

J403 Television News Production

Spring 2008

Instructor: Serena Cha

Class Hours: Thursday, 9 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Where: Annenberg TV Newsroom, ASC G-24

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 13, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

You will learn how to produce a live half-hour newscast under deadline pressure in a newsroom-studio that mirrors a real television news operation. You will deal with the same challenges news professionals face every day. You will learn by doing.

OUTCOMES

If you are serious about learning, and if you absorb what is taught in this course:

You will be able to produce a live television newscast for a professional station.

You will know how to make sound decisions and pay close attention to achieving fairness, balance and diversity in the coverage you generate.

You will improve your news judgment, newsgathering, broadcast writing, copy editing and production skills.

You will be capable of managing many tasks and details at the same time.

You will develop a sense of urgency, double your speed, and meet deadlines so they become natural to you.

You will be able to anticipate problems, cope with surprises, think on your feet, and come up with creative solutions.

You will be effective in arguing for and against stories, and in giving and receiving constructive criticism. You will not be afraid to stand up for what you believe is right.

You will be able to work with and bring out the best in people who have different viewpoints and temperaments.

You will understand the value of being a self-starter, and develop a “can do” attitude.

You will watch television news with an insider’s eyes and ears.

You will teach yourself throughout your career by analyzing your own work and learning from the work of other journalists.

You will examine your decisions and actions daily in order to grow as a journalist, serve the public well, and raise the standards of your profession.

You will be able to walk into any workplace with confidence and make valuable contributions immediately.

You will see yourself as a leader and will feel comfortable accepting responsibility.

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM ACADEMIC POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writing from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: "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 the school's policy."

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union, Room 301, and the DSP phone number is (213) 740-0776.

YOUR REQUIRED DAY-OF-AIR SCHEDULE

You must work ***AT LEAST 8*** scheduled hours **1** day a week at Annenberg TV News. We broadcast and webcast Monday through Thursday, so your shift will fall on one of those days. You must show up at the first class session with **2** possible days to fulfill your shift, or you must drop the course.

IN ALL CASES, your ATVN day must begin by 8 a.m. (see ATTENDANCE below). Most producers and teammates prefer to arrive at 7:30 a.m. (If you wish to arrive even earlier, please make arrangements with your day-of-air EP to have the newsroom opened earlier.)

In rare cases, if we cannot work out the producing schedule to avoid putting you on a day when you have a morning class, you will be allowed to leave after 9 a.m. for the appropriate amount of time needed to attend the class. In all cases, you must return to the newsroom by noon.

IN ALL CASES, your ATVN day lasts until 7 p.m.

Whether you are the producer of the day OR a teammate, you are required to fulfill an entire shift and stay until 7 p.m. In addition to putting together the newscast in the newsroom, you will “booth it” in the control room and participate in the post-show critique in the studio.

Ideal schedule: 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.
Acceptable schedule: 8:00-9:30 a.m. plus 12:00-7:00 p.m.
or, if absolutely necessary,
8:00-9:00 a.m. plus 12:00-7:00 p.m.

If you leave the newsroom for a class or for any other reason, you must make sure your Executive Producer knows, and you must coordinate duties with your class teammates so that AT ALL TIMES there is a responsible producer or teammate in the newsroom to assign work to students arriving throughout the day.

You are required to make a commitment to work specific hours on a specific day. **If you cannot make this kind of time commitment, you will have to drop the class.**

REQUIRED WORKSHOPS

ATVN iNEWS BASICS WORKSHOP

You will need to take this workshop if you have not used the ATVN iNEWS system as a writer-shooter-editor.

Please sign up now for one of these sessions:

Monday, January 28, 12 to 1:30, in the newsroom

Tuesday, January 29, 1 to 2:30, in the newsroom

Wednesday, January 30, 1 to 2:30, in the newsroom

Thursday, January 31, 3 to 4:30, in the newsroom
Friday, February 1, 2 to 3:30, in the newsroom

ATVN WRITING WORKSHOP

This workshop is mandatory for anyone who has not taken it.
Please sign up now for one of these workshops:

Tuesday, January 29, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., location TBD

Wednesday, January 30, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., location TBD

Thursday, January 31, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., location TBD

There will be a different location for each of these workshops.

The various locations will be posted on atvn.org (click on Calendar, then click on a specific workshop) by the end of this week.

ATVN GRAPHICS WORKSHOP

Will be taught by Art Director in class.

