INTRODUCTION TO BROADCAST NEWS

COMM 240-001  SPRING 2009  EDUCATION CENTER 203 MWF 12-12:50
(Term 091)

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Office: Robert Scott Small Building, Room 203 (old library); I also have a box at
the Communication Department Main Office located on Physicians Promenade
Office Hours: MWF 10:45-11:45 a.m. and TR 1:45-2:45 p.m.

Note: I do not accept any work by e-mail.

Books and Equipment

• Textbook: “Radio-TV Newswriting: A Workbook” by K. Tim Wulfemeyer
  (Iowa State Press, Second Edition)
• A digital voice recorder: You will need a digital recorder that allows you to
  upload content to your computer. Olympus makes a number of models. See:
  http://www.olympusamerica.com/cpg_section/cpg_vr_digitalrecorders.asp
  Sony is another manufacturer. Used or “reconditioned” recorders can also
  be found on the Internet. Will need recorder by the third or fourth week of
  class.
• Several recordable CD discs for your digital recordings/reports (CD-RW
  preferable)
• A microphone that attaches to your digital voice recorder (optional)
• Headset with microphone for digital recordings/production (optional)

Course Objectives: This is an introductory broadcast journalism course that
stresses the newsgathering process, as well as writing, reporting, ethical/legal issues,
industry issues and trends, and the business of broadcasting. You will do different
types of audio/radio-style news reports and newscasts that may be played during
class in a team newscast setting. We will also explore and utilize cutting edge
audio/video computer editing/production software. I also teach Television News
Reporting (Comm 340) that is designed as a follow-up to this course. So you are
encouraged to take both, if this field interests you, or if you just want to learn more
about broadcast journalism.

To Succeed in this Class:

• Complete all homework and reporting assignments on time and in the
  formats that will be detailed. Deadlines are crucial in the news business.
• Show effort, imagination, and improvement
• Take reporting assignments seriously—try to do them as a professional
  reporter would. Don’t take the easy way out by interviewing friends and
  relatives for your stories—professionals would not do that!
• Don’t miss class and be on time. Coming in late is very distracting!
• Very important class rule: Don’t turn on computers unless told to do so.
  Class time is not your time to check and send email or browse the Internet.
  Please do not make me repeatedly tell you to turn off your computer and pay
  attention in class!
Attendance Policy: A roll sheet will be passed around at the start of each class. Five absences will result in a half letter grade reduction in your final grade. To receive an excused absence you must give me a dated written note (not emailed). Do not ask me if I received an email from Health Services about your absence. You still must turn in a written note. You will also receive a half-letter final grade reduction if you are someone I repeatedly tell to turn off your computer and pay attention!

C of C’s Plus/Minus Grading Scale—The College uses the following grades in the posting of midterm and final grades: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F

Tests: There will be midterm exam and a final exam project. The midterm will cover Parts I and II in your book, “Radio-TV Newswriting Philosophy: Style and Methods” (Part I), “Legal and Ethical Concerns” (Part II), plus handouts and other material covered. The final exam project will consist of a five minute newscast containing the various types of reports you will be learning to do. It will receive a letter grade.

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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Extra Credit Opportunities: You can have points added to your marks in this class by producing extra news stories on communication and media-related speakers and events at this semester. Up to three points can be added to your midterm exam grade, for example, per story with a maximum of nine extra credit points possible. Producing newscasts/podcasts using your teams’ reports can earn extra credit also.

Reporting Assignments: You will be given plenty of advance notice about due dates for reporting assignments, and you will be instructed and trained in how to do these stories. The assignments include: “person on the street,” “voicer” and “wrap” stories; a multimedia reporting project; a 10 minute “live on tape” interview; radio newscasts/podcasts; and a longer form final project newscast.

You will also work together in groups to produce podcasts.

Reporting assignments and newscasts will be given letter grades based on the following criteria: accuracy, enterprise/initiative; newsgathering skill, writing quality, production quality, scripting; and delivery. A reporting or newscast assignment can be turned in one class period late, but will automatically lose one letter grade. They will not be accepted after one class period late, meaning you will receive a zero for that assignment. Book homework assignments can be turned in one class late but will get a check-minus and won’t be accepted after that.

All work turned in for this class must be typed unless told otherwise. Again, I do not accept any work by e-mail.
Final Grade Determination:
- Midterm Test & Final Exam Reporting Project 40 percent
- Reporting Assignments (averaged) 40 percent
- Homework, Quizzes, In-class work 20 percent
  (Homework receives check plus, check or check minus. 24 assignments=60 points maximum using 2.5 points for check plus; 2.0 for check; and 1.5 in my check minus system)
- Remember five unexcused absences results in a half grade reduction

Weekly Schedule (subject to changes and modifications)
Note about the Weekly Schedule: This schedule is frequently updated and adjusted. Please refer to this online schedule for the latest assignments and class details instead of relying on the schedule you may print early in the term.

