



SYLLABUS

Journalism 501

Broadcast News Writing--Graduate

Fall 2007

Wednesdays 7-9:40pm ASC 329

Instructor: Suzanne Lysak

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will learn the basics of writing and reporting for television news. You will begin to develop a clear, concise and conversational broadcast writing style. You will also learn shooting and editing skills. Our goal is to have you producing broadcast-quality stories. We will work on finding and improving your broadcast "voice"—i.e. broadcast delivery—and also reporter standups. You will gain practical experience working on deadline and producing a story under "real world" conditions.

We will also discuss and analyze current topics in journalism, such as ethical dilemmas, diversity issues, etc.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

I've worked in television news for more than 20 years. My undergraduate broadcast journalism degree is from Boston University. Currently I work as the managing editor for KDOC-TV in Orange County, but I've previously worked as a radio writer and reporter, television reporter, anchor, producer, executive producer and news director. My career has taken me to several markets around the country---small, medium and large cities.

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
Authors: C.A. Tuggle, Forrest Carr, Suzanne Huffman
ISBN: 0-07-352609-6

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

- 2) Newswriting Workbook or Course Reader for JO 202/203/501 (aka “The Course Reader”) ****IMPORTANT—BRING THIS TO CLASS EACH WEEK. MANY IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE TAKEN FROM IT****
- 3) Title: Associated Press Stylebook (2007 edition)
Author: Norm Goldstein
ISBN: 0-465-00489-X
- 4) Dictionary: Merriam Webster, www.m-w.com

DAILY NEWS READINGS

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 New York Times, Washington Post, Sacramento Bee and CNN/MSNBC/Fox News Channel

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Cell phones should be turned off during class. Please refrain from texting or emailing during class. (There will be a 10 to 15 minute break during each class when you will have free time to do this.) As per Annenberg policy, there is 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 7:00-7:05pm. If you arrive after 7:00pm, you still have only until 7:05pm 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 WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing on deadline is a basic journalism skill which you must master. There will be numerous in-class writing assignments, and there will be time limits for each.

YOU MUST TURN IN IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS WHEN INSTRUCTED TO DO SO, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT COMPLETE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF “F” FOR THE 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 WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You are required to turn in homework assignments as hard copy at the **START** of class. Don't fall into the habit of waiting to come to class to print out your story.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE TURNED IN LATE WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF "F".

(Some rare exceptions due to documented (on USC Student Health Center stationery) medical reasons may be granted.)

****Note**** Even if it is late, you should still turn in your work--because you will be provided with feedback on how to improve your writing, editing and shooting.

Homework assignments must also be in the basic broadcast, two column format. For some homework assignments, you will email your scripts as a Microsoft Word document to the instructor before that week's class.

VIDEO ASSIGNMENTS

This graduate course has a demanding schedule that includes four packages and a VO/SOT/VO. You will set up these stories, and shoot, write and edit them. All stories must be off-campus stories, and you **CANNOT** use stories from your print news writing class as broadcast assignments.

You will submit your story ideas for approval by the instructor (form will be provided); do not begin shooting the story until you have instructor approval of it.

All of the video assignments should be submitted in class as hard copy on the due date. For each of these assignments, you will turn in: script (in proper two column broadcast format), edited tape and story development form (latter to be provided to you). **FAILURE TO TURN IN ANY OF THESE THREE ELEMENTS WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.**

GRADING CRITERIA FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND FINAL EXAM

- A. **Basic criteria** - You will be graded on clarity, organization, accuracy, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, grammar, spelling, and ability to meet deadlines. Because photojournalism is such an integral part of storytelling in television news, your grade will also reflect the quality and creativity of your camerawork and videotape editing.

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). They are also shot and edited creatively and follow the guidelines in the photojournalism handout.
2. "B" stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. There may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing.
3. "C" stories need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable.
4. "D" stories require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors, and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory, or fails to show important elements.
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.

****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. Rewriting Assignments

Students will be allowed to re-write, re-shoot and/or re-edit some assignments to achieve a higher grade. This must be done within a deadline to be determined by the instructor, and the two grades will be averaged.

COURSE GRADES

Assignments (In-class, homework, ethics assignments)		10%
Edited VO/SOT/VO	Due 10/10	5%
Package #1	Due 10/24	10%
Package #2	Due 11/7	10%
Package #3	Due 11/21	15%
Final Package	Due 3pm Monday 12/10	25%
Final Exam (Written)	*In class on 12/5	15%
Current Events Quizzes		<u>10%</u>
	Total	100%

****NOTE—YOUR JO501 BROADCAST NEWS WRITING GRADE WILL BE AVERAGED WITH YOUR JO501 PRINT NEWS WRITING REPORTING GRADE****

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 class is different and students can't make up a class by going to another class in the same sequence. For example, if a student misses this Wednesday 7pm class, he/she can't go to another Wednesday Broadcast News Writing class as a substitute.