ATVN CAMERA WORKSHOP AND ATVN AVID EDITING WORKSHOP

If you have not attended the ATVN Camera Workshop and the ATVN Avid Workshop (both are somewhat different from the Core and Impact versions), you must talk to John Goldsmith when he visits class today to schedule a mandatory half-hour training session. There will be times when you may have to do some shooting and editing. You must obtain a current Equipment Card with ATVN privileges by the class session on Thursday, February 7, or your overall grade will be lowered by one full letter.

GUIDANCE, FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

During your day-of-air shift, you will be in a learning lab setting where you will receive on-the-spot guidance and feedback from many people, including the Executive Producers, the ATVN Associate Director Stacy Scholder and Newsroom/Studio technical experts John Goldsmith and Tom Norris.

I will check on you as much as possible, but there will be days when you will work mostly with others. You are essentially doing the bulk of your

“homework” for this course in the ATVN learning lab instead of at home. This means you should not expect your teacher or others (advisors, techs, student managers, etc.) to do your work for you.

Important points that come up in your work will be discussed throughout your shift and during class. You will also receive weekly written goals from your day-of-air EP. **In agreeing to take this course, you must be open to on-the-spot feedback, constructive criticism and public discussion of your work.**

GRADING DETAILS

You will be graded by me and by no one else. I will ask the ATVN Associate Director, the Executive Producers and the technical supervisors for additional details about your day in the newsroom and studio.

You will not grade any writers or reporters, nor will you sign any forms and scripts they submit to their teachers. Refer all students needing signatures to your day-of-air Executive Producer, the ATVN Associate Director or me.

50% QUALITY OF PRODUCING AND TEAMWORK

To excel in this course, you must become a self-starting producer who can produce a quality newscast by coming up with stories, meeting deadlines, and managing information and people without frequent prodding by your EP, teammates or advisors.

DAY-OF-AIR PERFORMANCE

Your producing and teamwork grade will be based on your news judgment, story ideas, use of wires and feeds, initiative, leadership, ownership, organization, communication, teamwork, people skills, professionalism, ability to meet deadlines, decision making, problem solving, formatting, writing, copy editing, timing, creativity and attention to detail.

On your assigned day, you will be scheduled to produce each week or on a rotating basis throughout the semester. On the weeks when you are not the producer, you will perform a combination of jobs during your regularly-

scheduled day. These jobs will help you learn the skills needed to put together a newscast. For example, you will order graphics; make calls to set up stories; keep close track of stories in editing; obtain times and outcues; and relay information from the newsroom to the studio. You may also have to write, shoot and edit. No matter which jobs you do on a particular day, you will practice important skills and teamwork that will help you grow as a producer.

Your attitude and performance will be judged no matter which jobs you do in the newsroom and studio on a given day. For example, if you are a great producer, but fail to function well as a teammate, your grade will suffer. If you are a great teammate, but fail to function well as a producer, your grade will suffer.

Here are some examples of what will be required during your day of air.

PACKAGE IDEA SHEETS

On your scheduled day, as the producer OR teammate, you will turn in a set of package idea sheets before 8:30 a.m. You must list **3** solid package ideas. For each package you must include a clear explanation of the focus/angle, at least **3** possible interview types and at least **3** possible kinds of video. You will also explain where you found each package idea. Be sure to fill out your package idea sheets completely. They serve as written evidence of your ability to find, develop and prepare stories.

Over the course of the semester, you must show that you can come up a wide range of stories (hard news, enterprise, political, localized reaction, feature, etc.). If you tend to propose one kind of story, you must challenge yourself to come up with other types of stories.

These kinds of packages will NOT count:

- packages that merely mimic and illustrate stories in the Daily Trojan and the Los Angeles Times
- packages based solely on feed material
- packages consisting of “one stop shopping” at a news conference
- unused package ideas recycled from the previous week

Throughout the day, as additional stories come to your attention, you will need to pursue them promptly and develop them fully.

STORY LIST

Each week, on your scheduled day, you will also turn in a story list before 8:30 a.m. Your list must include the essential stories of the day (spotted on wires, feeds, websites, TV, radio, etc.). The quality/completeness of your story lists will be noted.

MORNING MEETING

Your package idea sheets and story list will be distributed and used in the morning meeting. News organizations look for producers (and reporters) who bring in viable package ideas AND solve problems. During the 8:30 to 9:30 morning meeting, you will each present your ideas for stories to be covered as packages or VSVs. These ideas will come from your package idea sheets, story lists and the CNS/AP budgets/daybooks.

