

USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
Journalism 303 – Broadcast Reporting
SPRING 2008
Thursday 10:00 AM -12:40 PM, GFS 207

Instructor: Liz Mitchell

Office Hours:
After class, and by Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on the basics of broadcast newswriting learned in your J-203 class by introducing you to the additional skills – unrelated to writing – that are needed to produce effective news reports for television. Specifically, you'll be learning how to develop and shoot stories, how to interview newsmakers, and how to edit your raw material into crisp, clear and balanced reports. We'll also continue to develop your newswriting skills with in-class exercises, homework assignments as well as hands-on production assignments. Throughout the semester, we'll also be discussing basic news ethics as well as racial, religious, gender and sexual orientation issues and how to address those issues in your reports.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Demonstrating good news judgment
- Knowledge of basic principles of broadcast news writing
- Generating and developing broadcast news story ideas
- Properly researching story topics and setting up interviews
- Developing basic broadcast interviewing skills
- Understanding basic videography concepts and putting them into practise
- Understanding the basics of non-linear editing and putting them into practise
- Using raw video and sound bites to write objective and balanced reports that include diverse viewpoints
- Producing and completing projects on deadline
- Using professional industry standards both in the classroom and 'in the field'

TEXTBOOKS

Broadcast News Handbook: Writing, Reporting & Producing in a Converging Media World, Third Ed., C.A. Tuggle, Forrest Carr, Suzanne Huffman, McGraw-Hill.

Web site: www.mhhe.com/tuggle3

(Optional) *Creative Interviewing*, Ken Metzler, Allyn & Bacon

Handouts

Editing and Shooting Glossary

Videography

News Editing

Story Idea and Story Development worksheets

Sample script format

Dictionary: Merriam Webster, www.m-w.com

DAILY NEWS READING & VIEWING

If you're serious about a career in journalism or just want to do well in this course, my advice is to become a news junkie. The more attention you pay to what's going on in the world, the better able you'll be to develop, write and produce compelling stories. So, watch local, network and cable television news broadcasts, check out online news sites, and read as many newspapers as you can. Every day. You'll not only sharpen your news judgment skills and see how the Pros do it (good and bad), you'll undoubtedly also ace the current events quizzes which will kick off many of our classes. (See Course Schedule)

For this class, I recommend watching BBC World News, ABC, CBS and NBC network nightly news and also CBS's *Sunday Morning* show.

QUIZZES

We'll have regular current events and production quizzes based on both news events as well as concepts discussed in class. Current events questions will be limited to major news stories. There will be 10 questions per quiz, with each question worth one point, or a partial point (at my discretion) for a semester total of 100 points. Quizzes may not be made up for any reason.

ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL PROJECT FORMAT

As mentioned earlier, there will be numerous in-class exercises as well as regular homework writing assignments and production projects. ALL stories must be written in standard television script format (sample will be provided) and submitted as hard copy on the due dates, before or by the beginning of class.

There will be **four major hands-on projects** in this class. Each will involve producing reports from an original story idea that you've researched, developed, shot and edited on your own. The first project will be a VSV. The other three will be edited reporter packages with the last package replacing a traditional final examination. FYI, the stories should be different from those developed for your print reporting class. Also, all story ideas must be approved before shoots are set up or a frame of footage is shot. In addition, I'll expect you to keep me updated on the progress of the report through development worksheets and at scheduled story conferences. All production should be done on-campus, though I reserve the right to make some exceptions. And a **technical** note: please use a separate Mini-DV cassette for all the edited stories. That way, you'll never accidentally tape over your edited material and we can track the progress of your skills throughout the semester.

GRADING FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL PROJECT

You will be graded on the thoroughness of your story development, on the clarity, organization, accuracy, fairness/balance, and completeness/omissions of your reports, and on your ability to meet deadlines. I'll also grade the quality and creativity of your camera work and videotape editing.

