

**SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
USC ANNEBERG SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION
JOUR 409 RADIO NEWS PRODUCTION
4 UNITS
FALL 2007**

WEDNESDAYS, 2 pm – 5:20 pm

Instructor: Willa Seidenberg

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will give students a solid foundation in public radio-style news, with a focus on high-quality writing, reporting, interviewing and editing skills. Students will learn the basics of writing and producing radio newscasts and short radio packages using ambient sound and actualities. They will advance to writing and producing feature packages.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to work in radio news, especially public radio. Students will develop good news judgment, high journalistic and ethical standards, and the necessary technical skills required for radio reporting, including an understanding of how to cover a community, sophisticated use of sound and the artful style of writing for the listener's ear. As other broadcast outlets have reduced their commitment to in-depth news, public and community radio have emerged as major sources of thoughtful coverage, provocative analysis and sound-rich storytelling. In this course, students will learn the basics of radio reporting – spot coverage which integrates sound, writing entire radio newscasts, on-scene live reporting, sound gathering, audio editing and clear, concise writing.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites: Core Newswriting (Graduate students may waive this with permission)

Lab Time: All students will be required to put in one shift every other week reporting for Annenberg Radio News (ARN). They will be required to go out in the field to file a report to meet the deadline for that day. Students must have a minimum six hours available either Tuesday or Thursday between 8 am and 4 pm.

News Knowledge: Students must be familiar with international, national, and local news. Students will be given current events quizzes, and class discussions will often revolve around the “news of day.” *To this end, students should read at least one newspaper thoroughly every day, and listen to National Public Radio news (KCRW-FM 89.9 or KPCC-FM 89.3)*

There is no textbook required for this course, but there may be various selections provided, including material from the following books: *Sound Reporting: The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production* by editors Marcus D. Rosenbaum and John Dinges; *History of Public Broadcasting* by editors John Witherspoon and Roselle Kovitz, *Broadcast News: Writing, Reporting and Producing* by Ted White and *Broadcast News* by Mitchell Stephens, *Creative Interviewing* by Ken Metzler. These books can be found in the Annenberg Resource Center or in the Library.

Other materials will be distributed in class.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Each session will build on material covered in previous sessions. Just as reporters are expected to contribute to newsroom discussions, you will be asked to contribute to all classroom activities, including critiquing stories and learning from an exchange of ideas. Attendance in class IS MANDATORY. Unexcused absences and habitual tardiness will affect your grade. If you have an unavoidable conflict, please contact me via email or phone as far in advance as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS

We are journalists. Deadlines count. All assignments must be turned in ON THE DUE DATE. Sometimes your work will be handed back for revisions; assignments will be deemed complete only after students have turned in revised work.

BLACKBOARD

We will use Blackboard to communicate and post assignments for the course. I will update Blackboard regularly with the weekly assignments and announcements, so please check the site consistently. Any emails sent via Blackboard will be sent to your USC address.

To log into Blackboard:

1. Go to: <http://blackboard.usc.edu>
2. You must use your USC login and password on Blackboard
3. Click on J-409 in the list of courses

EQUIPMENT AND EDITING

Students may want to purchase their own stopwatches. The School has field recorder kits available for check out from the Equipment Room. We will use *Adobe Audition* digital editing software which is loaded on certain computers in the Annenberg Digital Lab. Some assignments may need to be done in the Annenberg Radio News booth. The booth should only be used for designated assignments that require an audio board and for recording voice tracks. The booth cannot be used Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8 am and 4:30 pm

because of the newscast production. All other assignments and all basic editing should be done on the computers in the Digital Lab. The booth is only accessible during the hours the Digital Lab is open, so plan your workload accordingly.

Hours of the Annenberg Digital Lab:

Monday-Thursday: 10:00 am – 10:00 pm

Friday & Saturday: 10:00 am – 6 pm

*NOTE: On weekends when there are home football games, the Digital Lab will be open Sunday instead of Saturday.

GRADING CRITERIA

The following will count toward your grade:

10% quizzes

10% class participation and attentiveness*

45% homework assignments (includes Annenberg Radio News shift)

10% midterm project

25% final project

Journalists must be good listeners and must pay attention to details. To that end, you must have good listening skills in class and you must carefully read any written communication that is sent to you.