You will be judged not only on the strength of your ideas, but on how effectively you convey those ideas; solve content and logistics problems; and get your assignment editors, writer-shooter-editors and reporters going in the right direction right away. This also means you must participate in the discussions about your teammates' package ideas and must be able to explain each package idea (not just your own) to reporters and anchors throughout the day. You will also have to redirect crews throughout the day and come up with new ideas, interviews and solutions.

AFTERNOON MEETINGS

The ability to lead an editorial discussion is an essential part of producing in the real world. You will practice and learn this skill on your producing day. As the primary producer of the day, you will be responsible for convening the sports rundown meeting, the news rundown meeting and the "mini-meeting" with your teammates (right after the rundown meetings).

During the sports rundown meeting, you will be judged on your ability to work closely with the sports anchor/producer to make sure important sports-related stories are given proper treatment in various parts of the newscast.

During the news rundown meeting and throughout the day, you will be judged on your story selection and order; your choice and coverage of the lead story; your understanding of the facts and other elements needed to balance and complete each story; your communication skills; and your

positive attitude and aggressiveness in mobilizing the news team to get elements and put them together effectively.

After the sports and news rundown meetings, you must hold a “mini-meeting” with your teammates to go over important rundown changes and the top priorities for the rest of the afternoon.

LIVE PRODUCTION

In the studio as well as in the newsroom, you must show leadership. This means paying attention in order to correct mistakes before and during the newscast; answering questions from the studio crew and anchors; and making and communicating the decisions needed to end the show smoothly and on time, no matter what the challenge.

Note: As a producer or teammate, you will serve as a role model and representative of the organization in the newsroom, studio and field. Parents, prospective students, donors, educators and journalists come through the newsroom frequently. Please dress professionally.

IMPROVEMENT

You must show **SUSTAINED, SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT** throughout the semester **NOT JUST DURING THE FIRST HALF**. You must recognize and address your tendencies and weaknesses as a producer and teammate. No single poorly-produced newscast is likely to sink your overall grade beyond recovery, but you must avoid making the same basic mistakes at the end of the semester that you make at the beginning of the semester. It is okay to ask questions, but you should not ask the same question repeatedly because you weren't listening carefully during your shift or in class. Solid listening skills are essential in any newsroom and studio.

OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

You must assume complete ownership of your newscast. You are responsible for what you put on the air. For instance, as the producer, you “own” and therefore should read and approve every script in the newscast before printing it. You must also take the initiative to look up information, make phone calls, organize the newsroom team, handle breaking news and think of solutions.

You should avoid blaming others or diverting attention from your own performance. If you have trouble dealing with teammates, reporters, writers, anchors, directors, executive producers, etc., it is your responsibility to analyze your working relationships, seek advice if needed, and improve the team. Some of the people you work with may let you down, but you still have to learn how to deal with them directly and bring out the best in them. This is one of the most important skills you will learn in order to survive and thrive in a professional newsroom/workplace.

10% QUIZZES

A news quiz will be given at 8 a.m. at the start of your day-of-air shift to test your current events knowledge and reinforce punctuality. If you arrive after 8 a.m., you will not be allowed to take the quiz, and you will not receive credit for the quiz.

As a journalism student and producer, you must stay on top of the news. In addition to reading the wires throughout your scheduled day, you must make it a habit to read the Los Angeles Times and Daily Trojan throughout the week, listen to news radio and watch local TV news. You will need know campus, local, national and international news in order to fulfill your required role in making decisions about coverage.

If there is a pattern of tardiness at the start of class on Thursdays, I may give pop quizzes on current events, producing or writing at 9:00 to check your knowledge and reinforce punctuality. You will not be allowed to take the pop quiz if you show up late, and you will not receive credit for that quiz.

The total number of correct answers versus the total number of questions on the quizzes will be calculated to determine your midterm score and your second-half score.

10% WEEKLY GOALS, WRITTEN STORIES AND TAKE-HOME EXERCISE

GOALS

BEFORE the start of each class, you will each print out and turn in **4** goals (with at least **4** sentences describing points associated with each goal) based on your most recent day-of-air experience. Whether you are a producer or a

teammate, you will identify specific skills that you need to target, and specific ways in which you will improve the content and production of the newscast. You will be graded on the perception and depth you show in this “self-analysis.” Do not turn in skimpy weekly goals. You will be called on from time to time to discuss your goals in class.

