is **3** credits.

*Table 4.1. Types of educational work by periods of study of the EP HE for the full-time mode of study*

| Type of activity                       |           | TOTAL,<br>ac. hours | Semester (s) |   |     |   |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------|---|-----|---|
|                                        |           |                     | 1            | 2 | 3   | 4 |
| <i>Classroom activities, ac. hours</i> |           | 17                  |              |   | 17  |   |
| Including:                             |           |                     |              |   |     |   |
| Lectures                               |           |                     |              |   |     |   |
| Laboratory activities                  |           |                     |              |   |     |   |
| <i>Practical lessons/Seminars</i>      |           | 17                  |              |   | 17  |   |
| <i>Independent work, ac. hours</i>     |           | 82                  |              |   | 82  |   |
| <i>Control, ac. hours</i>              |           | 9                   |              |   | 9   |   |
| <b>Overall workload</b>                | ac. hours | 108                 |              |   | 108 |   |
|                                        | credits   | 3                   |              |   | 3   |   |

#### 5. CONTENT OF THE DISCIPLINE

*Table 5.1 Content of the discipline (module) by type of activity*

| <b>Name of the Unit</b>                                    | <b>Content of the Units (topics)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Type of activity</b>    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Unit 1. Foundations of Investigative Journalism            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigative journalism as a professional practice and public-interest activity;</li> <li>- Distinctions between investigative reporting, in-depth reporting, and routine news coverage;</li> <li>- Functions, values, and social significance of journalistic investigations;</li> <li>- Historical development and contemporary forms of investigative journalism;</li> <li>- Professional standards, editorial responsibility, and evidence-based reporting.</li> </ul>               | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 2. Developing an Investigative Idea and Research Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of socially significant topics and potential investigative problems;</li> <li>- Formulation of investigative hypotheses, research questions, and expected findings;</li> <li>- Preliminary research and assessment of the feasibility of an investigation;</li> <li>- Mapping key actors, institutions, events, relationships, and information gaps;</li> <li>- Preparation of an investigation plan, timeline, source strategy, and risk assessment.</li> </ul>           | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 3. Sources and Investigative Interviewing             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classification and evaluation of human, documentary, digital, and institutional sources;</li> <li>- Source credibility, motivation, access, and possible conflicts of interest;</li> <li>- Preparation and conduct of investigative interviews;</li> <li>- Work with confidential, anonymous, vulnerable, and reluctant sources;</li> <li>- Documentation of source communication and protection of sensitive information.</li> </ul>                                                     | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 4. Documents, Records, and Evidence                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Search for and analysis of official documents, public records, reports, and databases;</li> <li>- Verification of the origin, authenticity, relevance, and context of documentary evidence;</li> <li>- Comparison of documents, statements, timelines, and factual inconsistencies;</li> <li>- Organisation, classification, and secure storage of investigative materials;</li> <li>- Development of an evidence chain and identification of gaps requiring further research.</li> </ul> | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 5. Open-Source and Digital Investigation Methods      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principles and limitations of open-source intelligence in journalism;</li> <li>- Advanced online search, source tracing, and verification of digital identities;</li> <li>- Verification of images, videos, websites, social media content, and digital traces;</li> <li>- Introductory methods of geolocation, chronolocation, and metadata analysis;</li> <li>- Ethical and secure use of digital investigation tools and publicly available information.</li> </ul>                    | Practical lessons/Seminars |