Your writing and production exercises will receive letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F) according to the following guidelines:

- “A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copy editing (i.e., they could air). They are also shot and edited creatively and follow the guidelines in the photojournalism handout.
- “B” stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. There may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing.
- “C” stories need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable.
- “D” stories require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors, and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory, or fails to show important elements.
- “F” stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, have numerous errors, or both. A story that has a factual error that is material to the story merits an F.

The following are some additional circumstances that would warrant an F:

- Plagiarizing a script, portions of a script, or information from any source - wire copy, feed packages, another story script.
- Staging video: When the reporter tells or asks a person or persons to do something specific.
 - **Please note:** “Set-up” shots (the interview subject is seen walking in frame, then walks out of frame) are a gray area, but are generally accepted.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as his or her own work.
- Telling an interview subject what you want them to say.
- Distorting video: shooting video in one location and presenting it as being another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Having someone else shoot standups and/or interviews when the assignment calls for the student to shoot his or her own standups and interviews.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an on-cam (or off camera) interview.

In order to receive a passing grade on your projects, you MUST turn in both a hard copy script and an edited tape. Without a tape, the assignment gets an F. (I consider it as a story that missed its deadline and failed to make air.) Also, if the edited story doesn’t match the script (eg. the script indicates b-roll not on the edited tape), the highest grade the assignment can get is a D.

I may allow some stories to be rewritten, re-shot and/or re-edited. Such rewrites will be done within a tight time frame, and the two grades will be averaged. The fundamental goal here is to encourage learning from our mistakes. This policy does not apply to the final package.

As for work that isn't turned in on time, know that **late assignments will not be accepted**. They will be assigned an F. Exceptions may be granted but only for extraordinary circumstances.

Finally, all stories developed for this class **MUST** include a **list of sources**. That is, titles of people interviewed, names of organizations, telephone numbers and email addresses; web sites must have URLs; printed sources must have bibliographic information. Without a detailed list of sources, the story won't receive a grade higher than a C+. **Be aware: some stories may be randomly fact-checked during the semester.**

LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

All **broadcast** majors are required to become a staff member at ATVN. There are no exceptions. More information will be given during Class One.

Print majors have several ways to fulfill this requirement. The first involves writing a series of short essays (200-300 words maximum) based on weekly broadcast ethics questions. Another option is to become a staff member at the Daily Trojan or at Annenberg Radio News (proof of performance must be supplied). Finally, print majors may substitute an off-campus internship at a news media organization to fulfill this requirement. (FYI, off-campus internships must be approved.)

COURSE GRADES

Final grades will be based on an evaluation of a student's entire performance, i.e., class projects, homework and production assignments, and growth in skills during the semester.

Story idea pitches & development; VSV, 2 packages & misc. assignments	50%
Quizzes and class participation	15%
Learning Lab	5%
Final Package	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be in class every week and to be there on time. However, if you can't avoid being absent (due to a solid reason such as a family emergency, a medical problem that can be documented or a religious holiday), you will be excused IF you contact me before class begins, just as you would contact your employer about missing work. (Call, e-mail, leave a note in my campus mailbox.) It will be up to you to get class notes from another student and to find out what's due next. However, feel free to call me if you have specific questions about the class you missed or if the homework assignment needs clarification. Please remember that in-class assignments and quizzes cannot be made up, and hard copies of homework assignments need to be turned in at the beginning of class, so excessive absences and/or tardiness can definitely affect your grade.

Note Well: you are required to attend the AVID edit training session that will take place during Week Five of the semester (2/14/08). Be aware that make-up sessions will not be held. Also, any and all editing must be done at ASC facilities.

PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Don't even think of a career in this field if you're tempted to use someone else's work and put your name on it. In today's litigious society, it's not a quality any employer will tolerate, never mind a news operation. Frankly, there's no upside to plagiarism. It's fundamentally dishonest, it violates the standards intrinsic to the profession of journalism, you won't learn anything from it, and most of all, it'll put an immediate halt to your career in journalism.

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of both the University's and the School of Journalism's Academic Integrity policy.

USC Annenberg School of Journalism ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy.

USC Statement on ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty.

