JMSC’S GLOBAL REACH:

High-tech Skills and Critical Thinking in Demand
East Meets West in JMSC Curriculum

A hotbed of journalism bustles behind Eliot Hall’s red brick facade. Inside the home of the Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC), a faculty of world-renowned media professionals and scholars cultivates the next generation of global journalists.

Journalists are the pillars of free society. Call them the Fourth Estate, the watchdogs of government, the torch-bearers of democracy. The catchphrases suggest one truth: the profession is essential in our ever-changing world.

Each year, JMSC graduates realise this integral role as they join the ranks of working journalists around the world. Along with local undergrads and postgrads last year, JMSC students came from more than 20 countries.

Oxford graduate Philippa Stewart came to the JMSC from the United Kingdom to study a Master of Journalism.

“This year has been the most interesting and exciting year of my life,” Stewart said. “If anyone would have told me a year ago that I would have interned at The Jakarta Post, worked at Forbes Magazine in Hong Kong, been to Vietnam to record a piece for ABC, was about to go to New York and had a cover story in the South China Morning Post weekend magazine, I would not have believed them!”

She joined local students like Marco Lui (BJ 2007; MI, Year 1), who had completed a bachelor’s degree at the JMSC in 2007 and returned to further hone his skills. Lui will finish his Master of Journalism degree in the fall and was recently hired as a fulltime reporter at Bloomberg in Hong Kong.

The University of Hong Kong’s location at the crossroads of Asia offers a multilingual environment to practice journalism, situated beside the world’s largest emerging media market—mainland China. Student journalists also enjoy the benefit of Hong Kong’s famous press freedom and rule of law.

“We are in the heart of Asia, at the doorstep of China,” said Professor Chan Yuen-ying 陈婉莹 (BSocSc 1970), director and founder of the JMSC. “We offer education with both an international perspective and local knowledge.”

The JMSC enriches the local media environment with fresh talent. It also provides foreign student journalists an ideal springboard to launch a career reporting on China—a beat becoming increasingly important as China’s economy continues to grow.

Meanwhile, the Centre also helps mainland students achieve their aspirations to work in English-language or foreign Chinese-language media.

A generation of media professionals is becoming technologically outdated. Newspapers have undergone massive layoffs worldwide, and the Internet presents a new host of competitors, swollen with the ranks of bloggers and citizen journalists.

The JMSC is on top of all these changes and adept at teaching students the necessary new skills (such as multimedia editing or website content management systems) while also imparting long existing journalistic values and ethics.

Annie Zhang 张素平 (MJ 2006), was awarded Journalist of the Year, 2010, by the Society of Publishers in Asia.
Journalism and Media Studies Centre
Founded in 1999, the Journalism and Media Studies Centre (JMSC) is Asia’s premier journalism school - situated in Hong Kong, a vibrant media hub at the crossroads of Asia. The Centre is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in journalism and fostering Asian voices in the international media.

Degree Programmes
• Bachelor of Journalism (BJ)
• Master of Journalism (MJ)
• Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) / Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Journalism

