

# History of Spanish journalism in higher education: a longitudinal study of undergraduate degrees (2000-2020)

## *La formación universitaria en Historia del Periodismo español: un estudio longitudinal desde las licenciaturas a los grados (2000-2020)*



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**Abstract:**

This study examines the evolution of teaching of the history of Spanish journalism in university degrees on media studies and journalism in Spain. The main aim is to analyse the evolution of teaching of theoretical subjects in these degrees, focusing on the history of Spanish journalism, in order to be able to offer a quantitative longitudinal study on the weight that history of journalism has, and has had, in core non-elective subjects at Spanish universities teaching the evolution of journalism. Therefore, we have studied the syllabi of the 37 universities that offer this degree in Spain over the past two decades (from the former *Licenciatura* degrees to the current ones being offered in the 2020-2021 academic year). The evolution shows that less and less importance is given to teaching the history of Spanish journalism as a compulsory subject and leads us to reflect on the academic trend to given greater importance on practical-technological topics.

**Key words:**

Journalism; university teaching; Spain; History of Journalism; professional profile.

**Resumen:**

*La presente investigación analiza la evolución de la formación en Historia del Periodismo Español presente en las titulaciones universitarias que forman en España a los futuros profesionales del periodismo. El objetivo principal es analizar la evolución de la enseñanza de materias teóricas en esas titulaciones, poniendo el punto de mira en la Historia del Periodismo Español, para así poder ofrecer un estudio longitudinal de carácter cuantitativo sobre el peso que tiene y ha tenido, en las asignaturas obligatorias de las universidades nacionales, la enseñanza de la propia evolución del periodismo en nuestro país. Para ello se ha indagado en el contenido de los programas de estudio de las 37 universidades que imparten esta titulación en España, haciendo un recorrido durante las últimas dos décadas (desde los últimos programas de Licenciatura hasta los actuales del curso 2020-2021). La evolución muestra una creciente pérdida de peso de la formación en Historia del Periodismo Español en las materias de carácter obligatorio y anima a reflexionar sobre la tendencia académica a impartir una formación que prima lo práctico-tecnológico.*

**Palabras clave:**

*Periodismo; enseñanza universitaria; España; Historia del Periodismo; perfil profesional.*

## 1. Introduction and background on the topic

Higher education of journalists at universities is a current debate enlivened by the changes being undergone in the media. The increasing focus on technology in journalism risks future journalists' humanistic and multidisciplinary training that contributes to their ability to set criteria and undertake solid analysis (Sánchez-García and Marinho, 2015).

These and other questions have been raised in the academic field since the second half of the 20th century in Spain before and just after the entry of journalism degrees in higher education (Benito, 1967; Altabella, 1979; Aguinaga, 1984). And, at the time of publishing - when journalism university studies in Spain are marking their 50th anniversary - we are able to say that interest in the topic has grown over the past two decades, since technological changes have led to more interest in the debate, with the questioning of old syllabi (Tejedor, 2006; Baladrón, 2010; Biondi et al, 2010; Salaverría 2011) and in particular, when the first degrees adapted to the Bologna Plan emerged in Spain (2008-2010). These issues have given rise to research focused on European changes, both to the syllabi and on their first effects on students (Real, 2005, 2009; Marta, 2009; Olmedo et al, 2010; López, 2012 ; Rosique, 2013a; Sánchez-García, 2013).

In the application of these rule changes for journalism degrees in Spain, we must look at the ‘road map’ marked by ANECA (2005) in their publication entitled “*Libro Blanco. Título de Grado en Comunicación*”. Despite the fact that the White Paper recommends differentiating three degrees in the field of communications, one of the first results of these educational change is the emergence of double and triple degrees that blend degrees in communications and other fields (Farias, Gómez and Paniagua, 2010; Sierra 2010). The different formulas that intermingle the educational approaches in communications can be considered a first programmatic effect of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in journalism (Rosique 2013b). Following the implementation of the Bologna Plan in 2010, there have been constant changes to degree programmes, with an added exponential increase in the offering of master’s degrees.

The reality of the last two decades reflects that there is a trend towards an increase in teaching of technology to the detriment of the humanities. This occurs at a time when the debate on education continues to rage, particularly bearing in mind the new teaching policies and a changing landscape in media communications (Coelho 2015; Correia & Baptiasta 2005; López et al. 2013) in favour of a more vocational education overall (Sánchez-García, 2016), in line with policies reducing the duration of degrees and demands of the job market.

