



SYLLABUS

Journalism 303

Broadcast News Reporting

Spring 2008

Thursday 4-6:40pm ASC 329

Instructor: Jessica Bloomquist

KCBS/KCAL Producer

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will learn the basics of broadcast news gathering: shooting, editing and reporting. We will learn what makes a good television news story; how to cover sensitive events and topics; how to follow up on a story and develop sources. You will further develop your news writing skills, stressing strong leads, conversational writing style, and clear, concise scripts. 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 in Los Angeles for more than 14 years. Currently I produce the news at KCBS Channel 2/KCAL Channel 9 in Los Angeles. My undergraduate broadcast journalism degree is from the University of Missouri-Columbia's School of Journalism.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

ISBN: 0205262589

Title: Creative Interviewing

Author: Ken Metzler

Publisher: Allyn & Bacon

ISBN: 0—07-326869-0

Title: Broadcast News Writing Stylebook, Third Edition

Author: C.A. Tuggle

Publisher: McGraw-Hill

Handouts:

Editing and Shooting Glossary

Videography

Story Pitch Forms

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, Reuters, and CNN/MSNBC/Fox News Channel

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Cell phones must be turned off during class. 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 given for some answers at the instructor's discretion. Some questions may 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)

ASSIGNMENTS

There will be one vo/sot/vo assignment, and three package assignments, including the final. You will set up these stories, and shoot, write and edit them. They can be campus or off-campus stories. (There is no extra credit for off-campus assignments.)

These stories must be "hard news", not features, unless otherwise noted.

****NOTE:** You **CANNOT** do stories from your print reporting 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.

You **MUST** follow a two column, broadcast-style vo/sot/vo and package script format on these (and all other) assignments. You will be given a copy of these formats during the first class—keep them for reference throughout the semester.

All of the "major" 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 format), edited tape and Story Pitch Form (latter to be provided to you). ****NOTE*** FAILURE TO TURN IN ANY OF THESE THREE ELEMENTS WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF "F" FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.**

***Special note on Story Pitch Forms:** these must be as detailed as possible. Treat them as you would a bibliography for a major research project. You must include the name, title, phone and/or email of every person you contact for a story. You must include the URLs of web sites you use for research and information. You should attach hard copies of newspaper, magazine or web articles if they are major sources for your story.

There will be a few other homework and in-class assignments as well; some of these will be deadline writing that is due during the class session in which it is assigned; others will be homework and will be emailed to the instructor ahead of the next week's class.

GRADING CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNMENTS, FINAL PROJECT

- 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.

The following are some additional 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.

**Note: "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 his or her 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.

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."

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.

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 Stories

Students will be allowed to re-write, re-shoot or re-edit some assignments to achieve a higher grade (provided the assignments were turned in on time). Such re-writes must be done within a deadline to be determined by the instructor, and the two grades will be averaged.

NOTE: This DOES NOT APPLY TO Package #2 and the Final Project. There will be no re-working of those assignments.

COURSE GRADES

Homework, In Class Assignments	50%
Quizzes, class participation	15%
Learning lab	5%
Final – story pitch and package	<u>30%</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.

****IMPORTANT**** On February 7th (fourth class of the semester) the class will be an AVID editing training session. **Attendance is MANDATORY and no makeup sessions will be held;** you will not be allowed to use the Annenberg AVID PC's unless you attend this session.

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 Thursday broadcast class as a substitute.

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

PROFESSIONAL DRESS POLICY

Act professionally when arranging and conducting interviews for class. Address people on the phone or via email in a courteous, business-like manner. When contacting them, use your USC email, not your personal address. When you go to tape interviews, dress appropriately—not too casual. By conducting yourself in such a professional manner, people will take you more seriously and afford you more respect.

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.

Bob Berger, Print: raberger@usc.edu

Ed Boyer, Print: ediboyer@ca.rr.com

Brad Hanson, Print: brad.hanson@latimes.com

Mike Daniels, Broadcast: danielsm@usc.edu

BROADCAST MAJORS-ATVN LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

Broadcast majors are required to work a shift at ATVN. There are no exceptions. This counts for 5% of your course grade. An ATVN executive producer will come to class on the first day to explain the sign-up process.

PRINT MAJORS-LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT

Print majors must choose one of the following three options to meet the Learning Lab requirement for JO303:

- 1) DT/Annenberg Radio News: You will become a staff member of the Daily Trojan or Annenberg Radio News. The student is responsible for keeping clips of writing assignments/scripts 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 supervisor, at both the midterm as well as at the end of the semester, indicating they were a satisfactory employee.

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 – Jan. 17

Class Topics:

Introduction/Review syllabus

Camera checkout explainer (ASC Tech speaker)

Discussion/view examples of basic shooting guidelines—wide, medium, close-up, B roll, cutaway shots; writing to video

The importance of nat sound

Class handout/review scripting basics and terms—vo, vsv, package (view examples)

Practice current events quiz (not graded)

In-class timed writing assignment from handout (graded, but does not count)

ATVN Executive Producer explains Learning Lab sign-up for broadcast majors

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.)