Key Faculty
• Thomas Abraham, Assistant Professor and Director, Public Health Communication Project. Author and former editor of South China Morning Post. Served as head of news at World Health Organization in Geneva while on leave from HKU in 2009.
• Chan Yuen-ying 陳婉盈, Director and Professor, returned to her native Hong Kong in 1998 to start the Centre after an award-winning career at the New York Daily News and elsewhere in the US. Her honors include a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University and an International Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists.
• Fu King Wa 吳景華, Research Assistant Professor. Former journalist at Hong Kong Economic Journal. Has PhD from JMSc with research focus on health communication, research method, measurement and statistics in journalism.
• Qian Gang 錢鋼, Director, China Media Project. Author and former producer at Central China TV and editor of groundbreaking Southern Weekend newspaper.
• Masato Kajimoto, Teaching Consultant and Web specialist. Former online reporter and web producer for CNN.
• Jim Laurie, Senior Teaching Consultant and Director, Broadcasting Programme. Formerly of ABC TV in the US and Star TV in Asia.
• Gene Mustain, Senior Teaching Consultant and Director, Reporting and Writing Programme. Author and former reporter in New York and Chicago.
• Diane Stormont, Senior Teaching Consultant and online specialist. Formerly a print journalist and Hong Kong Bureau Chief for Reuters.
• Miklos Sukosd, Associate Professor. Noted for his research in political communication and democratic performance of the media in post-communist states.
• Jeff Timmermans, Teaching Consultant. Formerly a financial and business reporter for The Wall Street Journal in Tokyo and a managing editor for Dow Jones Newswires in Hong Kong and Singapore.
• Rusty Todd, Professor and Director, Business Journalism Programme. Former reporter and editor at The Wall Street Journal, executive with Dow Jones/Telerate, state editor at Austin American-Statesman.
• Nancy Tong 湯美如, Visiting Associate Professor. Award-winning independent film and documentary maker in New York. Former news reporter for Television Broadcasts Ltd (TVB) in Hong Kong.
• Doreen Weisenhaus, Associate Professor and Director, Media Law Project. Author, lawyer and former city editor of The New York Times.

Taking Learning to the Streets

The JMSc method goes beyond class work, lectures and the boundaries of Hong Kong. Internships play an important role in experiential learning facilitated by the JMSc and its multitude of media partners.

Temmy Jaya Goban is a first-year Bachelor of Journalism student who came to Hong Kong from Malaysia. She will begin an eight week internship at CNN Hong Kong in July.

“I’m really excited that my first exposure to broadcast media will be with one of the best news stations in the world. Right now, I think broadcast journalism is something I want to pursue,” she said.

Her classmates are now enjoying local intern placements including Chinese and English-language newspapers and magazines (South China Morning Post, The Standard, Ming Pao, HK Magazine, Time Out, BC Magazine and many more), television stations (TVB and ATV), and local international media like Forbes, Reuters and Bloomberg.

Other students are participating in international internships, such as a group of four students interning in Cambodia at The Phnom Penh Post, in Indonesia at the Jakarta Globe, in Beijing at bureaus for broadcasters including Al Jazeera, CNN, and others, and at a station in Shanghai. American intern placements include a newswire in San Francisco called New America Media. One undergrad is interning in Vancouver at a television station, while another is interning at a media outlet in Taiwan. The list goes on.

A degree in journalism allows students to pursue careers beyond the typical media field.

Recently, Yolanda Ma 马金 cited (BSocSc 2009, MJ) interned at Time Out magazine, the World Wildlife Fund in Hong Kong and at the United Nations Development Programme in Beijing.

Many students at the JMSc are already working journalists who write for publications around the world.

Joije Olsson (MJ, Year 1), a student from Sweden, has been sending articles home about environmental and social issues in China. He writes for Swedish publications like Fokus and Sweden’s largest newspaper, Aftonbladet, tackling stories such as logging in Malaysian rain forests and coal mining in one of the world’s most polluted cities – Linfen in China.

Other students have explored personal areas of expertise to establish their niche in the global media market.

Blogger Jonathan Stray (MJ, Year 1) writes regularly about the future of online journalism for Harvard University’s Neiman Lab, and The New York Times published an op-ed by Gao Yubing 高玉兵 (MJ, Year 1) on Shanghai’s pajama ban. Gao’s story was listed as one of the site’s most e-mailed articles when it was published.
Business Media a Strong Market for JMSC Grads

The JMSC is the leading journalism school in the area for sending students into international and local business media; it has been teaching business journalism since 2000.

The list of organisations snapping up talented young journalists from the JMSC is an impressive one; among them: Bloomberg, Forbes, Thomson-Reuters, the Wall Street Journal Asia, the Hong Kong Economic Times, Ming Pao Daily news business desk, the South China Morning Post business desk, the Hong Kong Economic Journal, Fin24.com, Dow Jones News Wire, the Financial Times, Now TV (Business News Channel), TVB’s programme Money Magazine, the Economist Business Unit, Caijing, Caixin, and the now defunct Far Eastern Economic Review.

