

SYLLABUS

Journalism 203

Broadcast News Writing

Fall 2007

Thursdays 4-6:40pm AHF 259 Studio C

Instructor: Jessica Bloomquist

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this Broadcast Newswriting course you will learn the fundamentals of writing television news. You will learn how to write clear, concise and conversational scripts. We will focus not only on the writing, but also on the facts. Accuracy, good grammar and strong leads are important elements in good writing. Format is also important. You will learn the basic broadcast scripts—30 second copy stories, 35 second VOs, 45 second VO/SOT/VOs, the 1:30 minute package. We will also discuss current topics in journalism, such as ethical dilemmas and diversity issues.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

I've worked in television news in Los Angeles for more than 12 years. My undergraduate broadcast journalism degree is from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Currently I produce the 11am newscast for KCBS Channel 2 in Los Angeles. I also produce different news shows at KCBS/KCAL on a consistent basis.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

These are available for purchase at the USC Bookstore, or other sources such as Amazon.com. They are also on reserve at the Annenberg Resource Center (ARC) and Leavey Library.

- 1) Title: Broadcast News Handbook, Third Edition
Author: C.A. Tuggle, Forest Carr, Suzanne Huffman
ISBN: 0-07-352609-6
Website: www.mhhe.com/tuggle3

*The following are required for both print and broadcast newswriting courses:

- 2) Title: Course Reader for JOUR 202/203/501 (with DVD)
Publisher: USC Bookstore

****IMPORTANT—BRING THIS TO CLASS EACH WEEK. MANY IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE TAKEN FROM IT****

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

DAILY NEWS READINGS

In order to be good writers, you need to be avid readers. Students should read the LA Times every day, and also watch at least one local or national television newscast daily. (Students can vary the newscasts they watch.) Also check frequently the online versions of the BBC, Reuters, CNN, MSNBC and Fox News Channel.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Please turn off cell phones during class. Mine won't be on and I expect the same from you. No eating or drinking during class. In-class critiques of your classmates' work will be constructive—feedback should be about the work, and never personal. Be respectful of each other's efforts.

QUIZZES

There will be a weekly 10 question current events quiz, which will be given from 4:00-4:05pm. If you arrive after 4:00pm, you still have only until 4:05pm to complete the quiz. Each question is worth 10 points; partial credit is given for some answers at the instructor's discretion. Two or three of the questions will come from homework reading assignments, "journalese" (i.e. common terms in journalism), or basic facts re: government and law (Examples: How many members are in the United States Senate? Who is the Secretary of State? etc)

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Writing on deadline is a basic journalism skill which you must master. There will be time limits for each in-class writing assignment. All scripts must be in the basic broadcast, two column format. Do not use proofreading symbols in broadcast scripts. If you misspell a word or need to make any changes after you print out your copy, cross out the unwanted portions completely, and neatly write in the corrected material.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Turn in assignments as hard copy at the beginning of class. Scripts must be in the basic broadcast, two column format. For some assignments, you will email your scripts as a Microsoft Word document to the instructor before that week's class. You will get back your graded assignments with extensive feedback within one week.

*****IMPORTANT: IN-CLASS AND HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE FIRST FOUR WEEKS OF THIS COURSE WILL BE GRADED BUT WILL BE WEIGHTED LESS WHEN DETERMINING THE COURSE GRADE. THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO THE LEADS TEST OR CURRENT EVENTS QUIZZES*****

GRADING CRITERIA: ASSIGNMENTS, MIDTERMS, FINALS

- A. **Basic criteria** - You will be graded on clarity, organization, accuracy, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, grammar, spelling, and ability to meet deadlines.

Each story will have a letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F).

1. "A" stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copy editing (i.e., they would air). Copy matches video.
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. ****This includes making one or more serious factual errors in a script---such as inaccurate names of significant people or locations, faulty descriptions of events that occurred, or misquoting people****

****Note** Plagiarizing a script, portions of a script, or information from any source will also result in a grade of "F"**

B. Plagiarism/Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own. Plagiarism is a serious violation of the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity, and a student found guilty of plagiarism is subject to dismissal from the journalism major.

The following is the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalogue:

"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."

C. Late Assignments

As per Annenberg policy for core classes, NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ALLOWED. Some rare exceptions due to documented (on USC Student Health Center stationery) medical reasons may be granted. ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE TURNED IN LATE WILL RECEIVE AN "F".

D. Rewriting Assignments

Students will be allowed to some assignments to achieve a higher grade. Such re-writes must be done within a deadline to be determined by the instructor, and the two grades will be averaged. This **DOES NOT APPLY** to the current events quizzes, leads test or midterm exam. Note: If you fail to turn in an assignment, but the instructor later allows the class to re-write that specific assignment, you may also do so---but the highest grade you will receive will be a "C".