Changes, in short, that reactivate the debate inside and outside of Spain, centred on a need to keep education and teaching abreast with innovation in the industry (Paulussen, 2016) since teaching has to match the pace of new media ecosystems (Canavilhas, 2013). Likewise, research on the training of journalists has been a recurring theme in Europe in the 21st century (Terzis, 2009; Wahl-Jorgensenvy Hanitzsch, 2009; Nowak, 2019). This international debate tackles how to adapt the training of journalists to the reality of communications media and the need for critical thinking. One of the challenges of higher education with an integrative and transversal vision was to combine technological and humanistic training.

In this context, and as detailed in the following sections, the objective of this paper is to analyse the evolution of the teaching of theoretical subjects in journalism degrees, putting the spotlight on the history of Spanish journalism, in order to offer a quantitative longitudinal study on the importance given to the teaching of the evolution of journalism in our country at Spanish universities, just at the time when teaching of journalism studies in Spain turns fifty.

## **2. An approach to the history of journalism in degree syllabi: from the Official School of Journalism (EOP) to the 21st century**

Among the different perspectives of the academic debate, one of the ones that comes closest to the present object of study is that of balancing the practical and theoretical education of future journalists, as well as general or specialised training in the profession. In the specific case of training in the history of journalism, the subject falls within journalists’ theoretical and specialised training. This subject was given importance in the syllabi of journalism degrees particularly when they were first launched in Spanish universities 50 years ago in 1971. If we delve into the previous syllabi, such as that of the first journalism school in Spain, *El Debate*, the full 1932 syllabus does not include any specific reference to the subject (Legorburu & Alcalá-Santaella, 2007). No until the introduction of the Official School of Journalism (EOP) syllabus in the late 60s was there a reference to the history of journalism subject (Humanes, 1997), specifically in year 4 of the ‘First full

multidisciplinary journalism syllabus in Spain of the EOP (1967) <sup>1</sup>, although without mentioning if it is a history of Spanish or international journalism.

The emergence of the first faculties in Spain offering degrees in journalism from 1971 onwards led to a bolstering of journalists' multidisciplinary training and the promotion of scientific research within the framework of communications, so that syllabi and research fed back into a new, more all-round education offering (Sánchez-García, 2014, 2017). The first university plans follow in the wake of the previous schools and little by little they are being expanded. In this initial stage there was another turning point in 1972<sup>1</sup>, when the Spanish Ministry of Education approved the general guidelines for the preparation of syllabi and included compulsory subjects as the only ones required to practice professionally and elective subjects chosen by each university and which gave rise to complementary degrees. In December 1973, the General Directorate of Universities and Research drafted the guidelines for the syllabi of the then-called faculties of information sciences.<sup>2</sup> The compulsory subjects were divided into two stages that combined the multidisciplinary training typical of other areas in the first stage and the specific journalism subjects in the second, where history of journalism expressly appears (Table 1).

**Table 1. Spanish national guidelines for university journalism syllabi (1973)**

First cycle	Information law; constitutional law; human geography; universal history (introduction, modern and contemporary); modern and contemporary history of Spain; history of philosophical systems; Spanish language; universal literature; Spanish literature; general information theory. And the more technical subjects including: Writing (analysis of forms of expression; journalistic genres; interpretive journalism) and information technology
Second cycle	Media companies; ethics and deontology; history of journalism; specialised journalism; international relations; information technology; communication theory and theory of public opinion

Resolution of the General Directorate of Universities and Research (1973)

Source: Sánchez-García, 2014

The following syllabus changes are once again related to new regulatory modifications introduced in the 1980s with the 1983 University Reform Law (LRU) that regulated the new operation of universities, granting them greater autonomy and scientific weight (Infante, 2010) with the main objective of creating degrees adapted to new social realities, curricular flexibility and the new concept of elective subjects. The specific consequence in journalism degrees is that specific areas of knowledge in faculties of information sciences emerged through legislative changes, including history of Spanish journalism for the first time as a core subject, among eight other subjects:

- 1.- Structure of journalistic information
- 2.- History of Spanish journalism
- 3.- History of universal journalism

1 Ministerial order of September 23, 1972, BOE of September 25.

2 Resolution of the General Directorate of Universities and Research of December 19, 1973, BOE of January 16, 1974.

- 4.- Specialised journalistic information
- 5.- Journalistic writing
- 6.- Information technology
- 7.- General information theory
- 8.- Theory and technique of audiovisual information

