

**USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
SYLLABUS**

Journalism 303 Broadcast-Reporting

Spring 2008 Wednesday, 3 PM noon-5:40 PM, AHF 259, Studio C

Lew Rothbart

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will teach the basics of broadcast news reporting. You will learn how to report in broadcast style, mainly for TV, but the skills will apply to radio news writing as well. By the end of the semester, you should have the basics of broadcast news reporting that are close to professional standards.

Strong writing is the essential skill for anyone planning to work as a reporter, anchor, producer, or news writer. There are few jobs in a newsroom where writing is not a key element of the job. In any broadcast journalism setting, you will immediately be judged by your writing ability and that will also influence the speed and direction of your career path. And do not kid yourself, correct spelling counts.

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to be in class every week. You must get my approval in advance if you know you will miss a class. You are responsible for getting the class notes from other students in the class and I cannot hold separate "catch-up" sessions outside of class. Students can't make up in-class assignments or quizzes with extra homework assignments.

Timeliness is important. You cannot be late to a story and you should not be late to class. There may be quizzes and viewings at the beginning of each class and students who miss them will be unable to complete those assignments. The material will not be repeated for late arrivals and the missing work will count against your grade.

Missing a class (journalism or other) to cover a story is unacceptable. It is up to you to schedule your shoots around your school schedule.

Attendance is *mandatory* for Avid package editing training. Students will not be able to use the Avid editing lab if they don't attend the training session.

OUTCOMES:

-Videography: You will see and learn some of the basic skills involved in using the camera as a tool in telling your story and you will be expected to put these skills to work.

-Avid editing – packages: (You will be shooting and editing your own stories.)

-(1) :45 VO/SOT based on an approved story pitch

-Minimum 3 Packages based on approved story pitches (there may be more)

-(2) 1:10-1:15 news story packages

-(1) 2:00-2:15 final news story package

Requirements:

- must be a multi-shoot story (more than one location,)

- Minimum of three interviews, no more than two soundbites per person

Note: Your stories must keep closely to these times

Two of your stories can be “event” stories: a scheduled event that you go to cover. Your other stories and especially your final package must be ideas that you originate. It can a controversy on campus, a problem or subject of concern in a neighboring community such as politics or the environment, a feature or profile story, e.g., how a particular area is changing, a look at someone with an unusual job, a special talent or hobby, or a person who successfully overcame a handicap; something unique, different, but above all, interesting and visual.

Broadcast reporting assignments can be done either on or off campus, but must first be approved. You will need to submit a story pitch form. The same story covered for the print reporting class may be done for the broadcast class but only with signed approval from BOTH instructors. You can use your story pitch form for the signatures.

TEXTBOOKS

From Newswriting:

ISBN: 0-07-326869-0

Title: Broadcast News Handbook, 3rd Edition

Author: C.A. Tuggle

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Handouts:

Editing and Shooting Glossary

Videography

News Editing

Story Idea and Story Development worksheets

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

Optional:

ISBN: 0205262589

Title: Creative Interviewing

Author: Ken Metzler

Publisher: Allyn & Bacon

ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL PROJECT FORMAT

Assignments are DUE on the class day as listed. They are **NOT** for the following week. They are due for THAT class meeting. Only with rare exception and approval will assignments be accepted late and the grade will be reduced.

Stories written in-class will be on a timed basis and must be completed within the allotted time frame.

Student videotape stories will be shot, edited, and turned-in on Mini DV format. You will also need to turn in a script with each edited story. These need to be typed double-spaced in regular TV split-page format. The script should also include the verbatim soundbites of each person interviewed, not just the narration track.

You can turn in your edited tape stories each on a separate tape or put all your stories on the same tape in progressive order, but make sure the tape is cued to the right place. Don't make me go hunting for it. If I can't find it, it won't get a grade. Make sure you put your name on the tape itself as well as the plastic case.

Before you start work on any story of your own, I must approve it. That means you first have to submit a story development form and discuss it with me. You will need to have some back-up ideas if your initial story is not accepted. You will also need to keep me informed of your progress and/or any problems on your story. This can be done through email or in class.

This syllabus is subject to change, depending on the availability of guest speakers if any, and the progress of the class during the semester. If you miss a class, it is *your* responsibility to find out if any of the assignments have changed. If you have any questions or problems about anything in class, please email me at lrothbart@yahoo.com or Lew.Rothbart@nbc.com (backup email.) If really necessary, call me at KNBC, 818 840-2888. Leave a message with your name and number and a good time to call you back.

GRADING

In all assignments, you will be judged first on the accuracy of your stories. Then they will be evaluated for organization, fairness, balance, completeness, grammar, style, editing, production value, originality, and ability to meet deadline. If you are concerned about your grade at any point in the semester, please contact me to arrange a time to discuss it, usually before or after class since I don't have office hours on campus.

Grade Breakdown:

Assignments & Story pitches	50%
Quizzes, class participation	15%
Learning lab requirement	5%
Final package	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

GRADING STANDARDS

“A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well-written and require only minor corrections. They are shot and edited creatively, well-paced, include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color, or emotion to the story.