PROFESSIONAL DRESS POLICY

A dress code in this day and age, you're asking? Well, sort of. We're talking about appearing credible and professional when you're out in the field and interviewing people for a story. Very simply, try not to look too much like a student. And another tip regarding credibility: use your USC email address rather than your personal – and sometimes way too obscure or way too cute -- email address.

WRITING COACHES

The writing coach for the broadcast sequence is Mike Daniels and I strongly encourage you to meet with him if outside help is needed. He can be reached at danielsm@usc.edu. You can find him in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment. Obviously, writing coaches should be used to review assignments AFTER I've graded and commented on them.

DISABILITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301. Its phone number is 213-740-0776.

So, Who's Liz Mitchell?

Well, you haven't seen me on-air -- I'm one of those Behind-the-Scenes people. Always have been. I began my journalism career writing broadcast news at the CBS-owned station here in Los Angeles, but for the past three decades, I've primarily free-lanced as a producer, writer, coordinating producer, and segment producer on programming for local, network and cable channels. Documentary subjects range from Children of Divorce, Hearst Castle and the state of labor unions to Infant Nutrition, Cholesterol and the problem of Hepatitis B in Asia. Magazine shows include KNXT's (now, KCBS) "About a Week," and "Here and Now," Lifetime's "Physician's Journal Update, Discovery's "Storm Warning" and NBC's "Real People." Most recently, I co-produced a promotional video for UCLA's AIDS Institute and I'm currently involved in a project about this country's space program for a presidential library.

ANY QUESTIONS? PROBLEMS?

Since I am a part-time faculty member, I don't have regular office hours but I will always be available before and after class. Just let me know you'd like to talk to me and I'll be happy to meet with you. And, of course, please feel free to email me or call the home number given at the top of this syllabus.

Here's to a challenging and fun semester! I look forward to working closely with all of you.

CLASS SCHEDULE

N.B. This syllabus is subject to change.

Details of assignments will be posted weekly on Blackboard.

<p><u>Week One 1/17/08</u></p> <p>Topics: Introduction to broadcast news storytelling: from idea to edited tape; review of syllabus; review of script format & basic terms; Learning Lab requirements</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p>Analyzing a series of facts for their newsworthiness; writing up a story idea</p> <p><i>USC Tech:</i> re Camera Checkout procedure</p>	<p>Homework: 1) Generate two story ideas on story forms and email both to me by 6 pm, Tues, 1/22; 2) <u>Write a VSV of a story (TBA)</u> using proper script form and describing each shot as shown in the script sample.; 3) Check out Camcorder Readings: Review Chapters 2, 3, 7 & 8 Tuggle</p>
<p><u>Week Two 1/24/08</u></p> <p>Topics: Elements of a broadcast story; recognizing and developing stories; thinking visually; story development forms</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p><u>Current Events Quiz:</u> Shoot B-roll of campus and view; exercises on researching topics and recognizing stories</p>	<p>Homework: Write up Story Development Form for VSV with research and sources attached. Email by 5pm, Tuesday 1/28.</p> <p>Readings: Handout on <i>Videography</i>.</p>
<p><u>Week Three 1/31/08</u></p> <p>Topics: <i>Guest Lecturer:</i> Basics of Videography shooting B-roll & interviews for television news</p>	<p>Note: Location: TBA</p> <p>Brief discussion re progress of stories</p> <p>Technical How To on using cameras and mikes</p>	<p>Homework: Set-Up, shoot, log, write and edit VSV. Report edited and dubbed on Mini-DV with complete script in proper format (w/ list of sources) DUE NEXT WEEK</p> <p>Readings: Handout on <i>Interviewing</i>; Chap 5 & 9, Tuggle</p>
<p><u>Week Four 2/7/08</u></p> <p>Topics: The Reporter Package; choosing interview subjects; preparing questions; etiquette.</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p><u>Current Events Quiz;</u> exercise on Interviewing techniques</p>	<p>Homework: Generate two new story ideas for Package #1</p> <p>Readings: Handout on <i>Editing</i></p>
<p><u>Week Five 2/14/08</u></p> <p>Topics: <i>ASC Tech:</i> Working with the Avid system to edit reporter packages</p>	<p>This class will be held in the ASC Digital Lab</p>	<p>Homework: TBA</p> <p>Readings: Chap. 13, <i>Tuggle</i></p>