These subjects were later adjusted to the new classification of subjects introduced in 1987 by Royal Decree including core subjects, mandatory in all syllabi for similar degrees and elective subjects that each university set in degrees. The next meaningful change for faculties offering journalism degrees was the differentiation between branches of knowledge with the Royal Decree of 1991<sup>3</sup> which gave rise to the latest undergraduate study plans (officially terminated in 2015) with the novelty of the division of communications studies into three branches: Journalism, audiovisual communications and advertising. A split that “was understood to ensure the specialisation in different professional fields” (Humanes, 1997: 430). Known then as ‘New Journalism Plans’, they include two major blocks: general knowledge (history, literature, economics, law, philosophy, etc.) and technical skills (writing, technology, language, among others). This syllabus shows the progressive incorporation of specific professional subjects, which occurred in the 90s, related to communications and technical-practical learning towards specialised training as a result of research (Sánchez-García, 2014). In the case of the subject matter of this study, it should be said that the history of universal journalism already differs from the history of Spanish journalism in the syllabus of the time.

The former 5-year undergraduate *Licenciatura* syllabi have been followed by a major reform of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that meant universities had to offer the new 4 or 3-year *Grado* degrees between 2008-2010 with the objective of standardising European university degrees and promote greater mobility of students and professionals. In these syllabi, the universities and those responsible for degrees in journalism in particular were unsure what to remove from the syllabus. Humanities subjects were more greatly affected by this change, being cut from many syllabi, although, at the same time, there was not a major change in the syllabus, in what has been called the ‘first effects of the EHEA’ (Sánchez-García, 2015). Since then, it should be noted that Spain began in 2015 the processing of a regulatory change so that universities, on a voluntary basis, choose new training models, such as the so-called ‘3+2’, aimed at reducing the first degree cycle to three years and increasing master’s degrees to two years. The conference of Spanish rectors (CRUE) granted a degree of flexibility in terms of deadlines for the final implementation of these changes. The truth is that, over the second decade of the 21st century, syllabi continue to change, stemming from the need to continue to adapt to new technologies, emerging professional profiles and changing business models. Something that once again confirms that the debate on the training of journalists was still topical at the time.

In this context, this research focuses on the evolution of the teaching of the history of Spanish journalism over the last two decades, given the regulatory changes and syllabi of 37 Spanish universities that train future journalists. Longitudinally,

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3 Royal Decree 1428/1991, dated 30 August, establishes the official university *Licenciatura* degree in Journalism and the general guidelines for its syllabus. Published in BOE n° 243 dated 10 October, 1991, pp. 32902- 32904.

and from a quantitative perspective, the presence of compulsory training in the history of Spanish journalism will be analysed both in the final syllabi of the former *Licenciatura* degrees (2000) and later in the implementation of the *Grado* degrees (2008-2010) up to the present time (2020/21), as detailed in the section on the methodology and taking as a starting point the following research questions:

What is the status of compulsory subjects on the history of Spanish journalism currently at Spanish universities? How do the former *Licenciatura* degree syllabi and the first *Grado* degree syllabi differ?

Did the reduction of number of years in degrees decrease the weight given to the history of Spanish journalism with the emergence of the new *Grado* degrees? And, a decade after the introduction of the Bologna plan and fifty years after the emergence of journalism studies at Spanish universities, does it continue to have the same presence in the syllabus or has it changed?

These questions will be addressed based on the hypothesis that the passing of the years and the weight of a more technological perception of the profession has progressively diminished the presence of training on the history of journalism; reflecting a greater absence of this subject as *Grado* degrees have consolidated compared to the first 2008-2010 syllabi.

### 3. Methodology

The research methodology is descriptive in nature and focuses on a quantitative content analysis of the presence of the aforementioned history of Spanish journalism subject in syllabi of Spanish universities offering a journalism degree - and within the mandatory content of these degrees - in three training stages over the last two decades.