| <b>Name of the Unit</b>                                | <b>Content of the Units (topics)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Type of activity</b>    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Unit 6. Data Analysis in Investigative Journalism      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use of datasets, spreadsheets, and structured information in journalistic investigations;</li> <li>- Data cleaning, sorting, filtering, comparison, and identification of patterns;</li> <li>- Interpretation of quantitative evidence and avoidance of misleading conclusions;</li> <li>- Integration of data findings with documentary and interview-based evidence;</li> <li>- Visual presentation of investigative data through tables, charts, maps, and timelines.</li> </ul>               | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 7. Verification, Fact-Checking, and Corroboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Verification of claims, allegations, quotations, documents, and source testimony;</li> <li>- Triangulation and corroboration of information from multiple independent sources;</li> <li>- Identification of manipulation, fabrication, selective evidence, and misleading context;</li> <li>- Maintenance of an investigative log and transparent documentation of verification procedures;</li> <li>- Pre-publication fact-checking and preparation of evidence for editorial review.</li> </ul> | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 8. Ethics, Law, and Security                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public interest, proportionality, fairness, and the right of reply;</li> <li>- Privacy, reputation, confidentiality, copyright, and responsible use of personal data;</li> <li>- Ethical dilemmas related to deception, covert methods, and publication of sensitive material;</li> <li>- Physical, digital, legal, and psychological risks in investigative work;</li> <li>- Personal and team security protocols, secure communication, and protection of sources.</li> </ul>                   | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 9. Writing and Producing an Investigative Story   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection of an appropriate narrative structure for investigative material;</li> <li>- Presentation of evidence, context, findings, and counterarguments;</li> <li>- Integration of interviews, documents, data, and multimedia elements into a coherent story;</li> <li>- Editing for accuracy, clarity, fairness, legal safety, and audience comprehension;</li> <li>- Adaptation of investigative content for print, broadcast, online, and multimedia formats.</li> </ul>                     | Practical lessons/Seminars |
| Unit 10. Investigative Journalism Project              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selection and justification of an investigation topic;</li> <li>- Preparation of an investigative proposal and detailed research plan;</li> <li>- Collection, verification, and systematisation of evidence;</li> <li>- Production and presentation of an original investigative journalism project;</li> <li>- Reflection on methodology, ethical decisions, limitations, and further research opportunities.</li> </ul>                                                                         | Practical lessons/Seminars |

## 6. MATERIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT OF THE DISCIPLINE

The discipline is implemented using e-learning and distance learning technologies

*Table 6.1. Material and technical support of the discipline*

| Type of classroom | Classroom equipment                                                                                                                  | Specialized educational/laboratory equipment, software and materials for the mastering of the discipline (if necessary) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Class             | A classroom is equipped with a computer, TV VCR and a transparency projector. CD players and DVD players are available upon request. |                                                                                                                         |

*\* The classroom for students' independent work **MUST be indicated!***

## 7. EDUCATIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL AND INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT OF THE DISCIPLINE

### *Main readings*

1. de Burgh H., Lashmar P. (eds.). Investigative Journalism. – 3rd ed. – London; New York: Routledge, 2021.
2. Hunter M. L. et al. Story-Based Inquiry: A Manual for Investigative Journalists. – 2nd ed. – Paris: UNESCO, 2026.

### *Other recommended readings*

3. Price S. (ed.). Journalism, Power and Investigation: Global and Activist Perspectives. – London; New York: Routledge, 2019.
4. Bradshaw P. The Online Journalism Handbook: Skills to Survive and Thrive in the Digital Age. – 3rd ed. – London; New York: Routledge, 2023.
5. Ettema J. S., Glasser T. L. Custodians of Conscience: Investigative Journalism and Public Virtue. – New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
6. Starkman D. The Watchdog That Didn't Bark: The Financial Crisis and the Disappearance of Investigative Journalism. – New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
7. Gillers S. Journalism Under Fire: Protecting the Future of Investigative Reporting. – New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.

### *Web-sites and online resources*

- RUDN University Scientific Library and electronic library systems available to students under the University's subscription agreements.
- Global Investigative Journalism Network – guides, case studies, databases, and training materials for investigative journalists.
- UNESCO – publications and educational resources on investigative journalism, freedom of expression, journalists' safety, and media ethics.

1. Databases and search systems:
  - The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <https://plato.stanford.edu/>

*Teaching materials for students' independent work while mastering the discipline/module\*:*

1. A course of lectures on the discipline.
2. Practical assignments and their brief contents;
3. Questions for self-check, test assignments.

\* - all educational and methodical materials for students' independent work are published in accordance with the current order on the page of the discipline in TUIS!

## **8. GRADING MATERIALS AND GRADING-RATING SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE FORMED IN THE DISCIPLINE**

The grading materials and grading-rating system\* for assessing the level of competence (part of competences) for the discipline are presented in the Appendix to this Working program of the discipline.

\* - are formed on the basis of the requirements of the corresponding local normative act of RUDN University.