

**USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM**  
**SYLLABUS - Journalism 303 Broadcast News Reporting**  
**Spring 2008 Tuesday, 9:30am -12:10pm**  
**AHF 259**

**Stacy Scholder**  
**ASC G24A**

I have an office at ATVN (Annenberg TV News), where I am the Associate Director of the student newsroom. We do a live newscast Monday through Thursday at 6pm, so talking with me later in the afternoon may not be the best time, depending on what's going on in the news.

The best time to reach me is during the day, Monday through Thursday between 9am and 1pm . But feel free to check in with me, because I may have time later in the day as well. I also check my email daily and will try to get back to you. The best time to make an appointment to see me is any day (Mon-Thurs.) before 1pm.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course will teach the basics of broadcast news reporting. You will learn how to gather, research, and prepare news stories for broadcast. This class will build on your writing skills and teach you how to produce a good news story from start to finish. We will stress the importance of stories that are well composed, creatively edited, and make the best use of video, sound bites and natural sound. You will also develop skills needed to pitch story ideas, develop stories, and conduct interviews.

By the end of the semester, you should have the basics of broadcast news reporting that are close to professional standards.

**TEXTBOOKS**

ISBN: 0205262589 (**Optional**)

Title: Creative Interviewing

Author: Ken Metzler

Publisher: Allyn & Bacon

From Newswriting:

ISBN: 0-07-326869-0

Title: Broadcast News Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

Author: C.A. Tuggle

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

From Newswriting:

Title: Course Reader for JOUR 202/203/501 with DVD

Dictionary: Merriam Webster, [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

### **DAILY NEWS READINGS/VIEWINGS**

As a journalism major, you need to be reading, listening and watching news. Try to read one newspaper each day. Watch at least one local and/or national newscast daily. Vary the newscasts each day. You can also get plenty of news online. The LA Times, the NY Times, CNN, and ABC News are just a few of the websites where you can get the latest news of the day.

### **QUIZZES**

At the start of every class, we will have a news quiz. If you're late to class you will miss the quiz. There are NO make ups. Most of the time, the quiz will focus on current major local and national stories, and people making news, nothing obscure. Sometimes the quiz will focus on an ethical issue facing journalists in the real world. You will write how you would handle the situation. You will be graded on the logical structure and thoughtfulness of your answers.

### **ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

You will write, shoot, and edit four complete stories (1 VSV and 3 Packages). The first will focus on shooting sequences – several shots of the same general subject to make your point in an interesting way. The remaining three packages must EACH include at least three sound bites (from three different interviews), natural sound full as appropriate, and a reporter standup. There will also be time restrictions on each VSV and Package that must be followed. All video assignments must be turned in as a mini-DV, cued to the start of the story, or as a DVD. A script/hard copy is also required. This should include a lead for the story, the body of the story, names and titles of the interview subjects, complete sound bites transcribed (verbatim), and running times. This script should also be clearly marked with your name, the story name, and the date. A sample script will be distributed to show the proper format.

Working under deadline is part of journalism. All assignments are DUE on the class day as listed. In most cases, assignments will not be accepted late. Assignments not turned in when due will receive an "F." Only with rare exception, my permission, and a verified excuse will assignments be accepted late.

### **DEVELOPING ASSIGNMENTS**

Before you begin work on a story that you plan on shooting, you must first submit a story idea form for approval. I may want to discuss it more with you if necessary. I may do this either in class, in my office, or by email.

Once approved, you will need to submit a story development form which should be a more detailed and complete outline for the story. (Examples of visuals, suggested interview subjects, and a story outline.)

## **SHOOTING ASSIGNMENTS**

Broadcast reporting assignments can be done on-campus or off-campus. The main objective of this class is to cover story conception, preparation, shooting, editing, and broadcast interview techniques. Depending on whom you are interviewing, 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. Use your USC e-mail address rather than a personal e-mail name.

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.

## **ASSIGNMENT GRADING & FINAL GRADING**

All broadcast reporting stories **MUST** include a tape, corresponding script, and a list of sources (people must have title, organization, phone number and e-mail address.)

Script but no tape = "F" (no exceptions; can't air a story without a tape!)

Script but incomplete tape or unedited tapes = "D"

"A" and "B" stories have to have ALL components. You will not get higher than a C+ unless everything is turned in.

**Note: Some stories may be randomly fact-checked during the semester.**

**Basic Criteria** – Assignments will be graded on clarity, organization, accuracy, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, grammar, punctuation and spelling, ability to meet deadlines.

1. "A" stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well-written and require only minor editing (i.e., they are ready for air.)
2. "B" stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission.
3. "C" stories need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors.
4. "D" stories require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors, and should not have been submitted.