- Last syllabi for *Licenciatura* degrees (2000s)
- First syllabus for *Grado* degrees (2008-2010)
- Current syllabus (2020-21)

We have used the extensive database gathered by Pilar Sánchez-García for her doctoral thesis presented at the Universidad de Valladolid entitled *Un siglo de enseñanza periodística en España: de la primera Escuela de Periodismo a la adaptación de los estudios al Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior* (2014) for our analysis. We have focused our study on the list of subjects that appear in the syllabi of *Licenciatura* degrees (obtained from their corresponding BOE) and those of the *Grado* degrees that were launched following the Bologna Plan (through BOE and official websites). In the case of current syllabi, the study examines the syllabi offered in the 2020-21 academic year, through the information provided by universities on their web pages.

The information compiled in Table 2, prepared by the author, is obtained through search engines and keywords related to the subject of history of Spanish journalism. When this subject does not appear specifically, the generic one that is most related to the history of journalism is included, those considered similar, excluding those that refer to communications in

general because they differ from the subject under study<sup>4</sup>. Table 2 offers the evolution of this discipline over the last two decades in the compulsory subjects included in the syllabi of public and private universities; with special attention to the name given, as it refers to epistemological issues, as well as the year in which it is taught and the credits assigned.

It should be noted that in the analysis of syllabi currently in force, we have considered it appropriate to undertake a qualitative analysis of the content of the teaching guides of those compulsory subjects related in a generic way to the history of journalism, in order to be able to know if their syllabus includes history of Spanish journalism and, if so, to what extent it focuses on this.

**Table 2. Analysis of the presence of history of Spanish journalism in the compulsory subjects in *Licenciatura* and *Grado* journalism degrees (2000-2010-2020)<sup>5</sup>**

	University <sup>6</sup>	Qualification	<i>Licenciatura</i> degree 2000	<i>Grado</i> degree 2008/2010	<i>Grado</i> degree 2020
1	Abat Oliva CEU UAO	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Journalism in Spain (year 3, 2cr.)
2	Antonio de Nebrija UAN	Private	History of Journalism (Year 3, 5cr.)	-----	-----
3	Autónoma de Barcelona UAB	Public	History of Journalism (Year 4, 5cr.)	History of Journalism in Catalonia and Spain (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Journalism in Catalonia and Spain (Year 3, 6cr.)
4	Camilo José Cela UCJC	Private	History of Journalism (Year 3, 6cr.)	Media History (year 1, 6cr.)	-----
5	Cardenal Herrera CEU	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 1, 6cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 1, 6cr.)

4 Although the history of communications, the history of the media or the history of journalism are closely related, it should be noted that when we talk about the former we are referring to the study throughout history of any form of public communications while in the cases of the history of journalism, only the latter is the object of study in the different contexts of the past. As Montero and Rueda point out, “the history of communications has to be placed on a different level than that of each media. This starting point is more easily understood if communications is conceived of, although not exclusively, as a result of *the joint effects of the media in a given spatial and temporal sphere*”. That is, the object, the subject matter of the history of communications is “communications understood as a result of the action of the media in a specific space and time” studied with a “diachronic approach, that of the historian” and, “it is possible to record specific media, as long as the reference to what is fundamental, to communications and its social significance is not lost” (2001: 18-19).

5 The closest reference to history of Spanish journalism is indicated in each case. Thus, when there is no specific history of Spanish journalism subject, the generic history of journalism or similar is included, together with the year and the credits. Electives are not included, nor are subjects that have to do with communications in general, not being considered similar to history of journalism for the reasons mentioned in footnote 4.

6 The list of universities with journalism studies has been drawn up from the ANECA databases and the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports. Available at [www.educacion.es](http://www.educacion.es) (Consulted on September 8, 2020). There are also three attached university centres not analysed here: CU Villanueva (attached to the Complutense University); CU EUSA (attached to the University of Seville) and CU CESINE

6	Carlos III de Madrid UC3M	Public	History of Journalism in Spain (year 3, 6cr.)	-----	-----
7	Castilla La Mancha UCLM	Public	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	History and Models of Journalism (3º, 6cr.)	-----
8	Católica San Antonio UCAM	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	-----	-----
9	Complutense de Madrid UCM	Public	History of Spanish Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	----- <i>History of Spanish Journalism is offered as an elective</i>	----- <i>History of Spanish Journalism is offered as an elective</i>
10	Europea de Madrid UEM	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 9cr.)	-----	Media History (Year 1, 6cr.)
11	Europea Miguel de Cervantes UEMC	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 9cr.)	History of Journalism and Social Communication (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Journalism and Social Communication (year 3, 6cr.)
12	Europea del Atlántico UEA	Private	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	Does not teach Grado degree	History of Journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
13	Europea Fernando Pessoa UEFP	Private	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	Does not teach Grado degree	History of Journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
14	Francisco de Vitoria UFV	Private / Affiliated	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	Media History (year 3, 3cr.)	-----
15	Internacional de Catalunya UIC	Private	Theory and History of Journalism 1 and 2 (year 3, 10cr.) (teaches second cycle)	History of Journalism (year 3, 4cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 3, 4cr.)
16	Illes Balears UIB (formerly affiliated to CESAG)	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 2, 6cr.)	Contemporary History and Journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
17	Jaume I UJI	Public	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	History of Journalism (year 2, 6cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
18	La Laguna ULL	Public	----- (teaches second cycle)	----	-----