<p><u>Week Six</u> 2/21/08</p> <p>Topics: Frameworks for packages: “Humanizing” a story</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> Review edited VSVs; writing “hard” leads for “soft” news stories</p>	<p>Homework: Research and write up Story Development form for selected Package #1</p> <p>Readings: TBA</p>
<p><u>Week Seven</u> 2/28/08</p> <p>Topics: Accuracy and Balance in stories with controversy; Follow-up stories</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> story conferences; researching a subject online</p>	<p>Homework: 1) Two story idea proposals <u>with research</u> submitted on Story Idea Forms for Edited Package #2 (due next class); 2) if possible, begin to shoot B-roll for Package#1 Readings: appendix B, Tuggle</p>
<p><u>Week Eight</u> 3/6/08</p> <p>Topics: Using natural sound; selecting multiple soundbites; writing effective lead-ins to soundbites</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> review of footage shot; writing a story with several soundbites</p>	<p>Homework: Set-up, shoot, write and edit Package #1. Report edited and dubbed on Mini-DV with complete script in proper format (w/ list of sources) DUE NEXT WEEK.</p> <p>Readings: RTNDA ethics statement</p>
<p><u>Week Nine</u> 3/13/08</p> <p>Topics: First Reporter Packages: what went right & what didn’t; issues of ethics and diversity in covering news</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> Handling questions of ethics</p>	<p>Homework: Research Package #2 story and write up Development Form</p> <p>Readings: Chap 7, pp 112-118 (Graphics), Tuggle</p>
<p><u>Week Ten</u> 3/20/08</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK</p>	
<p><u>Week Eleven</u> 3/27/08</p> <p>Topics: Using Graphics (data, quotes, images) in Lead-ins, over V/O</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> Developing graphics for news story; story conference</p>	<p>Homework: Two story idea proposals with research for Package #3, due next class.</p>
<p><u>Week Twelve</u> 4/03/08</p> <p>Topics: Localizing stories: examples and experts</p>	<p>In-Class: <u>Current Events Quiz;</u> Group story conference; localizing a national story</p>	<p>Homework: Set up, shoot, write & edit Package #2. Edited Mini-DV, script, list of sources DUE NEXT WEEK; continue researching stories for Package #3.</p>

<p><u>Week Thirteen</u> 4/10/08</p> <p>Topics: Developing & shooting sequences</p> <p><i>Note: Last Day to drop class with a mark of "W"</i></p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p><u>Current Events Quiz</u>; individual story conferences re Final projects</p>	<p>Homework:</p> <p>Story Development Form for Package #3, with complete shot list, names and titles of interview subjects, and detailed research, due next class.</p>
<p><u>Week Fourteen</u> 4/17/08</p> <p>Topics: Viewing and discussing edited packages; structuring multiple soundbites</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p><u>Final Current Events Quiz</u>; choosing soundbites from multiple interviews</p>	<p>Homework:</p> <p>Setup and (if possible) shoot interviews and b-roll for Package #3</p>
<p><u>Week Fifteen</u> 4/24/08</p> <p>Topics: Re-writing: making the story shorter and stronger</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p>Individual story conferences; Exercise on re-writing and condensing copy</p>	<p>Homework:</p> <p>Shoot material for Final Package; log and write rough draft & bring a hard copy to class next week.</p>
<p><u>Week Sixteen</u> 5/01/08</p> <p>Topics: TBA</p>	<p>In-Class:</p> <p>Viewing raw tapes; reviewing & re-writing rough draft of script</p>	<p>Homework:</p> <p>Re-write script and edit Final Package. Edited Mini-DV, script, list of sources DUE 5/8/08.</p>
<p>** May 8, 2008 **</p>	<p><u>FINAL PACKAGE DUE:</u></p> <p>TURN IN TO INSTRUCTOR BY 10:00 AM.</p>	