TELEVISION NEWS REPORTING
COMM 340-001 SPRING 2008 (081) MWF 1-1:50
EDUCATION CENTER, ROOM 110

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Office Hours: 11 a.m.-noon and 2-2:45 p.m. on MWF. I teach at C of C North on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact me there by my cell phone or e-mail
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Course Objectives: This is a hands-on/learning-by-doing class. You will learn about television newsgathering, writing, production and on-camera delivery by doing it. This course also focuses on journalistic responsibilities and ethical concerns pertinent to broadcast news. This course is somewhat technical in that you’ll be expected to learn how to operate video cameras, microphones, and video editing equipment and non-linear/computer video software. You’ll learn how to plan and complete the different types of TV news stories and you’ll learn how to write, produce and deliver television newscasts.


Supplies: Mini-DV video tapes for the video cameras will be provided. But you will need to purchase recordable DVDs (DVD-RW is recommended). Your reports can be turned in on these DVDs. You may also be able to turn in projects by posting them on You Tube (www.youtube.com).

Optional Equipment: If you are interested in and able to edit video on your personal computer you will need a firewire cable and, for a PC laptop, a firewire adapter. Some of this equipment can be checked out and used throughout the semester. Personal video cameras can also be used.

Cameras and Editing Equipment: We have expensive, high quality mini-DV cameras available for your shooting/reporting projects. Once news teams are formed, each team will be assigned a camera kit. Team members are responsible for taking care of this equipment. The equipment must be turned in at end of the term, otherwise final grades will be withheld—for each member of the team that has missing or damaged equipment!

You will also be taught how to use non-linear (or digital) editing equipment located in the Addlestone Library, Education Center and your own personal computers if you have Windows XP/Vista (or Mac) video capture capabilities. You will be exposed to editing software programs such as Casablanca, Final Cut Pro, Windows Movie Maker and Adobe Premier.
Working in Teams to Shoot TV News: Shooting TV news stories is usually a group process of two or more people. In this class we will set up news teams in which you will work together to shoot and edit news reports. Each member of the class will be required to turn in different types of TV news reports (see details below). Report due dates will be staggered (or spaced out) throughout the term so equipment usage can more efficiently be distributed.

Work Outside of Class: This class will require a time commitment needed to plan, shoot and edit these news and feature stories. Efforts will be made to organize teams with students who have compatible schedules.

Specific Individual Reporting and Writing Assignments:
- Individual Reports (POS, Q & A, Music Montage, VOs, VO/SOTS, PKGs)
- Individual writing and delivering of TV “live reports” and newscasts
- Homework assignments from your book and other sources dealing with TV news writing, research and news judgment

Grading Reports: Your reporting projects and some other assignments will be given letter grades based on: accuracy, enterprise and newsgathering skills shown, writing, scripting, production quality, delivery, meeting the deadline, and overall quality.

Exam: There will be a midterm exam. There won’t be a final exam. We will most likely use our exam period to record a final individual newscast or to turn in final reports

Midterm Exam Grading Scale: A 94-100; A- 90-93; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 65-69; D 60-64; F 59 and under

Here is the letter-grade plus/minus grading system:
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\begin{align*}
A &= 4.00 \\
A- &= 3.67 \\
B+ &= 3.33 \\
B &= 3.00 \\
B- &= 2.67 \\
C+ &= 2.33 \\
C &= 2.00 \\
C- &= 1.67 \\
D+ &= 1.33 \\
D &= 1.00 \\
F &= 0.00 \\
\end{align*}
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Deadlines: A crucial part of the news business is being able to work quickly, efficiently and accurately in order to meet deadlines. Reporting assignments turned in late cost one letter grade for each class session late. Regular homework assignments turned in late will receive an automatic check minus and won’t be accepted after one class period late.

Attendance: While attendance will not be taken every class—this is a small class and your absences will be hard not to notice! Many assignments will be made in class without advance notice that will be due the next session—such as the homework from your book which may not be listed on the syllabus. Missing class can result in failing to complete assigned work which will surely affect your progress in this class. And because you are working in teams, everyone must be responsible to do his/her share of the work.
**Final Grade Determination:**
- Team Reporting Projects 25 percent
- Live Reports and Newscasts 25 percent
- Midterm Exam 25 percent
- Homework, in-class work, participation, attendance 25 percent

**Weekly Schedule (subject to change)**

Week 1—January 9 and 11
- Course introduction
- Journalistic ethics and responsibilities/legal considerations (Chapter 11)
- View CNN’s Princell Hair speech on Future of News and News Ethics

Week 2—January 14, 16 and 18 (Jan. 15 is last day to withdraw with 100 percent refund)
- NO CLASS MONDAY—PROFESSOR OUT OF TOWN
- News, news sources and the TV newsroom (Chapters 1-3)
- Homework for Friday, Jan. 18: read Chapter 1, “All About News”
  - Define the Key Concept Terms on Page 25
  - Do Activities 1 and 2 on page 25
  - Activity 2—can find an example of “nonmainstream media” or a “mainstream imitator” and explain how it lacks objectivity
- View videos of C of C grads working in local TV news
- Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 23:
  - Read Chapter 2, “The Television Newsroom”
  - Define Key Concept terms on page 42
  - Write a paragraph or two about the two “Regarding Ethics” scenarios on page 43
  - Also read Chapter 3, “News Sources”
  - Define Key Concept terms on page 75
  - And address the three “Regarding Ethics” scenarios on page 76