Leani Wessels (MJ 2009) is working at Fin24.com, South Africa’s biggest online financial publication, and Finweek, a weekly financial magazine. She joined the company after she returned to her native South Africa in June 2009, at first as on an internship arranged by the JMSC and then later as a full-time employee. Wessels started out doing content management system work but progressed quickly to being a reporter.

“My beat involves the listed property and construction companies in South Africa,” Wessels said. “I’ve recently also been asked to tackle a new “Special Reports” section where I have to help decide how the content is presented.”

Kim Huang 廖立堅 (MJ 2009), works as a reporter for the Hong Kong Economic Times where he writes breaking news at the speed desk, monitoring stock markets in Hong Kong and China as well as writing feature stories on listed companies. Huang sought work in the financial sector as he felt that is where the jobs are.


During his time at the JMSC, Olsen completed other internships at Bloomberg TV and the Economist Group. He says that the JMSC trained him up for the job:

All of the students who have decided to pursue business journalism have done so out of a desire to inform people as well as people who work in finance.

“My interest in covering the business and financial news comes from a desire to pursue stories that have a direct impact on people’s livelihoods,” Olsen said.

“Economics plays a big role in our lives by determining what opportunities are available to us in terms of education, housing and employment, but the business press is too often written for investors and business people rather than the general public. The best business news involves storytelling that does appeal to a wider audience.”

More than 70 local and international employers hired JMSC students and alumni for internships/jobs in 2009:

International Experience with Major Media Crucial to JMSC Training

Experiential learning, literally learning through doing, has been an integral part of the JMSC since the school’s inception in 1999, through its practical, hands-on classes, extensive internship programme and collaborative projects with local and international media. The most exciting development of the JMSC this year has been a highly successful collaboration with the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in the United States. Funded by a 2009-10 Teaching Development Grant, the JMSC ABC News on Campus team has been pitching ideas to ABC for broadcast on TV and on its website.

President of Network News) and ABC News told us that being able to shoot and edit video is a requisite for anyone who wants to work at any American television news operation," he said. "Producers, reporters ... everyone needs those skills plus online journalism too – just to get in the door. These developments make our approach in emphasizing video journalism all the more important for all grad and undergrad students."

Laurie added that one of the most informative meetings of the trip was looking at news online. "One of the more fascinating sessions we had was a detailed briefing from the supervising editor of ABCNews.com on how he edits and 'composes' the front page of the site. It is striking how important the identification of what is 'trending' is to the process. We learned how editors monitor constantly hits, page views, etc. as they alter on-line layout and compete in the online news world. In days gone by, newspapers adjusted content based on circulation figures studied over months of time. Today editors respond to page view interests in seconds."

The students learned how the industry is changing and how young journalists now need to be able to multitask. "The basic idea is to give the tasks of what used to be done by a three or four person crew to one person," said MJ student Li Li 李理 (MJ, Year 1). "This way the expensive cost of an overseas bureau can be reduced to just the cost of one person. This person shoots video, stills and produces text and video packages, which is exactly what we learns at the JMSC."

Since November 2009, BJ and MJ students with strong skills in video journalism have embarked on field reporting trips for ABC News. New video stories from this project will be published by ABC News through September 2010. Based on the successful experience, plans are under way to expand the collaboration with other major international broadcasters.

Thanks to this experiential learning project, students have had the opportunity to report for ABC from Hong Kong, mainland China, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In addition, a group of students spent four days on a study trip to New York to visit the headquarters of international media giants ABC News and NBC News and be briefed in this study tour by top American journalists.

Jim Laurie, the JMSC’s Director of Broadcasting and an ex-ABC man himself, accompanied the students on the trip. "We were struck that both NBC News (no less than the Senior Vice
Journalism in a digital age requires a multifunctional brain, one that combines a keen and questioning mind with the high levels of technical ability required to report independently and critically and also to operate cameras, upload audio and edit and present articles using digital equipment and software.