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

****IMPORTANT—WE WILL HAVE EDIT TRAINING SESSIONS ON OCTOBER 3 AND OCTOBER 17. THE CLASS WILL MEET IN ASC G40 ON THOSE DAYS. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY AND THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP SESSIONS. YOU MUST ATTEND THESE SESSIONS IN ORDER TO USE THE EDIT LAB AND COMPLETE THE CLASS VIDEO 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 29

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
- Basic broadcast writing rules and terms—copy story, vo, vsv, package, video time code, matching copy and video—class handouts; view examples
- What is your lead? How to recognize the lead of a story; how to write an effective lead; hard leads vs. soft leads; 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 noon Sunday 9/2****

- For 9/5---Read pages 172-197 in USC Course Reader
- Read Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9 in Tuggle book
- Write two :35 VO scripts (video provided, pages TBA from USC Course Reader)

WEEK 2 – September 5 ****GRADED CURRENT EVENTS QUIZZES BEGIN WITH THIS CLASS SESSION****

Class Topics:

- More on leads; difference between print & broadcast leads---examples provided
- Adding sound to stories; selecting and writing SOTs
- Basic newsroom structure (see pages 161-171 in USC Course Reader; not required reading)
- Where do we find news?
- In -class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/12, find three short newspaper stories and re-write them as :20-:30 broadcast copy stories (Attach the newspaper story to your broadcast script)
- Write two :45 VO/SOT/VOs (video provided, pages TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book)
- Read pages 198-212 in USC Course Reader

WEEK 3 – September 12

Class Topics:

- What is convergence? How does it change the way news is gathered, written and presented?
- Covering/writing the basic broadcast stories: crime, fire, courts, etc; view examples
- ASC Tech will explain camera check out process
- In-class timed writing assignment

Reading/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/26, pick up your camera and shoot and script a :30 VO
- Write one VO and one VO/SOT/VO (video provided, pages TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book)
- Read Chapter 4 in Tuggle book
- Submit two 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 19

Class Topics:

- Shooting/Interviewing Basics and Tips: class session with professional videographer

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 9/26, shoot and script (“paper cut edit”) a :45 VO/SOT/VO
- Writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Read Chapter 5 in Tuggle book
- Read Pages 224-229 in USC Course Reader
- **For 9/26, Bring camera, tripod and blacked tape to class**

WEEK 5 –September 26

Class Topics:

- Review Story Ideas in class
- Writing Breaking News; view examples
- The basic Package script
- Standups; Why and How; view examples; class practice exercise (**Bring camera, tripod and blacked tape to class**)
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/3, writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Read Editing Terms Handout
- Begin shooting video/interviews for Package #1

WEEK 6 –October 3MANDATORY EDIT TRAINING--MEET IN ASC G40 AVID
EDIT LAB****

Class Topics:

- Basics of editing
- ?In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/10, complete editing assignment from Lab session
- Shoot, script and edit :45 VO/SOT/VO (email instructor with topic prior to shooting)
- Continue shooting/scripting Package #1

WEEK 7 - -October 10

Class Topics:

- Progress check for Package #1—**all students must bring something on tape to class to review
- Finding and Improving your Broadcast Delivery
- In class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/17, writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Submit rough script of Package #1 via email—deadline noon Sunday 10/14

WEEK 8 – October 17MANDATORY EDIT TRAINING--MEET IN ASC G40 AVID
EDIT LAB****

Class Topics:

- Editing Packages
- Brief review of basic scripting of a package
- Meet individually with instructor re: video/script questions for student package #1

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 10/24, Complete Package #1
- Writing Assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Reading assignment TBA re: ethical dilemmas for reporters (to be distributed in class or emailed to students)

WEEK 9 –October 24

Class Topics:

- View and discuss completed Package #1 in class
- Exercising restraint with sensitive stories; ethical dilemmas for reporters and producers; including avoiding stereotypes (view examples)
- The importance of diversity of sources
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 10/31, Ethics writing assignment TBA

- Submit Package #2 story idea via email by 5pm Friday 10/26; once story idea is approved (you will be notified via email) begin shooting Package #2
- Reading assignment distributed in class re: covering Beats in TV News

WEEK 10 –October 31

Class Topics:

- Progress check for Package #2—**all students must bring something on tape to class to review**
- News Beats and Franchises; view examples
- The importance of nat sound
- In-class timed writing exercise

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 11/7 finish Package #2
- Writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book

WEEK 11 –November 7

Class Topics:

- View and discuss completed Package #2 in class
- Investigative Reporting/Writing, “Good and Bad”—view examples
- ?Guest Speaker

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 11/14, Writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Submit Package #3 story idea via email by 5pm Friday 11/9; once story idea is approved (you will be notified via email) begin shooting Package #3

WEEK 12 –November 14

****Note—NOVEMBER 16: LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF "W"****

Class Topics:

- Progress check for Package #3—**all students must bring something on tape to class to review**
- Writing from Press Releases
- ?Guest Speaker
- In-class timed writing assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 11/21, Writing assignment TBA from USC Course Reader or Tuggle book
- Finish Package #3

WEEK 13 – November 21

Class Topics:

- View and discuss Package #3

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- Submit Final Package story idea via email by Friday 11/23; once story idea is approved (you will be notified via email) begin shooting Final Package

WEEK 14 ---November 28

Class Topics:

- Progress Check on Final Package--**all students must bring something on tape to class to review**
- In-Class review for written Final Exam
- Job/Career Advice--?Guest Speaker

Readings/Homework Assignments:

- For 12/5, Reading assignments TBA (review for written final exam)

WEEK 15 – December 5

Class Topics:

- Written Final Exam in class

****NOTE** FINAL PACKAGE MUST BE TURNED INTO MAIN JOURNALISM OFFICE
ASC 325 BY 3PM MONDAY DECEMBER 10TH****

