

COMM 358 - 201 Newscasting & Producing

Spring 2014

Tuesdays 1-2:15 p.m.; Thursdays 1-3:45 p.m.
SOC 100 (Convergence Studio)

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D.

Office: Lewis Towers 910B; phone 312-915-8538

Home phone: 630-510-3128; Cell: 630-235-4141 (please, no calls after 9 p.m.)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4 p.m., Wednesdays 10-11 a.m. (or by appointment)

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♦ Course Goals and Objectives

This class will function as a television newsroom. You will gather information, write, shoot and edit stories, and produce webcasts on deadline for *Loyola News Chicago*. Our goal is to cover and present news, not just produce a “show.” Our programs will follow a “live to tape” approach like a live newscast, with little or no post-production. The course is designed to help advance your professional skills. If your goal is to work in news, there is no better experience than working on a newscast. If your goal is some other aspect of broadcast production or communication, the writing, presentation and video skills, as well as the experience of working on a deadline, will prove valuable.

To perform well in this class, it is imperative that you keep up with the news. You will be expected to know what's happening in current events, both in our community and in the state, nation, and world. Read newspapers and/or credible on-line news sources, listen to radio news and watch television news. You will greatly enhance your ability to produce timely and relevant newscasts when you come to class informed. In addition, you will be expected to produce news that represents diverse perspectives in our community and avoids misrepresentation or harm to individuals, groups, or alternative points of view.

♦ Text

(required) Managing Television News: A Handbook for Ethical and Effective

Producing by B. William Silcock, Don Heider and Mary T. Rogus, 2007,

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (*Also available for rent through the university bookstore.*)

Supplemental Materials: Expect a number of handouts to supplement the reading material. You may wish to use a folder or notebook to keep the handouts together. Some, such as the broadcast style guide, you will need as an ongoing reference.

♦ Supplies

For gathering video and sound in the field, you will need:

- Compact Flash (CF) Card(s), Type I, minimum of 8GB (two cards recommended)
- External hard drive that meets the following specifications:

- Mac-formatted
- Minimum USB 3.0
- Minimum of 120GB (the larger, the more versatile)
- Minimum 5400 RPM (though 7200 RPM is recommended)

Note: If your drive uses a Firewire connection, you will need a cable to convert to Thunderbolt. See handout for additional information on CF cards and hard drives.

Also needed:

- “AA” batteries (to power microphones)
- Lens Cleaning Tissue
- Clear Medical Tape (for affixing microphones)

♦ Class Organization

The main focus of the class will be on all aspects of TV newscasts: producing, reporting packages and other forms of TV stories, and on-air presentation. Tuesdays will be devoted to instruction on topics related to producing television news, as well as meetings to help plan that week's newscast. Thursdays will be production days, when we will prepare and present the newscasts. We will produce newscasts from Feb. 13-April 24; they will be posted on the university's Ignation site (<http://ignation.luc.edu>) and on YouTube.

Once newscasts start, some weeks you will be assigned to produce a video story (package or other story) ahead of time. It will be imperative to have the story finished – written, edited, and uploaded to the server – by the beginning of class on the due date. On newscast days you will be assigned different tasks each week, with assignments in both newsgathering and presenting and/or the technical side of TV production.

We will not operate as a traditional class, in that there will be no mid-term or final exam. Your final portfolio will be in lieu of a final exam. It will be due on Friday, May 2, by 1 p.m., when we will gather to wrap up the semester.

♦ Story Considerations

Script Review on Packages

To help you improve your stories before they air, script review with Professor Hood is required on all pre-produced packages **before editing**. You may do this by email, in person, or by phone. Plan ahead to allow time to shoot additional elements, if necessary. ***Failing to get script review will result in a deduction from your weekly grade.*** I encourage you to discuss story ideas with me before you even shoot, to help in developing well-balanced, well-sourced stories. You may also wish to have vo/sot reviewed ahead of time, though these are easier to change or re-edit, if needed.

Story Subjects

In the interest of objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't interview people you are related to or are particularly close to. Also, make a concerted effort to round out your stories with a diverse subject base, particularly ethnically and culturally.

♦ **Other assignments**

- Assignments early in the semester will be focused on preparing you for generating news and producing newscasts.
- Expect quizzes early in the semester on news, broadcast style and terms.

