

MC 3104 Advanced Broadcast News, Section 1
Spring 2005, B12 Hodges Hall
Tuesday & Thursday 10:40 – 12:30

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to teach you advanced television news reporting techniques. In this course, we will advance your understanding of the elements that make up a television news story and then you will apply these elements to the creation and execution of your stories. Specifically, you will more fully develop your broadcast writing skills, expand your television reporting skills, strengthen your use of video and audio narratives within television news stories and learn to more effectively edit your television news stories.

This course is designed based on the assumption that you understand the development of television story ideas, the concept of television narrative structures, and the process of basic television reporting and editing. All written assignments in this course will be graded for grammar, spelling, punctuation, use of language and following appropriate style for that assignment in this course (Associated Press Broadcast Style and general grammar).

You will expand your knowledge of digital non-linear editing in this course. As you have discovered, the Avid system has remarkable potential. It will require time for you to become more proficient on the system. Nothing can replace spending time learning to operate this system. History has shown that students who spend the time learning the equipment in the early stages of the course produce much higher quality work on the later assignments.

This course should help you develop your reporting abilities, thus improving the quality of the information conveyed to the viewer. Some emphasis will be placed on your abilities to critically assess your own work and others. This will allow you to continue to grow and develop your skills after this course has ended.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Again, you should already have a solid grasp of the elements that comprise a television news story. You should be familiar with the process of gathering and

editing television news stories. You should also be proficient with the television news equipment used in the Broadcast News and Production course (cameras, lights, tripods, microphones, etc.). Finally, you need to have a conceptual understanding of story types and narrative forms within television news.

REQUIRED VIEWING AND READING:

You need to keep current daily on the WORLD around you. You need to read the Reveille, the Advocate, and a national newspaper daily. The Internet makes this much easier. You also will need to watch at least one local newscast and national news daily. Magazine shows can also be great teachers for you. As a broadcast reporter you will be expected to be a “jack of all trades, master of none.” In other words, you will need to have a good grasp of all news and current events to be a solid television reporter. It is also good to go to news outlets that don’t share your particular point of view. It helps in your understanding of all sides of the issue and may aid in story enterprise.

CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR:

There are several offenses that will get you fired on the spot in the working world of television news. Media practitioners must uphold the highest ethical standards. The same offenses will get you a referral to the Dean of Student’s Office for disciplinary action. Please note that I treat these offenses with the utmost seriousness and will initiate action based on the Manship School and LSU policy.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The LSU Code of Student Conduct is very specific on what is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged inclusion, in work submitted for credit, of someone else’s words, ideas, or data.” This includes the use of video shot by anyone outside this class.

In this course, this means all video submitted must be shot by members of this class. No videos from other sources will be accepted unless the course instructor approves it BEFORE the due date of the packages. If video from another source is approved and used, proper attribution must be given. Any violation of this policy can result in a charge of academic misconduct.

Non-negotiable Rules:

- DO NOT take a tape from another source and portray it as your own.
- DO NOT take the words of other reporters, print or broadcast, and portray them as your own.

- NEVER quote anyone as having told you something if they did not, whether directly or as a background source. If you can't justify the source, don't use it.
- DO NOT interview friends, roommates or others, and portray them as someone they are not. Do not do man-on-the-street interviews with friends. Those interviews must be randomly selected. Avoid interviews with Manship School employees unless there is no other relevant person to interview for that particular story.
- WORK TURNED IN FOR THIS COURSE MAY NOT BE SUBMITTED IN ANY OTHER COURSE FOR CREDIT!!!!
- All work must be completed using Manship School equipment unless you receive permission from the instructor PRIOR to use of the equipment.

DEADLINES: Television deadlines are hard deadlines. In a television newscast, a missed "slot" will adversely affect the entire show. A late story will be severely penalized, if accepted at all. If you have not executed your project in a timely manner, equipment excuses WILL NOT be accepted as a reason to miss deadline! No negotiating!

ATTENDANCE: You are expected to attend all classroom lectures and labs. This class is primarily a discussion course so your success will depend in part on prepared and thoughtful class participation. Students must read assigned material before coming to class and be prepared to discuss it. Unannounced quizzes on readings or current events may be given occasionally.