Your stories will be judged on a variety of factors: reporting, writing, editing and production skills. Each assignment will receive a letter grade and be judged as follows:

A - Must be accurate, clear and comprehensive; should be well-written, using broadcast language and require only minor copy editing; should use sound effectively and be well-produced.

B - Requires more than minor editing, and have some style and organizational problems. There can be ONE error of omission. There may also be minor flaws in the production.

C - Needs considerable editing, rewriting and reorganization; has many style flaws or omission errors. The production values are passable, but mediocre.

D - Requires excessive rewriting, reorganization, and re-editing or re-recording; has numerous flaws and errors.

F - Fails to meet the criteria of the assignment or was not handed in.

Please see Blackboard for more specific criteria that I will use in judging your stories.

STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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.

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 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 the school's policy.

PLAGIARISM

All journalists must be committed to the truth. Presenting components of a story done by someone else without attribution is dishonest. Fabricating any part of a story is a lie. Any act of fabrication or plagiarism will result in a failing grade in this course.

INTERNSHIPS

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.

J-409 CLASS SCHEDULE
 Fall 2007
 (Subject to Change)

DATE/TOPIC	IN CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS
<p>Week 1: August 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of Annenberg Radio News ➤ Overview of non-commercial radio 	<p>Recording and Sound Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of field recording equipment Recording for ambient sound and room tone <p>Timed diagnostic writing exercise</p>	<p>Assignments for Week 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LISTEN to TWO non-commercial (one national, one local) and TWO commercial newscasts (one national, one local). ● WRITE a short essay evaluating the differences in formats, story selection, writing and reporting style and vocal delivery. ● WRITE TWO :30 voicers from wire copy handed out in class <p>READ handouts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Using Microphones" "How to Mic a Field Interview" by Robin White
<p>Week 2: September 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Broadcast Newswriting Review 	<p>Neighborhood Assignments</p> <p>Demonstration: Digital Editing using Adobe Audition</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Radio newscast essay ● TWO written (:30) voicers <p>Assignment for Week 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect ambient sound at a news event Write, record and mix a :30 voicer READ "Journeys in Sound," from Poynteronline Take booth training AND iNews workshops <p>Assignment for Week 4:</p>

		Research your assigned neighborhood
<p>Week 3: September 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ News judgment ➤ Developing a news story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What makes a story newsworthy Finding your own stories Balance and fairness Essential elements needed to tell a story ➤ Reporting techniques ➤ Website preparation 	<p>Critiques</p> <p>Demonstration: Sending recorded material from the field</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambient sound voicer <p>Assignment for Week 4: Report, write, record and edit a 1:00 spot ARN PRACTICE SESSION Continue neighborhood research READ "Learning to Listen," Chapter 10 in <i>Creative Interviewing</i></p>
<p>Week 4: September 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Interviewing techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the field On the phone Preparing for an interview Questions that elicit answers Recording techniques ➤ Evaluate ARN practice session 	<p>Listen to examples of outstanding interviews from public radio</p> <p>Interview another student in the class</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:00 spot • Neighborhood research <p>Assignment for Week 5: Group #1: FIRST SHIFT at Annenberg Radio News Group #2: 1:30 extended spot READ handout "Telling the News Through Conversation," from Newslab READ "Coverage" from <i>Broadcast News</i> by Mitchell Stephens</p>

<p>Week 5: September 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of ARN shift ➤ Actualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for choosing good soundbites Writing in and out of actualities Ethics of editing actualities Using ambient sound effectively ➤ Reading wires with a practiced eye ➤ Preparing story pitches 	<p>Critique spots and ARN stories</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group #1: ARN story (cont.) • Group #2: 1:30 extended spot <p>Assignment for Week 6:</p> <p>Group #1: 1:30 extended spot and story pitch for USC/community story</p> <p>Group #2: ARN story and story pitch for USC/community story</p> <p>READ:</p> <p>"Conceiving Features: One Reporter's Style," Chapter 8 in SOUND REPORTING</p> <p><i>and</i> "Producing Features," Chapter 10 in SOUND REPORTING</p>
<p>Week 6: October 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feature stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How features differ from hard news Types of features How and where to find story ideas 	<p>Presentation of story pitches</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group #1: 1:30 extended spot AND story pitch • Group #2: ARN story AND story pitch <p>Assignment for Week 7:</p> <p>Group #1: ARN shift</p> <p>Group #2: USC feature story</p>
<p>Week 7: October 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing web versions of your stories extra web elements ➤ Neighborhood check-in 	<p>Critiques</p>	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group #1: ARN story • Group #2: USC feature story <p>Assignment for Week 8:</p> <p>Group #1: USC feature story</p> <p>Group #2: ARN shift</p>