19	Málaga UMA	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 9cr.)	History and Models of Journalism (3º, 6cr.)	History and Models of Journalism (3º, 6cr.)
20	Miguel Hernandez UMH	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism (year 2, 6cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism (year 2, 6cr.)
21	Murcia UMU	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 5, 12cr.) (teaches second cycle)	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 12cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 12cr.)
22	Navarra UNAV	Private	History of Spanish Journalism I (year 4, 5cr.)	History of Universal Journalism (year 2, 3cr.)	-----
23	País Vasco UPV	Public	History of Journalism (Year 4, 6cr.)	---	-----
24	Pompeu Fabra UPF	Public	History of Journalism (Year 4, 4.5 cr) (teaches 2nd cycle)	History of Journalism (year 1, 6 cr)	History of Journalism (Year 1, 6 cr)
25	Pontifica de Salamanca UPSA	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 3, 8cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 3, 8cr.)
26	Ramon Llull URL	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 3, 4cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism (year 2, 3cr.)
27	Rey Juan Carlos I URJC	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Journalism (year 2, 6cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
28	Rovira i Virgili URV	Public	---- (teaches second cycle)	---	---
29	San Jorge USJ	Private	History of Journalism (Year 3, 4.5cr.)	History of Spanish Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Spanish journalism (Year 3, 6cr.)
30	San Pablo CEU USP	Private	Theory and History of Journalism (year 5, 10cr.)	History of Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Spanish journalism (Year 2, 6cr.)
31	Santiago de Compostela USC	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 3, 9cr.)	---	-----

32	Sevilla USE	Public	History of Spanish Journalism (year 5, 6cr.)	History of Spanish Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Spanish Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)
33	A Distancia de Madrid UDIMA	Private	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	History of Spanish Journalism (year 4, 6cr.)	History of Spanish Journalism (year 4, 6cr.)
34	València UV	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism I and II (Years 2, 3 6cr.)	Theory and History of Journalism I and II (Years 2, 3 6cr.)
35	Valladolid UVa	Public	Theory and History of Journalism (year 4, 9cr.)	History of Spanish Journalism (year 3, 6cr.)	History of Spanish journalism (Year 3, 6cr.)
36	Vic UVIC	Private	History of Journalism (Year 3, 6cr.)	History of Journalism (year 3, 3cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 3, 3cr.)
37	Zaragoza UNIZAR	Public	It does not teach a <i>Licenciatura</i> degree	History of Journalism (year 4, 6cr.)	History of Journalism (Year 4, 6cr.)

Source: own elaboration based on Sánchez-García (2014) and the research carried out for this article

#### 4. Results

The analysis of the syllabi from 37 universities (19 public and 18 private universities) offering degrees in journalism over two decades (2000-2020) allows us to understand the evolution of teaching of history in Spanish journalism studies, from the old study plans for the *Licenciatura* degrees to the new *Grado* degrees, up to the present day. The analysis of its name is considered here not as a mere quantification, but rather represents an epistemological question that allows us to delve into the debate on content that was covered in the history of journalism and how it evolves over the years. This also includes an analysis of which years of the degree it was considered appropriate to teach it.

The results are presented, initially, in a general way, focused on each stage analysed and, subsequently, offering a comparative longitudinal analysis of the evolution of this subject over two decades.

In the case of the latest undergraduate syllabi, journalism was offered in 31 universities, of which four did so only in a second cycle. The subject 'history of journalism' appears on eight university syllabuses; while 'history of Spanish journalism' is offered with that express denomination only in three universities: Universidad Complutense de Madrid and University of Navarra in year 4 and University of Seville in year 5. Predominantly, we see that 18 undergraduate syllabi call it theory and history of Journalism. Only two universities (in both cases only the second cycle is taught) do not include any subject related to the history of journalism. Meaning that 94% of the studied universities include history of journalism as a

profession on their journalism degree syllabus. Regarding the years the subject is taught in, 48% teach this subject in year 4, with the rest offering it in year 3. And, with respect to credits, 58% offer the subject over more than one term.

