GU POLITICS FELLOW JONATHAN CAPEHART
Discussion Group Outline
So You Want to Be a Journalist?

Discussion Group Synopsis
The goal of the eight-week discussion period is to give a broader view of what it is like to be an opinion writer and journalist. From politics to punditry to opinion writing, these discussions, some interactive, will try to dispel the mystery and highlight the nuances of this area of journalism.

Week 1 — Media Literacy
Do you even know what news is? As a news consumer, you have as much responsibility to read and understand the news as the reporter has in putting together the story you’re reading, watching or listening. Telling the difference between real and “fake” news is essential as a news consumer and for our democracy.

Week 2 — News vs. Opinion
There is a wall between news and opinion. Journalists in each area go about doing their jobs differently to achieve the same result, a story that illuminates.

Week 3 — The Editorial Board
Think of the board as a Supreme Court with its own ideological leanings and precedents with the unsigned opinions reflecting the voice of the newspaper. These pieces reflect the consensus of the members of the board. Learn who is on the editorial board, who runs it and who gets the final say.

Week 4 — Outside Influence
The role of politicians and public relations firms on public opinion and what gets written. A lot of it is shared interest, but a lot of it is past relationships between reporter and source.

Week 5 — Identity Politics: Bringing Your Whole Self to the Table
Whether writing for the editorial page or under your own name in an opinion column, your identity plays a role in how you view the world and the issues of the day. Knowing who you are and how you fit in the political conversation helps you craft an argument. Knowing the same about others puts their opinions and worldview into greater context.
**Week 6 — So, You Want to Be a Pundit**

It looks easy, but discussing politics on television is much harder than you think. This interactive discussion will give participants a chance to act as commentators on the day’s news as a way of talking about the role and influence of pundits in journalism and on politics.

**Week 7 — Interviewing People: The Art of Listening**

The best interviews are those where the interviewer lets the subject speak. But there’s more to it than that.

**Week 8 — Podcasting**

The thought here is to record a “Cape Up” podcast during this period to (try to) demonstrate everything we’ve discussed over the last eight weeks.