ABSENCES: If it is necessary that you miss a class please let the instructor know in advance and get the class notes or schedule changes from a classmate. The consequence of poor attendance is usually a low grade. Excused absences are those recognized by Louisiana State University (illness, serious family emergency, special curricular requirements, court imposed legal obligations, military obligations, serious weather conditions, religious holidays, university athletic event participation, university musical event participation, approved field trip). Any excused absence requires documentation of the reason for absence. For example, if a person in your immediate family dies, bring a copy of the obituary or a funeral notice. If the relationship is not obvious, it must be documented. The instructor will determine what is considered adequate documentation. In cases where excused absences are anticipated, please notify me before your absence. Any work that is due must be submitted in advance of the anticipated absence. No make-up work will be allowed for unexcused

absences and you will receive a zero for any missed assignments. This is to protect students who play by the rules.

GRADING:

Grading will be based on professional standards. You will be graded primarily on your ability to apply concepts learned in class to your television packages. Please note, one package must have been presented on-set either for the Mass Communication or Tiger TV newscasts.

Scale: 90+ =A 80-89.99= B 70-79.99=C 65-69.99=D below 64.99=F

Class Participation, Story Critiques	5 percent
Story Ideas	35 percent
Packages	60 percent

- Practice Package – Any topic (don 't use your best idea here!!!)
 - Not graded, but feedback provided, if turned in on-time.
 - 1:00-1:15 in length
 - Best if done OPB (One-Person-Band or only you)
- Package 1 Any Topic
 - Less than 2:00
 - Must be done OPB
- Package 2 Feature
 - Less than 2:00
 - Can work with a classmate
- Package 3 Profile
 - Less than 2:00
 - Can work with a classmate
 - Only one bite (if any) from person being profiled
- Package 4 Issue Story
 - Less than 4:00
 - Can work with a classmate
 - Must have a strong focus
 - Must be balanced
 - See Publicagenda.org for ideas
- Package 5 Any Topic (REAL TIME STORY!!!)
 - Less than 2:00
 - Must work with a classmate (you pick PJ and Reporter roles)
 - Starts at 8:00 a.m. – Ends at 4:30 p.m. sharp
 - Story assigned from submitted ideas
 - You will sign up for one day during the week to do this story.

- You will both receive the same grade on the package.

***If you plan to submit any of your stories to competitions (e.g. Hearst), it would be in your best interest to save the raw tape.

Your packages will be graded according to the following categories:

- **Reporting:** Evaluates the range of sources used, the quality of the interviews and sound bites chosen, the depth of the information presented, the focus of the story, and the level of difficulty of the story.
- **Photography & Editing:** Evaluates the quality of your video (white balance, focus, steadiness), framing of your shots (vectors, depth of field, focal point), use of only motivated camera movements, and clarity of sound.
- **Writing & Style:** Evaluates writing clarity, style, grammar, spelling, use of broadcast style, production cues, word choice, verb tense, and use of active voice.
- **Packaging:** Evaluates the overall flow, pacing, voicing, use of narrative structures, use of natural sound, use of video, quality of storytelling, and meeting time constraints.
- **Lighting:** Evaluates the quality of the lighting – both natural and artificial. Remember to avoid putting subjects in front of windows. Please note that the quality of lighting can greatly sway the quality of a story.

****Any one of the above elements, when badly executed, can seriously affect the story's overall grade. Other errors will be weighted based on the professor's judgment. The package grades are ultimately the judgment of the instructor, based on current professional standards at top local television news stations across the country.****

DYNAMIC STORYTELLING

- **Research:** Have you collected all the facts, angles, and sources to make your story interesting and compelling? Do you take the easy interview or do you look for the person who can really advance the story? Do you have source and content diversity in your story (racial, ethnic, gender, perspective, etc.)? Do you work to avoid stereotypes? Do you have well formulated questions? Is the interview well thought out and structured?
- **Focus:** Do you know what the focus of your story is? Can you explain it in clear, simple terms? Do you have a rationale for choosing this focus?
- **Writing:** Factual accuracy and clarity are the most important factors. Factual errors are a fatal flaw – the worse the error, the worse the grade!