➤ **Reading Reflections**

Reading assignments have been carefully chosen to coincide with the topic covered in class on a particular day. To get the most out of the synergy between the readings and class, make every effort to complete the reading before class. To help you synthesize the material, written reflections will be required for each reading. Instructions are the same for each: Write a short reflection (4-5 sentences) on what you got out of the reading and any questions you have about the material. These may be submitted via Sakai or in hard copy (typed). Though each reflection is worth only 5 points, cumulatively they are worth 65 points so will impact your Other Assignments grade.

Though you should complete the reading before class on the assigned day, you will have longer to complete the written reflections. Because of the heavier reading load at the beginning of the semester, reflections for the first three weeks will be due Friday, Jan. 31. (Please note: The readings for Jan. 16, 21, and 23 include two chapters, so plan to write 4-5 sentences *on each*.) After that, reflections for that week will be due by 5 p.m. Friday. They will not be accepted later than that.

♦ **Grading**

Grades will be based on portfolios of your best work, along with your performance in the weekly newscasts, reading reflections and other assignments. Points will be deducted for not doing your share of the work on joint projects, as well as for tardiness and unexcused absences. (See more on punctuality and absences below.)

Grades will be divided as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Weekly newscast contributions | 40% |
| Other assignments | 20% |
| Portfolios | 40% |

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the accumulated points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale:

A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%;
C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 64-66%
Loyola does not recognize a grade of D-, so a grade below 64% is failing.

♦ Other Important Notes

Attendance/Punctuality: Reliable attendance and punctuality are imperative not only in TV News but in any profession. You are expected to be in class and on time. Punctuality and attendance points will count as part of your weekly grade. If you have a genuine emergency, please notify me *prior* to class, if possible. Any assignments missed due to unexcused absences may not be made up.

At Loyola, we respect that you may miss class due to religious observances. In these circumstances, please notify me ahead of time that you will be gone.

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is a fact of life in broadcast news. Assignments not turned in on time will receive an automatic reduction in grade.

♦ Rules and Responsibilities

Classroom Conduct: You may use your cell phone for calling news sources, but do not use it for purposes unrelated to class. Everyone will need to stay focused on the tasks at hand for us to get the most out of our time in preparing the newscasts.

Academic Dishonesty

Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SOC:

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g. failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes*;
- Turn in work that you have not done yourself; or
- Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Specifically for this course:

--*You are not allowed to copy someone else's video work from the Internet, DVD, or any other source without proper attribution in the script and/or an on-screen credit, and any use of such work in your stories should be limited to a few seconds with a very clear purpose (e.g., YouTube video). In general, you **cannot** use video from another TV station or network in your work.*

--*If you have anyone outside of the class help you with a story, you must reveal their contribution so your work can be evaluated fairly based on your role in the story.*

Turning in work that is not your own and representing it as yours will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

**If you are in two courses that generate news stories (for example, this class and Mosaic), it may be permissible to cover the same story for both courses if the stories are in different formats (such as broadcast and print) and both professors approve.*

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:
http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). We will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

◆ Electronic Communication & Information

Sakai: Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai. Some assignments, such as the reading reflections, may be submitted there. Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email: I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays but will not always access it on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

◆ Professional Staff

Professor Lee Hood

This is my fifth year at Loyola. I have extensive experience with student-produced newscasts, and my students at the University of Colorado won an Emmy award. I have 18 years of professional TV news experience as a news producer, mostly in Denver. My newscasts earned honors including regional Emmys for hard news and spot news. I have also anchored, reported (both news and sports), shot and edited, and worked in radio and newspapers before my TV career. I hold a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Colorado. My research interests are local news and the audience, as well as corporate and consolidation influences and local news outsourcing. I have a master's degree from the University of Colorado and a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Missouri.

Jim Collins, Studio Manager

Jim takes over this semester as our studio manager, and is a valuable resource for all production-related aspects of the newscasts. He also serves as the advisor for Rambler Productions, a student-staffed production company. In addition to his experience in directing, videography and editing, Jim is an accomplished filmmaker who has produced several independent films. He holds a communication degree from Loyola, and has been on staff since 1988.

Contact info: Jcollin@luc.edu Office : SOC 100 (studio) Phone: 312-915-6808

Jamason Chen, Technology Manager

Jamason is in charge of our technology needs. He can help you explore the technological capabilities of the studio from basic programs to more advanced, so be sure to ask for his help as far as your curiosity will take you! Before coming to Loyola in Fall 2009, Jamason worked for the digital media services at the University of Minnesota; he also taught and served in engineering capacities in Singapore and Shanghai. He holds an M.A. in Mass Communication from the University of Minnesota and a B.S. in Computer Science from East China Normal University. He is an ardent and accomplished photographer who teaches photojournalism courses at the School.

