



DU is First North American University to Offer Cannabis Journalism Course

With Colorado serving as the petri dish of the marijuana legalization experiment, DU's department of Media, Film and Journalism Studies (MFJS) became the first to offer a course solely devoted to cannabis journalism, during summer interterm 2015.

Throughout the course, led by MFJS assistant teaching professor [Andrew Matranga](#), students covered "America's new normal" and examined the legalization of marijuana - both medical and recreational - in Colorado and across the country.

The legalization of recreational marijuana [by Colorado voters in 2012](#) signaled a historic change that fuels the legal debate across the country. "This historic crossroads provides an opportunity for student journalists to dig into all the medical and legal issues that legalization poses," said Matranga.

Students interviewed industry professionals and private citizens and engaged with guest speakers like [Jane West](#), founder of [Women Grow](#), an organization that aims to connect, educate and empower female cannabis industry leaders. The course used Bruce Barcott's book, [Weed the People](#), as a lens to examine cannabis journalism, while The Denver Post's [Cannabist](#) outlet provided a local angle.

"Students' research not only investigated the scope of the marijuana legalization movement from a political and practical perspective, but also used original data and multimedia elements to push and promote enterprise storytelling on a national level," said Matranga.

Kevin Bartlett, DU economics major and cannabis journalism student said, "I think that having a more responsible conversation can lead to more open conversations for the rest of the country."

The class gained [local](#) and [national](#) attention and will be taught by Matranga during [DU's December 2015 interterm](#).

To learn more about the course, visit cannabisjournalism.com, search [#CannabisJournalism](#) or [watch the story](#) that aired on CBS4 Denver.