Week 1—January 12, 14 and 16 (Jan. 16 is last day of drop/add)
- Course introduction
- Broadcast News Code of Ethics
- Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 14:
  - Read the RTNDA Code of Ethics (see posting on class website)
  - Write two or three paragraphs on what you feel are the code’s most important elements (must be typed)
- Wednesday and Friday: View A&E Biography on American broadcasting pioneer Edward R. Murrow
- The Four Cornerstones of Journalism: Fairness, Accuracy, Balance, Objectivity
- Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 21: Type a paper about the Murrow video (see paper guidelines posted on class website—turn in notes taken while watching video too)

Week 2—January 19, 21 and 23 (no class Monday due to MLK holiday)
- Discuss and collect Murrow papers due Jan. 21—paper and notes
  - Murrow’s Legacy (web posting)
- View video of C of C alumna Kelly Golden, who is a local radio anchor/reporter and Murrow Award recipient
- Legal and Ethical Concerns—review Code of Ethics and preview Friday’s ethical analysis exercise
- Homework for Friday, Jan. 23: Read pages 70-83 and do the six “Stop and Write” sections (type- don’t pull pages from the book please)
- Friday in class exercise: Complete Ethical Analysis handout—how would you handle each scenario? What does the Code of Ethics say about each situation?
- Review Libel and Privacy Law standards and media defenses (web posting)
Week 3—January 26, 28 and 30

- Review additional ethical/legal scenarios (handout)
- How broadcast news writing differs from print style (website posting)
- Review RTNDA Guidelines for News Coverage
- Preview Wednesday’s homework
- **Homework for Wednesday, Jan. 28:** In book, read Introduction and review Radio-TV News Terminology. Read pages 3-16 and answer all (10 total) the “Stop and Write” questions and exercises
- Review broadcast pronouncers and rewrites done for homework
- The importance of proper attribution and sourcing
- **Homework for Friday, Jan. 30:** Read pages 16-20 and do the three “Stop and Write” sections (attribution and quotes)
- **Homework for Monday, Feb. 2:** Read pages 20-30 and do the eight “Stop and Write” sections (contractions, adjectives and adverbs, verbs, numbers, symbols, abbreviations and individually voiced elements)
- Attribution in print stories versus broadcast stories (handout)
- Go over Broadcast Writing Differences web posting and review homework due Monday
- Discuss next week’s field exercise—start thinking of College of Charleston-related news stories that you think would be good to cover for a College of Charleston News podcast

Week 4—February 2, 4 and 6

- Copy-Editing Broadcast Scripts
- **For Wednesday, Feb. 4:** Read pages 31-32 (editing) and do copy editing handout exercise (Marijuana Arrests)
- **Class Wednesday:**
  - Quiz: Rewriting to broadcast style (first 15 minutes of class)
  - Review copy editing homework (Marijuana story)
  - Prepare for Friday’s in-class interviewing field exercise
  - Be sure to bring recorders to class Friday
  - Also have a good “Person on the Street” topic in mind that you can interview people about on Friday—make sure your topic isn’t too time sensitive so that it would be “old news” by mid-March
  - Brainstorming news topics: international, national, state, local, CofC
- **Homework for Friday, Feb. 6:** Do second copy-edit exercise handout (plane crash)
- **Friday “field exercise”**: Bring your digital recorder to class so you can go on campus to record several interviews for your campus news story
- Friday: Go over interview “logs” (posted examples)
- Go over “POS” checklist (web posting)
- **Homework for Monday, Feb. 9:** Turn in a log of the interviews you did Friday (can be typed or handwritten—make sure your topic/story angle is clearly identified at beginning. Also, you don’t have to transcribe the
interviews word for word—you can paraphrase what people said…but the better soundbites—write those verbatim

- **Be sure to bring your recorder and upload cable to class Monday, Feb. 9**

**Week 5—February 9, 11 and 13**

- **Monday:** Collect interview logs
- **Bring recorder and upload cable to class Monday, Feb. 9**
- **Demonstrate how to upload from recorder to computer—students do this on your personal computer by end of the week**
- **Broadcast News Leads**
- **Homework for Wednesday, Feb. 11:** Upload POS interviews to your personal computer and put them into Windows Movie Maker—I will pass around a sheet Wednesday asking you if you have successfully done this.
- **Wednesday’s Class:** Transferring audio from recorder to computer (Part II) and the functions and importance of news leads
- **For Friday, Feb. 13:** Read pages 33-36 (copy preparation and leads)
  - Write leads for five stories on page 96.
- **In class Friday:** review page 96 and during class write leads only to four stories on page 95
- **Homework for Monday, Feb. 16:**
  - Read pages 37-41 (The Body, Endings, and Introductions) and do the three “Stop and Write” sections
  - Write a 30 second Radio with Sound (Actuality) story from the Police Sick Out story on p. 117
  - Also write a Radio Reader story for the Donut Shop Fire story on p. 101
  - Follow scripting format for these two types of stories (posted on website: Cat Woman Shot (reader w/ sound) and Teacher’s Strike (reader)
  - Write scripts on their own pages; do stop and write on separate paper
  - When you turn in have the everything stapled in this order: Reader with sound first, then reader, then stop and writes