		<p>and story pitch for Feature 2</p> <p>READ: "How to Cross Your 'Faultlines,'" by Sally Lehrman from the Society of Professional Journalists</p>
<p>Week 8: October 17</p> <p>➤Covering the Neighborhood: Understanding the neighborhood dynamic Finding stories Finding storytellers Confronting your faultlines</p> <p>Guest Speakers: Members of the Metamorphosis team</p>		<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Group #1: USC feature story •Group #2: ARN story <p>Assignment for Week 9: Group #1: ARN shift and story pitch for Feature 2 Group #2: 2:30-3:00 Feature 2</p>
<p>Week 9: October 24</p> <p>➤Midterm: Timed writing of local newscast</p> <p>➤Explanation of health pitches</p> <p>➤Discussion of Final Project</p>	Critiques	<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Group #1: ARN story •Group #2: Feature 2 <p>Assignment for Week 10: Group #1: Feature 2 Group #2: ARN shift</p> <p>Assignment for Week 11: Both Groups: Three pitches for final project AND two Team health story pitches</p>
Week 10: October 31		<p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Group #1: Feature 2

<p>➤Field Trip to NPR West Facility tour Editing and mixing tips</p>		<p>•Group #2: ARN story</p> <p>Assignment for Week 11: Group #1: ARN shift AND three pitches for final project AND two Team health story pitches Group #2: Feature 3 AND three pitches for final project AND two Team health story pitches READ: "Delivery: Using Your Voice," from SOUND REPORTING, Chapter 7</p>
<p>Week 11: November 7</p> <p>➤Vocal Delivery Guest Speaker: Jon Beaupre</p>	<p>Presentation of pitches for final project</p>	<p>Due:</p> <p>•Group #1: ARN story AND three pitches for final project AND two Team health story pitches •Group #2: Feature 3 AND three pitches for final project AND two Team health story pitches</p> <p>Assignment for Week 12: Group #1: Feature 3 AND begin work on final project Group #2: ARN shift AND begin work on final project</p>
<p>Week 12: November 14</p> <p>➤• Specialized Reporting: Health Guest Speaker: Michelle Levander, Director of the California Endowment</p>	<p>Presentation of Team health story pitches</p>	<p>Due:</p> <p>•Group #1: Feature 3 •Group #2: ARN story</p> <p>NO ARN shifts WEEK 13 because of Thanksgiving</p>

<p>Health Journalism Fellowships</p>		<p>Assignment for Week 14: Both Groups: Feature 4 Continue work on final project (be prepared to give a progress report next week) READ "Developing Sources" from <i>Broadcast News: Writing, Reporting and Producing</i> by Ted White</p>
<p>Week 13: November 21 (THANKSGIVING WEEK) NO NEWSCASTS THIS WEEK</p> <p>➤Final project progress report</p>	<p>Critiques</p>	<p>Assignment for Week 14: Group #1: ARN shift and continue work on Feature 4 and final project Group #2: Continue work on Feature 4 and final project READ "Ethics and Law," Chapter 19, <i>Broadcast News</i> by Mitchell Stephens</p>
<p>Week 14: November 28</p> <p>➤Ethics and Legal Issues</p> <p>➤Job hunting techniques</p>	<p>Critiques</p>	<p>Due: ●Group #1: ARN Story and Feature 4 ●Group #2: Feature 4</p> <p>Assignment for Week 15: Group #1: Final project Group #2: ARN shift and final project</p>

Week 15: December 5 ➤Class Evaluation	Critique of final project	Due: Group #1: Final project Group #2: ARN story and final project
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