“B” stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or minor spelling errors or an error of omission. There may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites.

“C” stories are stories that need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have several spelling and style errors. Camera work and editing techniques are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable. Sound bites add little or no color, only information that could be better told in the reporter’s narration.

“D” stories require excessive rewriting; have numerous minor spelling and style errors, and should not have been submitted. Camera work and video editing is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

“F” stories fail to meet the major criteria of the assignment, have numerous errors or both. Wrong names or locations are used and has a factual error that is material to the story. Camera work and editing is sloppy with obvious mistakes left in.

The following are some circumstances that would warrant an F:

- Plagiarizing a script, portions of a script, or information from any source: wire copy, feed packages, another reporter’s package, or story script.
- Staging video: When the reporter tells or asks a person or persons to do something specific. “Set-up” shots (the interview is seen walking in frame, then walks out of frame are generally accepted. You can’t ask a subject to do something he or she does not normally do.)
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as your original 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” footage.
- Having someone else shoot your standup (portion of story when the reporter is on camera) or interviews (but only in those cases when the assignment specifically calls for you to shoot your own standup and/or interviews.)
- Failing to make an effort to shoot video.
- Promising, paying, or giving someone something in exchange for doing an on-cam (or off-camera) interview. (“Checkbook journalism.”)

Students must turn in a complete edited tape (or raw tape, depending on the assignment) in addition to a script for their VSVs and packages. You can not turn in a script, but no tape, or only a partial tape. In broadcast, if there is no tape, there is no story. If there is no tape, the assignment gets an F. If there is only partial tape (the script indicates B-roll or a soundbite that is not in the edited tape, or there is raw tape, unedited) then the highest grade the assignment can get is a D.

Stories turned in late will automatically be reduced in grade value or may not be accepted at all. Since I am only on-campus once a week, there is no “turning it in the next day.”

All broadcast reporting stories **MUST** also include a list of sources (people must have title, organization, phone number and e-mail address, Web sites must have URLs, printed sources must have bibliographic information.)

Be aware that that some stories may be randomly fact-checked during the semester.

Any indication of fabrication of information will receive an F in the course and possible expulsion from the School of Journalism and USC.

LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

Undergraduate **BROADCAST** majors **MUST** work at ATVN. There are no exceptions. Undergraduate **PRINT** majors have two options:

1. Daily Trojan, Annenberg Radio News, or Online Journalism Review. You must keep copies of your clips and turn them in for review. If you have a non-writing assignment (e.g., copy editing), you must give me a letter from your supervisor at the midterm point and at the end of the semester. The letter must indicate whether you were a satisfactory staff member.
1. Off-campus internship: You can substitute a paid or non-paid off-campus internship at a news media organization. The internship should be at a news organization; it should not be a PR or advertising agency or department. I must approve the internship in advance. You must keep copies of your clips and turn them in for review. If you have a non-writing assignment (e.g., answering phones), you must give me a letter from your supervisor at the midterm point and at the end of the semester. The letter must indicate whether you were a satisfactory employee.

QUIZZES

There will be short quizzes at the beginning of most classes. Questions will mostly focus on current major local and national stories, nothing obscure, along with questions on grammar, style, spelling, and from the assigned readings. If you have been watching, listening, reading, and keeping up on your assignments, you should do fine.

USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Since its founding, the USC Annenberg 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 immediately 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

When doing an interview either on or off-campus, you should dress professionally. You are representing USC-ASJ and you will be judged by how you present yourself. You should also be aware of basic phone and e-mail etiquette. For callbacks, you should use your USC email address rather than some cutesy personal e-mail address, e.g., gottaparty@earthlink.net.

WRITING COACHES

Writing coaches review assignments after they have been graded. You can go anytime on your own and I may require some students to go for extra help. Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment.

Mike Daniels, Broadcast: danielism@usc.edu

Bob Berger, Print: rberger@usc.edu

Ed Boyer, Print: edjboyer@ca.rr.com

Brad Hanson, Print: brad.hanson@latimes.com

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. The phone number is 213-740-0776.

Semester Schedule:

Week 1 - Jan 16 Getting Started

Review syllabus and policies.

Differences between print and broadcast reporting style

Broadcast News writing formats and terms

ATVN Requirements

ASC Tech. camera checkout requirements. Get your cameras this week

Class contact list

Textbook readings: *None*

Handouts: Writing formats. Review (broadcast style, etc.)

In-class assignment: Writing a short VO in broadcast style from tape in class.

Week 2 - Jan 23 Videotraining

News Quiz

You MUST bring your camera and tripod to class.

Videographer Kris Smith will be in class to go over the camera and shooting techniques.

Return class contact lists

Textbook readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook – Chapter 14 – The Brave New World of Multimedia Convergence.

Distribute and discuss Story Idea & Development forms

Before this class: take your camera and start practicing. Do some shooting and evaluate your own work. Remember, it's not home movies, you are telling a story.