**Week 6—February 16, 18 and 20**

- **Monday:** Go over scripts due today and also discuss Friday’s Halsey photo exhibit reporting assignment
- **Friday:** Midterm Study Guide will be posted—exam is next Friday, Feb. 27
- **Friday:** Bring your recorders—class meets at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, 54 St. Philip St. for tour of “War on Terror/Inside/Out Photographs”
- **Homework for Monday, Feb. 23:** Write and record a wrap report about the photo exhibition on campus you visited Friday
Week 7—February 23, 25, and 27 (Feb. 23 is last day to withdraw with a “W”)

- **Monday:** Photo Exhibit reports due today (DVD/YouTube posting and scripts)
- **Monday:** Prepare for Wednesday’s midterm exam—moved up from Friday per class consensus
  - Review stories that you are writing as part of the test (see study guide)
  - Review TV split-page scripts (examples brought to class)
  - Review rewrite-to-broadcast style exercise
- **For Wednesday, Feb. 25:** Midterm Exam (radio/TV scripts due at start of class and also the copy-edit exercise)
- **Friday:** No class if you have taken the midterm. Have a great Spring Break!
- **Note:** You are encouraged to work on your POS Report stories during the break. Scripts will be due Wednesday, March 11

*Week 8—March 2, 4 and 6—Spring Break: No classes this week*

*Week 9—March 9, 11, and 13*

- **Monday:** Return Midterm Exams
- **Homework for Wednesday, March 11:** Turn in POS script
- **Friday:** Return POS scripts with comments
- Further discuss production of “POS” wrap story due March 18
- Producing audio stories using Windows Movie Maker
- **Friday:** Class visits Communication Department Media Lab located in the back of Comm Office at 7 College Way (near Science Center entrance)
  - Meet at noon in front of Communication Department building at 7 College Way
  - Bring your recorders
- **Note:** On Thursday, March 12, Erin O’Dea, C of C Career Center Internship Coordinator, will speak to my TV News class about how students can better prepare themselves for today’s tough job market. Class meets at 3:05 p.m. in ECTR 110. You can get sound from Erin for your upcoming issue/controversy report.

*Week 10—March 16, 18, and 20 (Midterm grades posted March 16)*

- **Monday:** In-class “Voicer” writing exercise (bring books to class)
- **POS script and YouTube posting or CD due Wednesday, March 18**
- Discuss “voicer natural sound” reports—cover an event or something over the weekend that has strong sound elements
- **Friday:** Meet at Rivers Communications Museum (St. Philip and George streets)—bring recorders
- Voicer reports are due Wednesday, March 25
Week 11—March 23, 25 and 27

- Monday: Update on voicer assignment due Wednesday
- **Wednesday, March 25**—“Voicer” reports (CD/You Tube and script) due today
- Discuss covering issue/controversy stories and “wrap” report and podcast assignment due Friday, April 3
- Handout: College-related News Topics
- **Homework for Friday, March 27:**
  - Come up with at least Issue/Controversy Topics
  - In this typed paper briefly describe each topic and why you think each would be a good story for our “C of C Scene” program
  - Who would you interview? Who would the official or expert be?
  - Friday we will form class into news teams and you will discuss these topics with each other and put together a preliminary podcast lineup

Week 12—March 30, April 1 and 3

- More on producing podcasts
- **Homework for Wednesday, April 1:**
  - Prepare a Lineup for a Two Minute C of C Newscast—see posted example. Stories should be timely for Wednesday at noon. Lineup must include news, sports and weather. Format per the example.
  - Team Podcast producers need images/photos of each anchor and reporter. Bring such an image to class so that it can be emailed to the producer or can be put on the producer’s flashdrive
- Writing and producing individual newscasts—will do one on Friday, April 10
- Discuss 10-minute interview assignment due Wednesday, April 15
- **Friday, April 3:** Issue/controversy reports due

Week 13—April 6, 8 and 10

- Discuss newscasts and newscast scripting
- Read pages 47-50 (newscast organization)
- Start to discuss 10 minute interview due on Wednesday, April 15
- Go over Interviewing Tips handout/posting
- **Team Podcasts (from Issue/Controversy reports) due Wednesday, April 8**
  - Post on YouTube (try to keep TRT within 10 minutes)
  - Producer turn in individual scripts
- **First individual newscast will be taped Friday, April 10 during class**

Week 14—April 13, 15 and 17

- Discuss multimedia assignment
- **Friday, April 17:** 10 minute interview due (don’t forget the script)
- **Friday:** Meet at Comm Dept Media Center
Week 15—April 20, 22, and 24 (last week of classes)
  • Go over guidelines for the Final Exam Newscast Project
  • More on the Multimedia Project
  • Multimedia Project due Friday, April 24

FINAL EXAM DATE— Wednesday, May 6, noon-2  Final newscast projects due—
  come to the classroom to turn in your scripts and CD
**Final Grades can be viewed by students on Cougar Trail on Tuesday, May 12

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