Thirty-five universities offered the first official journalism degree syllabi following the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (2008-10). It is possible to highlight some changes in the subjects offered. Specifically, the subject name expressly 'History of Spanish Journalism' is offered at five universities, but in others as we mentioned that offered it in the *Licenciatura* degrees, except in the case of USE. These are the Autonomous University of Barcelona (year 3 and with the addition of History of Journalism in Catalonia and Spain) Universidad de San Jorge (year 3), University of Seville (year 3), Udima (year 4) and Valladolid (year 3)<sup>7</sup>. The predominant name becomes 'History of Journalism' at 17 universities (one of them in English, and the name of Theory and History of Journalism is reduced to only 3 universities). The subject is generally offered in the second half of the degree (69%), mostly in year three. And, in terms of credits, 73% opt for 60 hours of training per term.

In addition, it is worth highlighting the fact that in nine degrees do not offer a similar subject to history of journalism; with universities offering mandatory education on the history of journalism are reduced to 74%. Among the universities that stop offering history of Spanish journalism as compulsory subject are Madrid's Complutense University; but, in this case, it must be pointed out that the subject does not disappear from the 20-21 syllabus but is offered as an elective subject<sup>8</sup>.

The analysis of history of Spanish journalism subjects offered in present (2020-2021 academic year), we must take into account that the degree is offered at 37 universities, including two more private universities than in the previous stage. We see that the history of journalism subject is compulsory at 11 universities; this being the most common name for the subject compared to other cases in which we find that history of journalism is tied to Communications (Miguel de Cervantes European University UEMC) or the case in which it appears together with contemporary history in the same subject (University Illes Balears UIB). History of Spanish journalism appears expressly at six university syllabi: UVa UDIMA, USE, USJ, UAO y San Pablo CEU<sup>9</sup>. Four universities teach subjects called theory and history of journalism, while three offer subjects with similar names such as 'History and Models of Journalism' or 'Media History'. On the other hand, it should be noted that, of these 37 universities, 12 do not teach any type of compulsory subject related to the history of journalism, which means that the subject under study is present in 67.5% of journalism degrees. Regarding the years in which the subject is taught, around 50% teach said subject in the second half of the degree (continuing to offer the subject in the third year). In terms of credits, the majority –in 76% of the sample– offer a four-month course of 60 hours.

Currently (in the 2020-2021 academic year), as we pointed out in the previous paragraph, there are about twenty universities that offer history of journalism or similar subjects as part of their mandatory syllabus, although not exactly as history of Spanish journalism (which appears only expressly in half a dozen syllabi). Therefore, we have considered it of interest to carry out a qualitative approach to the contents of the teaching guides for these subjects in order to be able to

7 The University of Valladolid, that currently offers the degree with no modifications, teaches the subject History of Universal Journalism (first term of the year 3) alongside History of Spanish Journalism instead of the Theory and History of Journalism that appeared in the syllabus of the *Licenciatura* degree.

8 The UCM is the only university of those studied that does not include history of Spanish journalism - or similar ones - among the compulsory subjects but does so as an elective.

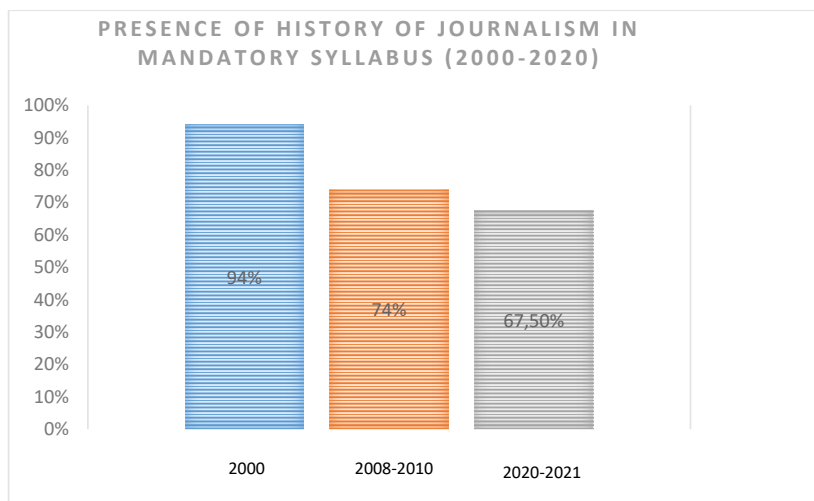
9 And, as we have mentioned previously, we also find it as an elective at the Complutense University.