The Centre’s curriculum for both Bachelor and Master of Journalism students caters to all these requirements. The MJ program offers students a broad spectrum of courses that address academic needs such as critical issues and global communication and literacy. All MJ students are required to take practical skills courses, including Television News Production, Multimedia Production, Online Journalism, and News and Feature Writing.

Clement Rossignol (MJ, Year 1), a Master of Journalism student from France, comments on the practical nature of the course: “It is really good for people with limited experience in journalism because through the numerous practical assignments that we do we build up a portfolio of written articles, videos, TV scripts, radio bulletins, as well as getting familiarised with online publishing tools.”

As universities in Hong Kong move toward a four-year curriculum in 2012, all programmes have started to include internships and work placements as part of their courses. The JMSc is ahead of the curve. Such experiences have been an integral part of the school since its inception.

JMSc Director Chan Yuen-ying says internships are at the heart of the School’s programmes. “Internships have always been an integral part of the JMSc’s programme. For a practical discipline like journalism, there is no substitute for learning in real life situations under the guidance of industry experts. We are grateful to our industry partners for their support.”

Internships provide students a chance to gain work placements during the course of their studies. The JMSc has established a wide and constantly expanding internship network with dozens of local, regional and international media partners.

Dong Jinzhi (M, Year 1), a Master of Journalism student from mainland China, spent a month at Al Jazeera English Beijing Bureau, where she helped find interviewees for the news, then assisted the team with shooting and interviewing.

“I learned that collecting good news sources and adaptability are two of the main things required at an international news channel,” she said.

In many cases, internships have led to full-time jobs. Alumnus Cornelius Rahn (MJ 2009), who graduated last summer, now works at Bloomberg in his native Germany as the result of a successful Internship. He had previously interned at The Phnom Penh Post in Cambodia.

Deirdre Wang Morris (BA 2006; MJ, Year 1), a student about to graduate from the JMSc wrote this thank-you to the school.

The trip to New York was the culmination of a wonderful year at HKU and I have a deep appreciation for the programme for giving us these opportunities. I have to admit that I was a little skeptical starting out this programme. Coming from a business background, I wasn’t sure about making the leap to journalism, a fragmented industry in the middle of huge changes. However, after completing the course, I feel that I am on the leading edge of these changes and have a real part to play in contributing to what the field might look like in the future.

The ABC project was by far the highlight of my year at HKU. It’s one thing to sit in a classroom and be taught how to write, shoot and edit. It’s a totally different experience to do it in the real world and be rewarded by seeing the final product broadcast on American television. No doubt that because of the programme and the help of all the staff, I now have the opportunities that I do - specifically going off to Beijing to work for CCTV as a business news anchor.
JMSC Forges Partnership Across Campus

The JMSC is involved in numerous collaborations with other faculties, sharing, exchanging and transferring knowledge among departments at HKU.

A notable example is the decade-long partnership with the Faculty of Law. Joint research and writing projects with law faculty members involve topics such as freedom of information, national security, privacy and defamation.

The JMSC has also collaborated with the Faculty of Arts on research, exhibitions, seminars, film screenings, symposiums and lecture series.

Nancy Tong, a filmmaker who teaches documentary making at the JMSC, recently joined hands with the cultural critic, Sze Wei Ang, from the Department of Comparative Literature to give a symposium on the History of Chinese in America at the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

The JMSC and the Faculty of Medicine work together on a Public Health Communication Project. Run by the JMSC’s Thomas Abraham, the project covers research, articles and teaching.

“Collaboration between the faculties is absolutely essential,” Abraham said. “The Faculty of Medicine does research on public health that we report on. Researchers at the medical faculty are also keen to learn how to better communicate their work to the public.”

Abraham is also working alongside the Faculty of Science on a new Common Core Course called “How the Mass Media Depict Science, Technology and the Natural World.”

Abraham sees this kind of interdepartmental cross-fertilisation becoming more common in the future: “We hope to offer more courses on reporting health, science and the environment in future, so these sorts of collaborations can only increase.”