5. “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. There are no exceptions.

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 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 your 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 your standup (portion of story when the reporter is on-camera) or interviews when the assignment calls for the student to shoot his or her own standup and/or interviews.
- Failing to make an effort to shoot video (if students have cameras)
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an on-cam (or off camera) interview.

### **LEARNING LAB AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

Students must attend Avid training sessions held during class. There are **NO** make-up sessions for Avid training.

*Broadcast majors* are required to work a shift at ATVN. This counts 5% of your course grade. An ATVN executive producer will explain the sign-up process. After that, it is your responsibility to sign-up and show-up for your shifts.

*Print majors* can work at the Daily Trojan, Annenberg Radio News, or get an approved internship at a news organization. All students must discuss their learning lab with me at the start of the semester to understand what will be expected to earn the 5% of your course grade. You also have the option of working a ‘campus beat’ and doing a series of stories that we will discuss before you turn them in.

### **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Quizzes, Class Participation	15%
VSV and Story Idea ‘pitch’	10%
Pkg #1 and Story Idea ‘pitch’	15%
Pkg #2 and Story Idea ‘pitch’	15%
Other Assignments	10%
Learning Lab	5%
Pkg #3 (Final Project and Story Idea ‘pitch’)	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

### **REWRITING STORIES**

You will be allowed to rewrite, re-shoot, and/or re-edit assignments to achieve a higher grade. Such rewrites must be done within a deadline to be determined by the instructor, and the two grades will be averaged. This policy does NOT apply to the final project.

### **USC ANNEBERG 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.

### **WRITING COACHES**

Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted drop-in times and by appointment. Writing coaches should be used to review after an assignment has been graded and critiqued by the instructor.

Bob Berger, Print: rberger@usc.edu  
Mike Daniels, Broadcast: danielsm@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. Its phone number is 213-740-0776.

## **SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1 – JANUARY 15:**

#### **Class Topics: From Writer to Reporter**

Review syllabus and policies  
Broadcast News writing formats  
Terms  
Thinking creatively  
ASC Camera distribution, basics, and brief instructions  
ATVN Requirements

#### **Readings:**

*None*

#### **In-class assignments:**

Write a short reader in broadcast style.

#### **Handouts:**

Writing/script formats; Videography/Shooting & Editing

### **WEEK 2 – JANUARY 22**

#### **Class Topics: Videographer in Class**

Guidelines for shooting  
How to approach a story with a camera

#### **Readings for this class:**

*Course Reader:* Chapter 1 and 2 (pgs. 9-17), Common Terms pgs.152-158, Basic Rules and Leads pgs.172-185

#### **Homework assignments due this week:**

Get your camera and start practicing. Take several shots of the same thing from various angles and focal lengths – close-ups, medium shots, long shots. Remember, it's not home movies, you are telling a story.

Shoot and write a :40-:45 VSV. Be sure to put script in TV news form (split-screen) double-spaced.

#### **In-class assignments:**

Writing in broadcast style: View tape and write VSV, time permitting

#### **Handouts:**

Shooting Guidelines & Tips

### **WEEK 3 – JANUARY 29**

#### **Class Topics: Developing News Stories**

Work on Story Idea & Story Development forms

#### **In-class assignments:**

View tape and write VSV

#### **Homework assignment for this week:**

Fill out a story idea form for a VSV. The story can be shot on or off campus. Be realistic about what you will be allowed to shoot. You aren't free to shoot just anywhere. Be sure to "sell" me your idea!

#### **Readings for this class:**

*Course Reader:* Writing to Video pgs. 186-191; Tuggle Chapter 7 (The VO)

### **WEEK 4 – FEBRUARY 5**

#### **Class Topics: Avid Training**

Digital Lab – ASC G-40

This is a mandatory class. You must attend this week to complete the rest of the course.

#### **Readings for this class:**

*Course Reader:* Adding Sound pgs.192-197, Tuggle Chapter 8 (The VOSOT)

#### **Homework assignment due this week:**

Once your story idea has been approved, plan, shoot, write and edit a VSV.

Turn in script and edited tape with anchor lead and VSV for the story you shot. Script should run about :40-:45. Indicate which scenes you want and the time it appears in the left hand column of script.

## **WEEK 5 – FEBRUARY 12**

### **Class Topics: The Importance of Sound**

Choosing a sound bite; how sound can help you tell a story

Writing into and out of a sound bite

Using natural sound

Opening shots

View videotape examples of creative shooting; discuss how shots help tell a story

Intro to Interviewing

View and Critique graded VSV's

#### **In-class assignments:**

Write a V-S-V TBA. Script should include on-camera lead.

#### **Homework assignment due this week:**

Submit a story idea for first package. Include any additional materials you can to convince me your idea is great.