Contact info: Jchen4@luc.edu Office: SOC 100 (studio) Phone: 312-915-6936

Andi Pacheco, Technology Coordinator

Andi is a Loyola alum who is now coordinating our equipment lab. Andi graduated in May 2012 with a degree in Communication Studies (focused on TV and video production) and Studio Art (drawing and painting). She is no stranger to the lab, having worked there for several semesters before graduating. In the interim, she worked on web applications and participated in several film competitions, where her team won awards for sound design and cinematography. An avid runner and bicyclist, Andi grew up in southern California but enjoys the variety of Chicago's seasons (usually, anyway).

Contact info: **Apacheco@luc.edu** Office: SOC 004 Phone: 312-915-8830
Hours: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. M-F (Equipment lab is generally staffed until 10 p.m. on weekdays.)

♦ Newscasting & Producing Schedule

Reading and other assignments are to be done by the beginning of class on the scheduled date.

Tues Jan. 14 General intro: Class structure, TV terms and jobs, studio basics

Thurs Jan. 16 Intro to News Producing; using the newsroom computer system

Reading assignment: Ch. 3 “What Makes a Good Producer” and Ch. 6 “The Art of Producing” (*double reflection*)

Tues Jan. 21 Writing and scripting refresher: writing to video and graphics

Reading assignment: Ch. 7 “Writing Well”

Thurs Jan. 23 News philosophy, developing ideas for our newscasts

Reading assignment: Textbook Intro, Ch. 1 “What Makes News?” and Ch. 2 “Who Watches and Why?” (*double reflection*)

Due: Producing assignment

Tues Jan. 28 Packaging for TV and other story types, the A/B’s of vo/sot’s,

Due: Writing assignment

Thurs Jan. 30 TV Symbiosis: Combined on-air and technical training

--On-air training: Anchoring and using the teleprompter

--Technical operations: Using the control room/switcher, running studio cameras

Due: Newscast log & critique, program ideas

Fri Jan. 31 Reading reflections for Weeks 1-3 due

Tues Feb. 4 Video and editing review, uploading videos for air

➤ **Community Quiz Redo**

Thurs Feb. 6 Deadline reporting practice

Bring in video cards and come prepared for field assignments.

Tues Feb. 11 News meeting and preparations for first newscast

Reading assignment: Ch. 5 “Deadlines, Datelines, and Decision Making”

Due: First video stories (edited and uploaded to server)

Thurs Feb. 13 First Newscast Day

Tues Feb. 18 Teases and Promoting Your Work

Reading assignment: Ch. 8 “Put On Your Marketing Cap”

Thurs Feb. 20 Newscast Day

Tues Feb. 25 Newscast and Producing Ethics

Reading assignment: Ch. 4 “The Ethics of Producing”

Due: Tease assignment

Thurs Feb. 27 Newscast Day

Week of Mar. 3 SPRING BREAK

Tues Mar. 11 News meeting and assessing the newscasts so far

Thurs Mar. 13 Newscast Day

Tues Mar. 18 The Ethics and Art of Live TV

Reading assignment: Ch. 10 “Managing Live”

Thurs Mar. 20 Newscast Day

Tues Mar. 25 Different TV genres and jobs (sports, entertainment, etc.)

Thurs Mar. 27 Newscast Day

Tues Apr. 1 The Producer as Manager

Reading assignment: Textbook Ch. 11 “Managing People”

Thurs Apr. 3 Newscast Day

Tues Apr. 8 The TV Business

Reading assignment: Ch. 12 “Managing Sweeps” and Ch. 13 “Managing the Business”

Thurs Apr. 10 Newscast Day

Tues Apr. 15 Looking Ahead

Reading assignment: Textbook Ch. 14 “Managing Life”

Thurs Apr. 17 Newscast Day

Tues Apr. 22 Work day (no formal class)

Thurs Apr. 24 Last Newscast Day

Fri May 2 Final Portfolios due by 1 p.m.

* We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise.
Additional assignments and due dates may be added as the semester progresses.

Guiding Principles for Newscasting and Producing

- 1) TV is a team sport
- 2) Timing is everything
- 3) Whatever it takes...
- 4) When in Rome...
- 5) Remember the Journalism