The JMSC has also collaborated extensively with the Asian Case Studies Centre, the Faculty of Business and Economics. The JMSC’s Rob McBride, Jim Laurie, Ka Ho Ng, 伍家豪 and Roy Ching, 程俊銘 co-produced an 11-part series called Asia Business Leaders for the BBC’s International news station, BBC World. These programmes were subsequently used as a teaching tool for the Faculty of Business and Economics who co-produced and funded the project.

Another example of successful teamwork with the Faculty of Business and Economics was the lecture that international financier and philanthropist George Soros gave in February.

The JMSC also works together with many other faculties and service units of HKU in making promotional videos and also training their staff in writing and online media so they can improve their websites and other written information.

A partial list of JMSC collaborations with HKU faculties

**Faculty of Architecture**
Seminars and knowledge exchange activities at the Shanghai learning centre.

**Faculty of Arts**
Film screenings, seminars, symposiums and talks with the Department of Comparative Literature.

**Humanities Now: Perspectives Across Cultures** lecture series joined lecturer Professor Leo Lee Ou-fan 李弼言, 与 the School of Humanities.

**Faculty of Business and Economics**
Research and production of 11-part Asia Business Leaders series aired on BBC World to more than 200 countries around the world; collaborated research in case studies on media companies.

Sponsorship of talks organized by the JMSC, including “A Conversation with George Soros.”
Generous Supporters Share Our Mission of Excellence

The JMSC has received substantial support since its outset in the form of generous donations by groups and individuals who are committed to journalism education. These donations have helped the JMSC to achieve its vision of being at the cutting edge of journalism education. They have paid for facilities, equipment, scholarships, internships, lectures, exhibitions, symposiums and much more. The JMSC is grateful for all the support it receives.

- The Shum and Lee families are the JMSC’s earliest sponsors, providing more than HK$8.5 million over the last decade to support interns and provide scholarships and give us the latest technology and an endowment for a Distinguished Lecture Programme in Digital Media.

- The SCMP Wah Kiu Yat Po Journalism Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to local, mainland and international students. The SCMP recently donated HK$2 million to the JMSC to set up this fund.

- Arnold Zeitlin, a veteran journalist, set up a fund in memory of his late wife, Vicky, 10 years ago. The Vicky Zeitlin Memorial Scholarship Scheme funds scholarships for mainland and postgraduate students.

- Frank Proctor, the Publisher of Muse Magazine, Hong Kong’s leading English language arts and culture magazine, has donated funds for student tuition, internships, exchanges and also sponsored lectures, seminars and other events.

- The William Woo Memorial Scholarship Fund was set up by friends and relatives of the late William Woo, Professor of Journalism at Stanford University and visiting professor at the JMSC.

- The HKUGA Scholarship fund was started by well known Hong Kong journalist and HKU alumnus, Ching Cheong (SocSc 1973). It provides funding for undergraduate and postgraduate students studying at the JMSC.

Faculty of Education
Research collaboration and seminars. Qian Gang, Director of the JMSC’s China Media Project is a regular guest speaker for the faculty.

Faculty of Law
Joint student project on reconstruction in the Sichuan quake area. JMSC students filmed, documented the work and helped edit a book recording the project.

Faculty of Science
In 2008, the Hong Kong chapter of Creative Commons, an international system of intellectual property rights management, was launched as a joint project of the JMSC, and Faculty of Law Associate Professor Alice Lee (LLB 1990; PCLL, 1999) and Dr. U Yehoh (LLB). The Faculty of Law’s Centre for Comparative and Public Law and the JMSC co-sponsored a panel discussion by the members of the South East Asia Media Legal Defense Network at the JMSC’s International Media Conference in April 2010. JMSC Associate Professor Doreen Weinberger, Director of the Media Law Project, lectures law students on freedom of expression; conducts joint research and writing projects with law faculty members on freedom of information, national security, privacy and defamation; co-authored chapters in books.