know what contents they focus on and if they revolve around the Spanish history of journalism. The results of the analysis show that in these cases the subject focuses on the history of the press as a Western phenomenon. Therefore, attention is placed particularly on Europe, looking more closely at Spain and the United States (with exceptions, like in the case of the Jaume I UJI, that despite giving the subject a general name focuses exclusively on Spain). The exception would be Fernando Pessoa UFP European University, where the History of Journalism in Latin America is included on the syllabus.

It should also be noted that at Cardenal Herrera CEU University, the subject offers an approach to the history of journalism in the West, paying special attention to Spain, and more specifically, to Valencia. On the other hand, in the case of the UAB, as the name of the subject indicates, it focuses on the case of Spain, and more specifically, on the history of journalism in Catalonia (as it happens in the Pompeu Fabra although the title of the subject is generic).

From a longitudinal point of view, taking into account the period of time in which this article focuses, and as can be seen in graph 1, the fall in the curve with respect to the presence of mandatory teaching of history of journalism is worth noting. The launch of the Bologna Plan meant a reduction of 20% of this type of subjects, but it will be the evolution over time and the consolidation of the *Grado* degrees that will lead to a drastic decrease in these subjects; their presence is currently 26.5% lower, with respect to the former *Licenciatura* degrees, and leaving only 67.5% of the universities offering journalism studies that teach history of journalism in their mandatory syllabus.

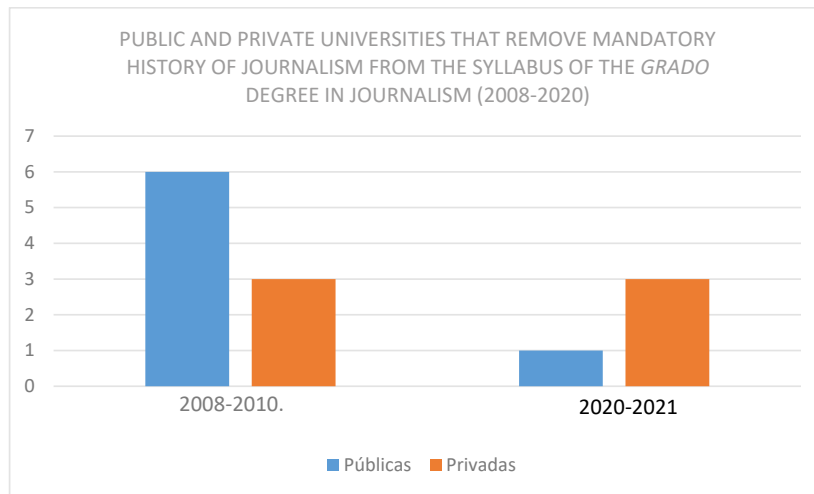
Figure 1: Presence of history of journalism in mandatory syllabus (2000-2020)



Source: author's work

So, we see that over two decades, of the 37 universities studied, 13 at some point abandoned the compulsory teaching of the history of journalism. Of these, only one, the UEM, although it did not include this subject in its first syllabus, does currently offer include it in its current degree in journalism. From 2008 to 2010, and since the emergence of the Bologna Plan, six public and three private universities stopped teaching the history of journalism, as can be seen in graph 2, including the aforementioned UEM, and one public university (University of Castilla La Mancha) and a further three private universities have discontinued the subject in the present day. Thus, as can be seen in the graph, private universities continue to include the history of journalism with the introduction of the Bologna Plan in *Grado* degrees, while public universities opted for removing the subject from their syllabi in that first phase of the European Higher Education Area. This trend did not continue over time, and currently it is private universities have opted to suppress the subject from their syllabi.