- Write to the video! Spelling and grammar do count. Avoid cute writing and cliché phrases. If you are unsure, ask.
- **Integration:** Broadcast news writing involves the weaving of three basic elements - words, pictures and sound – into a complete, memorable story. Your grade depends on how well each of these elements works independently and more importantly how they work together to form a well-told story. It is important to realize that each element is needed for the story, but none can carry it alone.
 - **Photography & Editing:** A good reporter must understand the elements and function of good photography. The video portion of your grade will depend on well-chosen shots, and clean, properly framed video. This means the shots are well composed and tie in with the writing with a minimum of distractions.
 - **Natural Sound:** Sound can make a story come to life and hold attention. Listen for natural sound opportunities in the field – shoot AND listen. Listen for examples on the major networks and even on the radio (NPR's All Things Considered) of how to integrate natural sound skillfully into packages.

PROFESSIONALISM: Remember – on-camera appearance (this means you look and dress like a reporter), professionalism, attention to detail, and care of the equipment DO count! Please conduct yourself in a courteous and ethical manner. When you are interacting with the community, you are a Manship School representative and should act in a professional manner. Being courtesy also means shutting off your cell phone during class/interviews unless there is an urgent reason or use has been approved by the instructor.

GRADE APPEALS: Grade appeals for any course work must be made in writing within two weeks after the grade is posted in SEMESTERBOOK. The appeal must be typed and must include the assignment, due date, date it was turned in, the specific issue that warrants consideration of a grade change and the grade you believe would accurately reflect the work quality you produced on that assignment. A copy of the appeal must be provided to the instructor in person – NOT VIA E-MAIL. Any appeals turned in late will not be considered. Any appeal of a final grade may be based only on assignment appeals. All appeals must be accompanied by the original graded assignment.

EQUIPMENT: The equipment used in this class is very expensive and must be used by students other than this class. Therefore, you must follow all directions for use and storage of this equipment! None of the equipment can be used for

personal gain, personal projects, or projects in other classes, unless specifically assigned. **You are responsible for the care and handling of any equipment you check out. If you lose it, break it or it is stolen while it is checked out in your name, you are financially responsible for replacing it.** All repairs and replacements will be handled by the Manship School of Mass Communication following standard LSU purchasing procedures. It is strongly recommended that you purchase renters or other insurance that might help cover possible damage or loss. **Finally, absolutely no food or drink will be allowed in the studio, control room, or the labs.**

DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities that require special assistance or accommodations should inform the instructor as soon as possible. Assistance is also available through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, 122 Johnston Hall, 578-4307 or 578-2600.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Aim for the Heart by Al Tompkins

Television Production 9th Edition by Herbert Zettl

Associated Press Broadcast Stylebook & Libel Manual

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

You will need to purchase at least 2 DVCam tapes (3 is recommended). One will be your field tape and the other a tape for your completed stories. Some tapes are available in the LSU bookstore. However, you can get a better price if you go on line to tapeandmedia.com.

You also need to provide 1 ream of paper (500 pages) by the end of the second week of school. Failure to do so will result in your computer account being locked.

COURSE CALENDAR: As in all newsrooms, the schedule is subject to change. You will be alerted to any adjustment in advance. **AGAIN, ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT TO ENSURE UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET INFORMATION YOU MAY HAVE MISSED IN CLASS.**

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week 1

Tuesday, August 23

Course introduction
 Introduction of instructor and students
 Discuss Syllabus and course work
 Equipment procedures
 Camera & AVID review
Assignment: Shoot practice Package
Assignment: Read Lang article
Assignment: Review broadcast writing section in front of AP Broadcast Stylebook.
Assignment: Read Tompkins Intro, CH 1 & CH 2

Thursday, August 25

Lecture/Discussion: Elements of a Good Story (Lang & Tompkins) Advanced shooting
 Work on practice Package
Assignment: Read Tompkins CH 3
Assignment: Read Zettl CH 1 & 6 (with DVD examples)

Week 2

Tuesday, August 30

Editorial meeting : **Story idea #1 to me by Monday, August 29 at 3:00 p.m.**
Practice Package Due
 Discussion/Lecture: Storytelling & Characters
Assignment: Read Tompkins CH 4 & 5 (writing)
Assignment: Read Zettl CH 9 & 10 (with DVD examples)
Note: Other sections of Zettl may be helpful depending on your skill level. Please pick sections as you see fit.