To receive full credit, you must turn your goals in on time.

If you are on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday teams, your first set of goals will be due at 9 a.m. on Thursday, February 14.

If you are on the Thursday team, your first set of goals will be due at 9 a.m. on Thursday, February 21.

You will continue to turn in weekly goals at the start of each class session through the end of the semester.

WRITTEN STORIES

On your scheduled day, as the producer OR teammate, you must write at least **ONE HARD NEWS STORY**.

You must print out your story/script AND the wire/feed information that you used. You must place those pages in the J403 SCRIPTS BIN in my office **by 4 p.m. on your day of air.**

It is YOUR responsibility to meet the 4 p.m. deadline.

Later, I will look to see what time you printed your scripts to see if you met the deadline. I will also give you feedback on your writing at the midterm point. Your ability to meet the deadline and the general quality of your scripts will be taken into account in grading.

TAKE-HOME EXERCISE

For the first few weeks of the semester, before you begin the regular routine of turning in your package idea sheets, story list and written story plus your weekly goals, you must complete a take-home exercise designed to familiarize you with examples of news and sports names you’ll need to have “on your radar.” The take-home exercise is due at the start of class on Thursday, January 31.

**10% ATTENDANCE, PUNCTUALITY AND
 ATTENTIVENESS/PARTICIPATION**

ANY unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures will significantly hurt this portion of your grade and bring down your overall grade. This course will be conducted as on-the-job training with real world responsibilities and strict deadlines.

MISSING CLASS

If you need to miss class, you must call me at (213) 740-3874 and give me a valid reason (such as illness or emergency) **BEFORE** class starts.

You cannot make up a missed class. It will be your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate.

START OF CLASS

Be on time to start class at 9:00 a.m. sharp.

If you need to check your email, go to the coffee cart, etc., do it before class starts at 9:00.

As mentioned above, pop quizzes may be given if there is a pattern of tardiness. To avoid making the entire class take pop quizzes, please be on time.

DURING CLASS

When class begins, I expect your full attention. Your attentiveness and participation will be factored into your grade.

During class, you will not use the computer, make or answer phone calls, or watch the television monitors unless you are Thursday's designated **PRODUCER** of the day. The Thursday **PRODUCER** of the day must pay attention in class while handling producing duties and must also **OBTAIN NOTES** from a teammate. Thursday's **TEAMMATES** of the day must pay complete attention in class and **TAKE NOTES** for the designated producer of the day.

You will be required to lead and participate in class exercises and discussions. Whenever possible, we will hold a "week in review" discussion of the past week's newscasts, problems and solutions, and you will receive pointers in addition to those given on-the-spot on your particular day. It is important to pay attention and offer input when we discuss your classmates' newscasts. In the real world, producers learn from observing and discussing the work of fellow producers and "the competition."

If a guest speaker is present, you are each expected to ask at least one question.

END OF CLASS

You are on the class clock until 12:20. Please do not schedule appointments (including job interviews) that cut into the class period.

You will need the information we cover in class in order to function well as a producer or teammate during the week.

DAY-OF-AIR SHIFTS

If you cannot work your scheduled shift or if you have to miss part of your shift, you must have a valid reason (such as illness or emergency). As in the real world, excuses or poor planning (conflicts with studying for exams, homework for other classes, internships, jobs, special events, etc.) are unacceptable. Merely announcing to the Executive Producer of the day, your teammates, the ATVN Associate Director or me that you must miss all or part of your shift will not automatically constitute a valid, excused absence.

Be on time for your ATVN shift and be present for all of your scheduled hours. Any tardiness or disappearances will be noted and will significantly affect your grade. Your learning, your fellow students and the success of the nightly newscasts depend on your presence and full participation.

You must keep your day-of-air EP informed. You must talk to your EP on the phone as early as possible **BEFORE** your scheduled in-time. Don't just leave a voicemail. Keep calling until you reach your EP. You will be given a list of contact numbers. Be sure to keep them handy.

Following any absence, tardiness or early departure, it will be your responsibility to initiate a discussion with me the next time you are in the newsroom.

In the case of unexcused absences, you cannot make up your missed hours for credit. It is up to you if you would like to come in on extra days to gain more experience and practice your skills.

For excused absences, please contact me to discuss how you will make up your hours.

NOTE: The use of music listening devices will not be allowed in class or during your day-of-air shift as a producer or teammate.

20% FINAL EXAM

You will be judged on your ability to put together a solid, creative, quality newscast. It is impossible to earn an “A” in this course without doing well on the final exam.