**Bring your practice tape to class.

Week 3 – Jan 30 Shooting A Story

News Quiz

Some guidelines for shooting, how to approach a story, think before you shoot.

Handouts: Videography outline
Shooting Guidelines & Tips

Develop and pitch me an idea for a simple VO story that illustrates a problem or situation. The actual story should be about :30. You should need to shoot no more than 3:00 of raw tape to get what you need to cover story. This is a story you will be shooting and editing.

In-Class Assignment: Writing from uncut, field tape.

Week 4 – Feb 6 Avid Training

Avid editing training VOs, packages. Class meets in the Digital Lab, ASC G-40
You will get a package editing assignment to do in class.

Week 5 - Feb. 13 Shooting and Writing VOs

News Quiz

Homework assignments due this week:

Turn in your Avid editing assignments.

Turn in the VO that you shot, edited, and scripted. Be sure and turn in your script with it. Remember: script must be double-spaced, each sentence a separate paragraph, and indented.

Textbook readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook – Chapter 4: Deadly Copy Sins and How to Avoid Them.

Handout: Becoming a Better Journalist

Week 6 - Feb 20 More on Writing to Video

News Quiz

Pitch me on a story idea for a VSV that you will shoot, edit, and write. Have more than one story idea just in case I have PNS (Pre-News Syndrome) and I'm in a bad mood and want to be difficult.

Getting your words to match the pictures, reference the video

“Touch and go” writing

Let the pictures tell the story

Adding Sound

Choosing a sound bite, writing into a sound bite, writing out of a sound bite

Using natural sound

Review “Crossing the Line”

Textbook readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook – Chapter 9 The Package

Week 7 – Feb 27 Packages

News Quiz

Homework due for this class:

Turn in the VSV tape that you shot, edited and wrote, along with your script.
The reporter stand-up: More than just a pretty face.

Do story pitch for a package. This should be a more fully developed idea. It does not have to be a “hard news” story, but it should be a complete story with multiple elements, sources, and interviews. Don’t just tell me what the story is about, tell me how YOU’RE going to cover it.

Textbook readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook: Chapter 5 – Interviewing: Getting the Facts and Feelings
From Creative Interviewing: Chapter 8 - Planning Your Interview, Chapter 9 - Lessons from Failure

Handouts: Guidelines for interviewing

Week 8 - March 5 More on Interviews and Sources

News Quiz

What to shoot when and who to interview at breaking news
Circle of Sources
Rules of Transparency
Diversity/Inclusion (OWGs)-Handouts

Homework due for this class.

Turn in your edited tape package with written script.

Textbook Readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook: Chapter 13 - Why We Fight (Ethics)
Creative Interviewing: Chapter 14 - Special Problems

Week 9 - March 12 – Live Shots, Second Package

News Quiz

This is the midterm point. Individual grade review

Story pitch on second package. Dazzle me.

Live shots: How they differ from packages

Textbook readings for this class:

Broadcast News Handbook: Chapter 12-The Care & Feeding of TV Live Shots.

Creative Interviewing: Chapter 15-Electronic Aids to Interviewing

In class assignment: TBA

Week 10 - Week of Mar. 19 - SPRING BREAK

Week 11 - March 26

Recover from previous week.

News Quiz

Turn in completed package with script.

Class critiques.

Review and explore techniques

Graphics, effects

Begin looking for story ideas for final package. Don't wait until the last minute and get stuck.

Textbook Readings for this class:

TBA

Week 12 April 2 - Preparing for Final Project

News Quiz

Story pitch for final story package. Make it good.

In class assignment TBA

Textbook Readings for this class:

Creative Interviewing: Chapter 17- Covering a Newsbeat

Week 13 - April 9

(FRIDAY, APRIL 11 IS THE LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF "W.")

News Quiz

Homework assignment due this week:

Submit Story Idea and Development forms for a story you could do in two different ways or as a multi-part story. This may require some thought and research, so give yourself time.

You should also be working on your final story package if it's been approved. Remember, this should take some research, preparation, and thoughtful shooting and editing.

Textbook Readings for this class:

Creative Interviewing: Chapter 20-Ethics of the Interview

Week 14 April 16

News Quiz

In class writing TBA

Long Form, what it takes, examples

Textbook Readings for this class:

Creative Interviewing: Chapter 11-Journalistic Observation

Week 15 April 23

News Quiz

In class writing TBA

Individual review on progress of final package.

Textbook Readings for this class:

Creative Interviewing: Chapter 21 Ten Steps toward Truth

Week 16 April 30

News Quiz

FINAL PROJECT IS DUE ON MAY 9, BY 3 PM. You may turn it in earlier, but this is the last day I will accept any work. Leave your tape and script in an envelope with my name on it in the mailroom by Students Services in Annenberg. Make sure your name is on the script and on the tape, not just on the outside plastic case. If you want your tape and script back, include a self-addressed stamped envelope for it to be returned.