Thursday, September 1

Discussion/Lecture: Storytelling continued
 Critique practice Package
Assignment: Read Tompkins 6 & 7 (interviews & shooting)
Assignment: Read Zettl CH 13 (with DVD examples)
Assignment: Buy NY Times, Washington Post or LA Times Sunday Paper and bring to class.

Week 3

Tuesday, September 6 Lecture/Discussion: Story Research
Work on Package #1

Thursday, September 8 Work on Package #1
Package #1 due at end of class period!!
Assignment: Read Tompkins CH 10 (enterprise)

Week 4

Tuesday, September 13 Editorial meeting : **Story idea #2 to me by
September 12 – no later than 3:00 pm!!!!**
Critique Package #1
Lecture/Discussion: Natural Sound/Vocals

Thursday, September 15 Discussion/Lecture: Beyond the Obvious
Work on Package #2

Week 5

Tuesday, September 20 Work on Package #2

Thursday, September 22 Editorial meeting : **Story idea #3 to me by
Monday, Feb. 21 at 3:00 p.m.**
Work on Package #2

Week 6

Tuesday, September 27 **Package # 2 due**
Critique Package #2
Discussion/lecture: The Business of Storytelling

Thursday, September 29 Discussion/Lecture: Story Presentation
Live, on-set Practice

Week 7

Tuesday, October 4 Live, on-set practice continued

Thursday, October 6 Work on Package #3

Week 8 – Midterms

Tuesday, October 11

Work on Package #3

Assignment: Ethics reading**Assignment:** Tompkins CH 8 (ethics)

Thursday, October 13

Package # 3 due

Critique Package # 3

Week 9

Tuesday, October 18

Lecture/Discussion: Live, Breaking & Ethics
Ethics exercise

Thursday, October 20

Editorial meeting : **Story idea #4 to me by
Monday, March 28 at 3:00 p.m.**Assign Jamieson readings/Press Effect
(check out from my office)**Week 10 – Fall Break**

Tuesday, October 25

Lecture/Discuss: Story Framing

Guest Lecture: Fred Francis – NBC News

Work on Package #4

Thursday, October 27

No Class - Labs close at 4:00 on October 26****No equipment check out over break without special
permission from instructor*******Week 11**

Tuesday, November 1

Lecture/Discuss: Story Framing

Work on Package #4

Thursday, November 3

Editorial meeting: **Story idea #5 to me by
Wednesday, April 6 at 3:00 p.m.**Assign Diversity readings
(online www.nytimes.com/race)**Week 12**

Tuesday, November 8

Package # 4 due

Critique Package # 4

Thursday, November 10

Discussion/Lecture: Diversity in Storytelling

Week 13

Tuesday, November 15 How to prepare for real time story.
Assignment: Read Tompkins CH 9 & 11 (survival)

Thursday, November 17 Discussion/Lecture: Linear Editing, Resume Tapes,
Real World, Survival in a Newsroom

Friday, November 18 Real Time Package #5 groups 1 & 2 & 3

Week 14

Monday, November 21 Real Time Package #5 groups 4 & 5 & 6

Tuesday, November 22 Real Time Package #5 groups 7 & 8 & 9

Thursday, November 24 **Thanksgiving** – Labs close at 4:00 on November 23
**No equipment check out over break without special
permission from instructor***

Week 15

Tuesday, November 30 Work on Resume Tapes (lab not available after finals
week until start of next semester)

Thursday, December 1 Last Day of Class
Critique Package # 5

December 5-10 Final Exam Week

Friday, December 16 Graduation