#### **Readings for this class:**

Tuggle Chapter 5 (Interviewing)

## **WEEK 6 – FEBRUARY 19**

### **Class Topics: Interviewing**

Preparing for the interview

How to get people to talk openly and candidly

How to convince people they should go on camera

Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing

#### **In-class assignments:**

Bring your cameras and a mini-DV tape! Interview a classmate. Just have a conversation and figure out how to get information and details.

#### **Homework assignment due this week:**

Work on your first package. Submit a story development form for your first package.

#### **Readings for this class:**

Creative Interviewing: Chapters 1-3

## **WEEK 7 - FEBRUARY 26**

### **Class Topics: More on Interviews/Sources**

What to shoot when and who to interview at breaking news  
Sources and Balance  
Diversity; How to Avoid Stereotypes  
More Interview Techniques

#### **In-class assignments:**

TBA

#### **Homework assignment due this week:**

Work on first package.

#### **Readings for this class:**

TBA

## **WEEK 8 – MARCH 4**

### **Class Topics: Personalizing Stories**

How does a news event affect individuals?  
How can a ‘real person’ help you tell/advance your story?  
View and critique first packages in class

#### **In-class assignments:**

TBA

#### **Homework assignments due this week:**

First Package **DUE** today!

Submit mini-DV of edited story (cued to the top of story) and a complete hard-copy of script.

#### **Readings for this class:**

TBA

## **WEEK 9 - MARCH 11**

**Class Topics: Rules of Slander, Libel; Being prepared and what to do if you make a mistake**

### **In-class assignments:**

TBA

### **Homework assignments due this week:**

Submit a story idea for second package.

Before you leave for spring break, try to get your next story organized for shooting. You may want to consider shooting a spring break story. Be sure to get all sides, so that your story is balanced and fair. Your next package is due Week 12, April 1.

### **Readings for this class:**

TBA

\*Individual conferences on midterm status grades

## **WEEK 10 - MARCH 18: NO CLASS - Spring Break**

## **WEEK 11 – MARCH 25**

**Class Topics: Graphics**

Some stories need more than pictures

How graphics (maps, lists, quotes, numbers) can help explain/clarify the story

Providing information that helps authorities and/or offers ‘viewer benefit’

### **In-class assignments:**

Write a story with at least two graphics from story provided in class.

### **Homework assignments:**

Work on Package #2. Story development form due.

### **Readings:**

TBA

## **WEEK 12 – APRIL 1**

### **Class Topics: Story Ideas**

How to find solid news stories  
Figuring out what to shoot and who to interview  
Knowing when a story idea ‘won’t fly’  
View and critique second packages  
Discuss Final Projects

### **In-class assignments:**

TBA

### **Homework assignments due this week:**

Second package is DUE today!  
Submit mini-DV of edited story and a complete hard-copy of script.

## **WEEK 13 - APRIL 8**

### **Class Topics: Competing Coverage**

What’s the ‘best’ way to cover/tell a story?  
View and discuss competing coverage of same news stories  
What makes one station’s coverage better or more compelling than another’s coverage?

### **In-class assignments:**

TBA

### **Homework assignments:**

Research and prepare a story idea form for Final Project. This is your final ‘story pitch,’ so make sure you give it some thought. The Final Package – the edited videotape and script – is due Tuesday, May 8 at 9:30am.

<p><b>APRIL 11 – LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF “W”</b></p>
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## **WEEK 14 - APRIL 15**

### **Class Topics: Breaking News, Updates**

How to deal with developing stories

How to make sure you've got the latest, most up-to-the-minute information

Make sure you don't assume viewers have been following the news

#### **In-class assignments:**

View raw tape and write a breaking news story

#### **Homework assignments:**

Fill out a story development form showing where you stand on your final project. Please let me know if you'd like to show me your raw tape and/or discuss your story. The time to get help is now, not two days before the final project is due.

## **WEEK 15 - APRIL 22**

### **Class Topics: Writing and Formatting Review**

Back to the basics

Making sure your script reflects what we see in the video

#### **In-class assignments:**

Writing assignment TBA

#### **Homework assignments:**

Work on final project

## **WEEK 16 - APRIL 29: Last Formal Class**

### **Class Topics: The Final Project – Challenges, Breakthroughs, Surprises**

Discuss what's working and what's not

View raw tape

#### **In-class assignments:**

Writing to tape

#### **Homework assignments:**

Work on final project

**FINAL PROJECT – MAY 8**

**Wrap party and Viewing.**

Final projects are due at 9:30am today. NO extensions are permitted except for verifiable emergencies. Please submit your edited mini-DV clip and a complete hard-copy script.