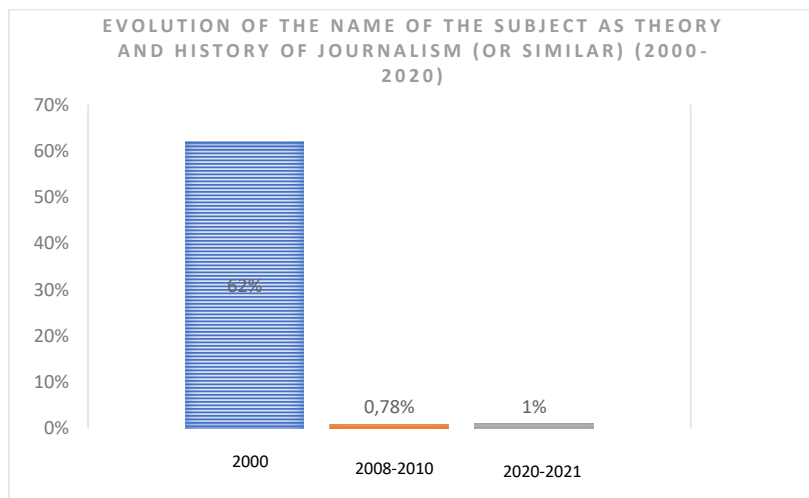
**Figure 2: Public and private universities that remove mandatory history of journalism from the syllabus of the *Grado* degree in journalism (2008-2020)**



Source: author's work

The decreased importance given to this subject has evolved along with the change in name of the subject. Thus, not only can it be observed, in this research and in others carried out previously (Sánchez-García, 2017), how the degrees have been adapted in order to offer more practical training, but also that over time subject names have changed to reflect this. As can be seen in graph 3, in 18 cases of the former *Licenciatura* degree syllabi the subjects' name included reference to the theory of the history of the profession itself (62%). However, in the first *Grado* degree syllabi we were able to observe that only three universities opted for that name (Miguel Hernández University, Murcia University and Valencia University), with only one other 2020 syllabus including it, in this case the Universidad de Ramon Llull.

Figure 3: Evolution of the name of the subject as theory and history of journalism (or similar) (2000-2020)



Source: author's work

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

As a whole, the longitudinal analysis of the three stages included in this study reflects how the arrival of the Bologna plan implies not only the disappearance of the history of journalism in 20% of the new *Grado* degrees, but also that those universities that chose to continue offering this type of subjects reduced their weight in compulsory credits in the degree. Something that has continued over the last decade where this subject, in the degrees in which it is taught, usually counts for about 60 hours in a term. The year in which this subject is taught in degrees continues in a similar vein; since for the most part, in the three stages studied, it is taught in the second cycles of university degrees, although this trend has been decreasing in recent years.

Over the last twenty years, seven public universities have removed the subject from their journalism syllabus compared to five private universities that have taken the same decision. Although the arrival of the Bologna Plan meant that 31.5% of public universities and almost 12% of private universities that taught journalism developed new syllabi without that historical training, at present we see that this percentage has increased to 17.6% in the case of private universities, while it has decreased to 5.2% in the case of public ones.

The hypothesis from which this research was based pointed out that over the years, and with greater weight given to technology in the profession, has diminished the presence of training on the historical past of journalism; reflecting a greater absence of this subject as the *Grado* degrees have been consolidated in comparison with the first syllabi of 2008-

2010. Once the results have been analysed, we were able to see a continuous reduction in the presence of the history of Spanish journalism in the mandatory training of future journalism professionals, resulting not only from the decrease in the number of years of the new *Grado* degrees, but that has continued over time, a sharp drop from 94% of universities teaching the subject to future journalists to the current 67.5%. A decrease of almost 27 percent over twenty years. This represents an annual loss at a striking rate of 1.35% that, with an eye to the near future, does not seem likely, or at least there are no signs of it, slowing.

Although it was not the objective of this article, we consider that the conclusions reached encourage in-depth qualitative research into the content of subjects related to the history of journalism in current syllabi at Spanish universities, in order to gain insight into their approach, the training they provide students and the way in which it is complementary with other subjects. Likewise, the study could examine elective subjects and their evolution.

On the other hand, it is true that this research focuses on a very specific theoretical subject, but we consider that its evolution in degrees is an example that it can be extrapolated to other academic contents that, either because they are more or less practical or are more or less removed from the technological education demanded by the market, have been relegated. This, in turn, invites us to reflect on the academic tendency to teach practical-technological skills that, due to the mercurial and changing nature of our world, are destined to be perishable and, over time, to end up being of little real use to those who learnt them years in the past.

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