During the exam, you will be given information on a variety of stories. You will format a mini-newscast, write several teases and stories, and explain how you would fully develop each story.

You should absorb producing principles and techniques throughout the semester so you can put them to use during the exam. All semester long, you should also push yourself to move quickly in making decisions, formatting the newscast and writing copy so that you will be up-to-speed for the final exam and the real world.

You will take an ungraded practice test during a class session midway or two-thirds of the way through the semester. You will use that practice test to help identify what you should improve during the rest of the semester, and how you should prepare for the final exam.

MIDTERM EVALUATION

You will sit down with me for an individual **MIDTERM EVALUATION** during one of the class sessions. We will discuss how you are doing and set goals for the remainder of your semester.

EXTRA CREDIT (1%) FOR INTERNSHIPS

School of Journalism policy:

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who

undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

Please obtain an internship credit letter from Annenberg Office of Career Development (ASC 140).

LETTER GRADE PENALTY for failure to obtain EQUIPMENT CARD WITH ATVN PRIVILEGES

As mentioned above, you must obtain a current Equipment Card with ATVN privileges by the class session on Thursday, February 7, or your overall grade will be lowered by one full letter.

TIMETABLE

Friday, January 25, evening – CONFIRMATION OF PRODUCING SCHEDULE

By the end of the evening, you will receive an email listing your/everyone's designated day-of-air shift. (If possible, I would like to wait until after the Open House and anchor auditions to finalize the producing schedule.)

Each Thursday producer must email me back indicating which a.m. session he/she will attend during Training Week (see below).

Week of January 28 – TRAINING WEEK

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Teams

You will start coming in for your 8 a.m.–7 p.m. shift.

Thursday Team

For this week only, in addition to staying after class for your Thursday afternoon training from noon to 7 p.m., you must make a commitment to come in for a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday morning training session from 8 a.m. to noon. It is essential that you complete a full day's worth of

training this week. If you miss any part of the training, you run the risk of falling behind the rest of the semester; and it may be impossible for you to catch up. **This Thursday only**, you will come in at 9 a.m. instead of 8 a.m.

All teams

Each day's group will discuss and decide which member of the team will produce during run-through week AND the first week of broadcasts. Taking the primary producer role during run-through week does not count as an actual full turn/show. The same student will also produce the newscast the following week when the broadcast season begins.

**Thursday, January 31, at start of class –
TAKE-HOME EXERCISE DUE**

Week of February 4 – RUN-THROUGH WEEK

Starting this week, on your day of air:

Quizzes will be given at 8 a.m.

Your package idea sheets and story list will be due before 8:30 a.m.

Your written story will be due by 4 p.m.

Thursday, February 7 –

DEADLINE FOR EQUIPMENT CARDS WITH ATVN PRIVILEGES

Again, you must have your Equipment Card with ATVN privileges by this class session to avoid having your overall grade lowered by one full letter.

Week of February 11 – START OF BROADCAST SEASON

ATVN's first newscasts of the semester will air live on Trojan

Vision/Channel 8 at 6 p.m. Each night, the live 6 p.m. broadcast will also be shown on the monitors in the upstairs East lobby of the Annenberg School.

The newscast will appear on the **atvn.org** website later in the evening.

Be sure to have your friends and family watch!

Thursday, February 14, at start of class –

**FIRST SET OF GOALS DUE FROM MONDAY, TUESDAY AND
WEDNESDAY TEAMS**

Monday, February 18 –

NO NEWSCAST ON PRESIDENTS' DAY

**Thursday, February 21, at start of class –
FIRST SET OF GOALS DUE FROM THURSDAY TEAM**

**Date TBA –
MIDTERM EVALUATION in class**

**Date TBA –
PRACTICE EXAM in class**

Week of March 17 – SPRING BREAK

**Thursday, May 1 –
LAST NEWSCAST OF THE SEMESTER**

**Tuesday, May 13, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. –
FINAL EXAM**

MODULES/TOPICS/THEMES
(ORDER TO BE DETERMINED BY CLASS PROGRESS)

ROLE OF THE PRODUCER

Range of responsibilities

How the newsroom functions, process for getting news on the air

Understanding the editorial role of each member of the news team

Importance of the producer as decision-maker and guardian of journalism

FINDING, IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING STORIES

Methods for keeping up on news 24 hours a day

Where to look for stories

Understanding the scope of local news

Recognizing significant national and international news

Gathering necessary elements for stories

Achieving balance under ideal conditions or less-than-ideal conditions

Actively seeking interviews and viewpoints that are economically, culturally and ethnically diverse
Deciding for your audience vs. reflecting your audience
Developing beats, franchises and contacts