Week 3—January 21, 23 and 25
- NO CLASS MONDAY-- MLK HOLIDAY
- Form news teams
- Camera operations (Chapters 7 and 8) and editing videotape (Chapter 9)
- Teams will shoot “Person on the Street” reports that are due Monday, Feb. 11
- View examples of POS reports and scripts
- Practice nonlinear editing assignment: Using Civil War re-enactment clips, produce in Windows Movie Maker a short video, using b-roll and interviews (due Monday, Jan. 28—turn video in on a CD-RW or DVD-RW disc)

Week 4—January 28, 30 and February 1
- Linear versus non-linear editing
- Civil War video due Monday (on disc)
- Video “Media Matters” segment on digital video editing
- Writing television news (Chapters 5 and 6)
• Scripting TV news
• Friday: Training session on editing computer (Addlestone Library’s Student Technology Center)

Week 5—February 4, 6 and
• Writing TV news (cont’d)
• Identifying different parts of a TV newscast: VO, PKG, etc
• Discuss “Q&A” team project due Monday, Feb. 25
• Shooting Video II (Chapter 8)—handout assignment
• More Casablanca editing training

Week 6—February 11, 13 and 15
• POS reports are due Monday, Feb. 11
• Using public records (Chapter 4)
• Newswriting/news judgment exercises
• On camera delivery tips

Week 7—February 18, 20 and 22
• Preview Midterm Exam which will be Friday, March 2
• More newswriting/news judgment exercises
• Discuss shooting and editing news footage or “b-roll”
• Start to discuss “Music Montage” assignment due Wednesday, Feb. 28

Week 8—February 25, 27 and 29
• Q&A reports due on Monday, Feb. 25
• Midterm Exam preparations—libel analysis paper, writing exercises and more
• Review term paper guidelines
• Friday, Feb. 29: Midterm Exam

Week 9—March 3, 5 and 7  **Spring Break—no classes this week

Week 10—March 10, 12 and 14
• Return midterm exams
• Discuss Music Montage assignment—due Wednesday, March 19
• Discuss shooting and editing news footage or “b-roll”

Week 11—March 17, 19 and 21
• “Music Montage” assignment due Wednesday, March 19
• Delivery, live reporting and anchoring (Chapter 10)
• Will tape Live Report I on Wednesday, March 28

Week 12—March 24, 26 and 28
• More on live reporting
• Tape Live Report I on Wednesday, March 26
• Team Package I (issue/controversy report) due Friday, April 6
• Friday: View Live Report I
• Live Report II will be shot Monday, April 2
• Discuss TV news packages—first team package (issue/controversy) due Friday, April 6
• Writing TV news packages (pkgs) assignment
• More on news packages (“Anatomy of a TV News PKG”)
• Package script writing assignment

Week 13—March 31, April 2 and 4
• More on live report and package assignments
• “Anatomy” of a TV news package presentation
• Wednesday, April 2: Shoot Live Report II
• Friday: View Live Report II
• Producing and writing newscasts. Will shoot Newscast I on Monday, April 14
• Write a newscast using a newspaper as source material

Week 14—April 7, 9 and 11
• Continue to discuss next package assignment: feature/human interest story
• Friday, April 11- Issue/controversy packages due

Week 15—April 14, 16 and 18
• Monday, April 14: Tape Newscast I during class
• Wednesday: View Newscast I during class
• Feature and human interest packages

Week 16—April 21 and 23
• Monday, April 21—Shoot Newscast II during class
• Wednesday, April 23 is last class—exams begin April 25

Final Exam Period—Friday, April 25, 1:30-3 p.m.
• Final Reports due—Human interest feature, remaining Issue/Controversy reports
• All equipment must be returned at 1:30 on this date whether your reports are completed or not!

**Final Grades can be viewed by students on Cougar Trail on Thursday, May 10

KEY ASSIGNMENT DATES (subject to change)
• Monday, Feb. 11—POS reports due
• Monday, Feb. 25—Q&A reports due
• Friday, Feb. 29—Midterm Exam
• SPRING BREAK—MARCH 3-8
• Wednesday, March 19—Music Montage video due
• Wednesday, March 26-- Live Report I during class
• Wednesday, April 2—Live Report II during class
• Friday, April 11—Issue/controversy packages due
• Monday, April 14—Newscast I during class
• Monday, April 21—Newscast II during class
• Friday, April 25—Final Exam Period (1-3 p.m.): Human Interest Feature packages due during our exam period—meet in classroom at 1 p.m.—all equipment due at this time and day also

NOTE: In this class, you have the potential to start to put together a professional television resume or audition tape used to apply for jobs in this field whether as a reporter, anchor, producer, editor or videographer. So keep this in mind and be sure to save all the things you do and shoot in this class that might be useful for such a tape: scripts, video, stand ups, live reports, packages, etc.