For 1/24

--Pickup your camera and shoot, write and edit a :30 on-campus vo

--Write a short 1-2 page autobiography and email it to me **by Monday 1/21 at Noon**

--Read Handouts—Shooting/Editing Glossary and News Editing

--Read/Review Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7 in Tuggle book

--Read Handout-- the RTNDA ethics statement

--Submit Story Idea Form for a 1:00 – 1:15 VSV

WEEK 2 - Jan. 24

Videography guest lecturer: Kris Smith

Shooting/Interviewing Basics and Tips

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 1/31

--Shoot, script and edit a 1:00 – 1:15 VSV

--Read/Review Chapter 4, 8 in Tuggle book

--Read Handouts—Shooting Basics and Videography

--Submit two Story Idea Forms for PKG #1

WEEK 3 - Jan. 31

**** WEEKLY GRADED CURRENT EVENTS QUIZZES BEGIN WITH THIS CLASS**

****LEARNING LAB REQUIREMENT MUST BE FINALIZED BY THIS CLASS**

Class Topics:

Writing good, tight scripts

Writing hard lead vs. soft lead—view examples, in-class writing exercise

Where to find story ideas

What makes a good TV news story? Hard news vs. Features, Discuss/view examples

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 2/7

--Shoot a 2:00 interview

--Read Chapters 2, 3, 5, 8 and 16 in Metzler book

--Read/Review Chapter 9 in Tuggle book

WEEK 4 – Feb. 7MANDATORY AVID EDITING TRAINING** MEET IN ASC G40 AT 4:00PM**

Reading/Homework Assignments:

For 2/14

--Begin working on shooting, scripting and editing PKG #1

--Read/Review Chapter 5 in Tuggle

WEEK 5 - Feb. 14

Class Topics:

Review progress on Package #1; all students must have something on tape to review in class

More on what makes a good TV news package

Standups—their purpose and use—view/discuss video examples

Developing Sources/Story Follow Up—the importance of diversity

Creative Editing—view examples

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 2/21

--Complete PKG #1

WEEK 6 - Feb. 21

Class Topics:

Review Completed PKG #1
Creative Editing—view examples

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 2/28
--Submit two Story Idea Forms for PKG #2
--Read/Review: Appendix B in Tuggle book

WEEK 7 - Feb. 28**Class Topics:**

Covering Crime/Legal Stories

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 3/6
--Read Chapters 7 and 14 in Metzler book
--Homework writing assignment TBA

WEEK 8 – Mar. 6**Class Topics:**

Covering sensitive stories/interviews—ethical issues

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 3/13
--Begin shooting, writing and editing PKG #2
--Read/Review Chapter 11 in Tuggle

WEEK 9 - Mar. 13**Class Topics:**

Review progress on Package #2; all students must have something on tape to review in class
Writing on Deadline/Timed in-class writing assignment
Ethical case studies/issues in broadcast journalism; examine/discuss case studies

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 3/27
--Complete PKG #2

WEEK 10 - Mar. 17 - SPRING BREAK**WEEK 11 - Mar. 27****Class Topics:**

Review completed PKG #2

Covering a Beat as a TV Reporter; Franchise Reporting—View/discuss video examples

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 4/3

--Submit two Story Idea Forms for Final Project

--Read/Review Chapter 14 in Tuggle

WEEK 12 – Apr. 3

Class Topics:

--Discussion: recent trends in TV news, including “one man bands” in major markets and convergence: promotion/marketing/”tying in” station web sites; view examples

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 4/10

--Read/Review Chapter 13 in Tuggle book

--Homework writing assignment TBA

WEEK 13 - Apr. 10

****Note—Friday APRIL 11: LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF "W"****

Class Topics:

Connecting with the Community as a Reporter

Writing from Press Releases—in class assignment

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 4/17

--Homework assignment from class handout/press release

--Begin setting up/shooting Final Project

--Read/Review Chapter 12 in Tuggle book

***Bring camera, tripod, mic and tape to class on 4/17**

WEEK 14 - Apr. 17

Class Topics:

Review progress on final project; each student must have something on tape to review in class

The Live Shot—basic elements, scripting, exercising restraint in breaking news

In Class Exercise—simulated live shots on deadline

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 4/24

--Read/Review Chapter 15 in Tuggle book

--Continue shooting/scripting/editing final project

WEEK 15 - Apr. 24**Class Topics:**

Review progress on final project; each student must have something on tape to review in class

Building a career in broadcast journalism: Guest Speaker

Readings/Homework Assignments:

For 5/1

-- Finish final project

WEEK 16- May 1 FINAL PROJECTS DUE/REVIEW IN CLASS