BROADCAST MAJORS-ATVN LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

Broadcast majors in JO203 are required to work a shift at ATVN. **There are no exceptions.** This counts for 10% of your course grade. An ATVN executive producer will come to class on the first day to explain the sign-up process.

PRINT & PR MAJORS-LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

Print and PR majors must choose one of the following three options to meet the Learning Lab requirement for JO203:

- 1) DT, OJR, Black Voices: You will become a staff member of the Daily Trojan, Online Journalism Review or Black Voices. The student is responsible for keeping clips of your writing assignments and turning them in to the instructor at midterm and the end of the semester. If you have a non-writing assignment (such as copy editing, etc) you are responsible for obtaining a letter from your supervisor at midterm and the end of the semester, indicating you were a satisfactory staff member.
- 2) Off-campus internship: You will obtain a paid or non-paid off-campus internship at a news media organization. The internship should be at a news organization;

it cannot be a public relations or advertising agency or department. The internship **MUST** be approved by this instructor in advance. Students will be responsible for keeping copies of their clips and turning them into the instructor for review. If students have a non-writing assignment (such as answering phones, sorting scripts, etc) they will be responsible for obtaining a letter from their instructor, at both the midterm as well as at the end of the semester, indicating they were a satisfactory employee.

****IMPORTANT: ALL STUDENTS MUST BE SIGNED UP FOR THE LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT BY SEPTEMBER 13*****

COURSE GRADES

Assignments (In-class, homework, ethics assignments)	25%
Leads Test (9/13)	10%
Midterm (10/11)	20%
Current Events Quizzes	10%
Learning Lab requirement	10%
Final Exam (12/6)	<u>25%</u>
Total	100%

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to be in class every week. Instructor and student will jointly determine how - or if - the student can make-up missed assignments or lectures. If for some reason you are very late to class, be courteous and remain after class to discuss the reasons for your tardiness with the instructor.

Although the syllabi are similar, every core class is different and students can't make up a class by going to another core class in the same sequence. For example, if a student misses this Thursday 4pm class, he/she can't go to another Broadcast News Writing class as a substitute.

Documented medical emergencies or other circumstances will be considered excused absences.

****IMPORTANT—WE WILL HAVE AN EDIT TRAINING SESSION ON THURSDAY NOVEMBER 1. THE CLASS WILL MEET IN ASC G40 THAT DAY. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AND THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP SESSIONS. YOU MUST ATTEND THIS SESSION IN ORDER TO TO USE THE EDIT LAB AND COMPLETE CERTAIN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS.****

WRITING COACHES

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

Frank Sotomayor, Print: frank.sotomayor@sbcglobal.net

Bob Berger, Print: raberger2001@yahoo.com

Mike Daniels, Broadcast: danielism@usc.edu

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – August 30

Class Topics:

- Introduction/Review syllabus
- Practice current events quiz (not graded)
- Television news---what makes a story newsworthy? The importance of *people*;
view video examples
- What is convergence? How does it change the way news is gathered, written and presented?
- Class handout/scripting basics and terms—copy story, vo, vsv, package--view examples
- In-class timed writing assignment (not graded)

Reading/Homework Assignments:

(*Note some reading assignments are not shown in this syllabus because they will be very current; they will be distributed in class and/or emailed to students.)

****Write a short 1-2 page autobiography (single spaced, Word document). Give me any details you want (family, hobbies, sports/activities, likes/dislikes, etc) but be sure to tell me what your career goals are. **Email this to me by 5pm Tuesday 09/04****

---For 09/06, read pages 9-15 (Ten Secrets to Writing Well), 152-158 (Common Radio

& Television Terms), 172-177 (Basic Rules of Broadcast Writing), 161- 171 (A Typical Newsroom Structure) 178-185 (Radio and Television Leads and Copy Stories) in the USC Course Reader

--Read Chapters 1, 3, in Tuggle book

WEEK 2 – September 6 **GRADED CURRENT EVENTS QUIZZES BEGIN WITH THIS CLASS SESSION**

Class Topics:

- Basic broadcast writing rules/terms
- Leads; difference between print & broadcast leads---view examples
- TV copy stories
- Basic newsroom structure
- In -class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/13, find three short newspaper stories and re-write them as broadcast copy stories (Attach the newspaper story to your broadcast script)
- Read Chapters 2, 11, 7 in Tuggle book
- Read pages 186-191 (Writing to Video), 198-201 (Radio and Television Fire Stories), 208-212 (Radio and Television Crime Stories) in USC Course Reader

WEEK 3 – September 13 **YOU MUST BE SIGNED UP FOR LEARNING LAB BY THIS CLASS SESSION**

Class Topics:

- More on leads—how to recognize the lead of a story; how to write an effective lead; view examples
- Covering/writing the basic broadcast stories: crime, fire
- Writing VOs; matching copy and video; view examples
- Where do we find news?
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/20, write :30 broadcast copy stories on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
 - Greenfield Race Track Fire page 327
 - Shots Fired page 361
 - Armed Robbery page 362
 - Child For Sale page 364
- Read pages 202-203 (Radio and Television Disaster Stories), 204-207 (Radio and Television Speech and Meetings Stories) in USC Course Reader

- Read Chapter 4, 5 in Tuggle book
- Submit two campus story ideas; detail what the story angle is; who would you interview for the story; what video would be needed to tell the story (Use Story Idea Form that will be distributed in class)

WEEK 4 – September 20 **ALL ASSIGNMENTS NOW COUNT AT FULL WEIGHT **

Class Topics:

****Leads Test****

- More on writing VOs (including logging tapes and time codes)
- More on covering/writing basic broadcast stories: courts, meetings, features (view examples)
- Review story ideas (homework)
- In-class timed writing assignment

Reading/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/27, write :35 VOs on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
 - Pilot Arrested page 282
 - Head On Crash page 271
- Read pages 213-215 (Updates and Breaking News for Radio and Television), 192-197 (Adding Sound to Radio and Television Stories) in USC Course Reader
- Read Chapter 8 in Tuggle book

WEEK 5 –September 27

Class Topics:

- Review Leads Test
- Writing VO/SOT/VOs, including selecting and writing to SOTs (view examples)
- Writing Breaking News (view examples)
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/4, write :45 broadcast VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
 - Obadiah's Rescue page 274
- Read Chapter 13 in Tuggle book
- Read pages 85-99 (Multicultural Sensitivity)

WEEK 6 – October 4

Class Topics:

- More on VO/SOT/VOs

- More on covering basic broadcast stories—exercising restraint with sensitive stories; ethical dilemmas (view examples)
- News Franchises and Beats—(view examples)
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/11, write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Griffith Park Brush Fire page 349
- Re-read for Midterm Review: 172-177 (Basic Rules of Broadcast Writing) in USC Course Reader
- Re-read Chapter 3 in Tuggle book

WEEK 7 - -October 11

Class Topics:

- Review for Midterm Exam
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/18, write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Poolside Bear page 284

WEEK 8 – October 18

Class Topics:

****Midterm Exam****

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/25, write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Rain/Melrose page 275
- Homework reading assignments will be distributed in class: avoiding stereotypes

WEEK 9 –October 25

Class Topics:

- Review Midterm Exam
- Ethics dilemmas for reporters and producers; including avoiding stereotypes, the importance of diversity of sources
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

*****Ethics writing assignment TBA—must be emailed to me by noon on Monday 10/29*****

---For 11/1, write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Downed Horse page 281

---Homework reading assignments will be distributed in class re: investigative reporting

WEEK 10 –November 1 **MANDATORY EDIT TRAINING--MEET IN ASC G40 AVID EDIT LAB**

Class Topics:

****Edit training in ASC G40; mandatory attendance--no makeup sessions**

---Also: importance of nat sound in editing (view example)

Readings/Homework Assignments:

--For 11/8, Complete editing assignment from training session

--Write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Hillside Falls page 272

WEEK 11 –November 8

Class Topics:

--Investigative Reporting/Writing, “Good and Bad”—view examples

--In-class timed writing exercise

Readings/Homework Assignments:

--- Write :45 VO/SOT/VO on the following (found in USC Course Reader):
Burbank Metrolink Crash page 285

--- Read Chapter 9 in Tuggle book

--- Read pages 224-229 (Writing Simple Packages for Television)

WEEK 12 –November 15

**** NOTE--- NOVEMBER 16: LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF ”W”**

Class Topics:

--More on Editing; view examples of good and bad

--Ethics and Editing; manipulation of video and sound bites

--Writing packages

--In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

---For 11/22, write 1:30 PKG on the following (found in USC Course Reader):

Encino Apartment Explosion page 335

*** Students will e-mail this homework assignment to me by 4pm

Thursday, November 22.***

WEEK 13 – November 22

*** THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS ***

WEEK 14 ---November 29

Class Topics:

--View long format story telling

--In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

---For 12/6, writing and reading assignments TBA

WEEK 15 – December 6

Class Topics:

--Review for Final Exam

--In-class timed writing assignment

December 13

****IMPORTANT** FINAL EXAM
 THURSDAY DECEMBER 13
 4:30 - 6:30 PM**

****IF YOU HAVE A CONFLICT RE: THE FINAL EXAM DATE/TIME, YOU MUST CONTACT ANNEBERG STUDENT SERVICES BEFORE SEPTEMBER 18****

Syllabus subject to change at discretion of instructor.