HOW TO COVER MAJOR STORIES

Developing angles, full presentation
Achieving thoroughness without overkill
Sidebars
Explainers
Follow-ups
How to plan special programs

DECIDING THE LEAD STORY

Competing theories based on factors such as:
 immediacy, strength of elements, audience interest
Substance-weight, completeness
Unacceptable leads
Weak leads and disturbing trends
Alternate leads
Umbrella/double leads

NEWS MANAGEMENT – SYSTEMS

Managing information, people, resources and time
Communicating within the newsroom, with field crews, with contacts
Assigning, monitoring and approving stories
Setting priorities and deadlines
Problem solving
Managing essential details
Triple-checking

NEWS MANAGEMENT – TEAMWORK

Managing up, down and around
Instilling a sense of editorial responsibility on all levels
How to get the best out of everyone; give and take
Positive reinforcement and constructive criticism
Insisting on excellence; getting beyond “no” or “can’t do”
Setting the tone
Feedback
Positive reinforcement

Respect
Responsibility
Accountability
Classic newsroom dividing lines and complaints
Forming alliances

NEWS MANAGEMENT – INTEGRITY

Picking your battles
Vision
Protecting the news department
Remembering your duty to the public

BASICS/METHODS OF FORMATTING

Selecting stories
 Comprehensive list
 Kaplan method
 Dropping/adding
Order of stories
 By relative importance
 (timeliness, universe, weight)
Sections as mini-newscasts
Conflicting theories of flow
Achieving flow and avoiding jarring changes in tone
Determining appropriate time for each story
Visual punctuation: graphics, chyrons

CONTROLLING THE NEWSCAST ON THE AIR

How to backtime a newscast
Adjusting time during the newscast
Booth communication, leadership and troubleshooting
Insurance/protection
Accuracy
Quality control
Updating stories during the live newscast
Web components

WRITING AND COPY EDITING STORIES

Familiarity with material
Relative reliability of sources
Wire types and tips

Improving speed
Copy editing priorities
How to spot and fix common writing errors

WRITING TEASES

Responsible tease writing
Honesty
Types of teases
Live vs. preproduced
Tease writing techniques
How to choose video, use nat sound
Placement and hazards of repetition

ETHICS, SENSITIVITY AND TASTE

Gut
Attribution
Generic video
Juveniles
Rape victims
Crime victims, witnesses, locations
Graphic video, disclaimers
Coping with cursing, slurs
Counteracting stereotypes
Descriptions of people
Refusals
Trespassing/intruding
No staging
Embargoes – print, broadcast and web
Copyright
 Film clips
 Music rights
 Titles
 Web issues
Legal opinions, risks

DIVERSITY

Raising awareness
Developing sensitivity
Tapping into co-workers' knowledge
Making story choices

Examining stories for signs of bias
Obtaining wide array of interviews
Paying attention to staffing as well as coverage

ENHANCING STORYTELLING THROUGH PRODUCTION

Pacing

Story count vs. depth

Editorial responsibility

Setups and cold opens

Bump-ins, bump-outs, special theme bumps

Animation

Pros and cons

Full or over-the-shoulder

Complex tosses

Whiparounds

Boxes – multiple (ethics of), remote, large-small

Maps

Pulls/pushes

Releads and recaps

Online elements

BREAKING NEWS

Disaster plans

Staying on top of it

Mobilizing the newsroom

Types of information needed

Finding, managing and communicating information

Getting the facts to the studio set or newsroom desk

Getting on the air

Phoners, chopper live shots, satellite live shots

Pictures, pictures, pictures

Bringing in b-roll and interviews, making sense of the material

Graphics that illustrate and reinforce information

Thinking on your feet

CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trends, consultants

Meter clicks; pressures of ratings, money

Unethical demands

Cross-pollination, cross-promotion

The Line
Taking a stand
Horror stories
Victories
The Secret Power of the Producer

YOUR ROLE IN JOURNALISM

Demand for producers
How/where to start
How to analyze newscasts, stations, markets
Understanding what news directors and executive producers want
Convergence
Negotiating and networking
Learning throughout your career
Changing the face of television news
Making your mark, making a difference
Improving television news

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