DIGITAL NEWSROOM

Professor Peyronnin jfp7@nyu.edu Office Hours Thursday 12:00-1:00pm 7th floor
Professor Mihai am14@nyu.edu Available daily 7th floor office
(Instructors always available by email, and by appointment.)

SYLLABUS

Digital Newsroom will combine TV Newscast and Beat iReporting so graduate students can develop a comprehensive set of skills that will ready them for a career in video journalism. It is a holistic approach that will prepare students for content production that is distributed via the Internet, mobile or television. This class replicates life in today’s daily newsroom, capturing the energy, urgency and spirit of a newssroom, including the deadline pressure. The professors will provide constructive criticism of reporting, writing, producing, shooting and editing, which is intended to help each student reach their full potential.

THE CONCEPT

At the core of Digital Newsroom is a weekly broadcast that runs LIVE Thursday evening on NYU TV network and is also streamed on the web. The broadcast is where content is published, and it provides students a regular deadline to shoot for. The course’s unique approach facilitates instruction and cross training in a real newsroom environment in order to gain fluency with a wide range of newsroom production tools. This approach will also allow students to better experience the collaborative nature of a newssroom, which is necessary to effectively produce a newscast or publish with a web based organization.

While we typically do one newscast each week, we are open to considering from time to time altering the format. For instance, we can split the program in half; the first portion can be a newscast and the second portion an interview program.

Over the course of the semester, students will work in various newscast production roles and in-depth field reporting assignments. For the latter, students will be taught advanced editing and camera techniques, as well as live field reporting. The class will also encourage media crossover and experimentation. For instance, students will be able to use iPhones and other mobile devices in newsgathering, editing and publishing, as well as the use of software applications, such as Skype, Face Time, Periscope, Adobe Premiere, Adobe Audition, Adobe AfterEffects, and Adobe Photoshop.

When working on the broadcast(s), which are anchored from the NYU studio, students will rotate among the typical newsroom positions. These positions include reporter, writer, executive producer, director, technical director, anchor, camera and so on. Students will be given the opportunity to spend more time focusing on a position that interests them most, yet they will be exposed to all the positions. Since this class was first offered, every student has easily and successfully mastered their weekly technical function.

Students will be instructed on how to do live on-set reports, live remotes, and special segments, such as sports, entertainment, health, political and consumer stories. Students are free to propose any kind of segment they wish to try. Students will use the facilities to pre-tape interviews with guests, as well as develop new ways of telling a story. We encourage imagination, experimentation and the use of social media tools, such as Twitter and Facebook, for reporting and to reach a broader audience.

During the second half of the class news packages will be screened and critically analyzed. Many of these packages will come from the day’s newscast. However, students who are not directly involved in the operation of the day’s newscast will be given specific video assignments to prepare during the day for the post-newscast discussion. All student content will be carefully analyzed for writing, shooting, and editing techniques. All students are expected to participate in the post screening discussion. Further technical instruction will also be given, but students should freely raise problems or questions at any time.
So, on one hand, Digital Newsroom’s all-inclusive approach will replicate the environment of a typical television newsroom. Yet, it will facilitate development of new ideas, experimentation and creativity that will enhance the experience for each student. **Video journalism is the fastest growing story-telling format on all distribution platforms.** Digital Newsroom prepares students to be skilled, entrepreneurial, adaptable and agile. Digital Newsroom is an exciting and fully engaging course that will ready students for the real world of video journalism.

**SPECIALIZED REPORTING:**

This class will give students an opportunity to report on specific subjects or beats. Students with similar interests can work in teams. Beats should include original reporting. Beats could include the following:

- **Spot News**—reports on major breaking news stories of the day—source includes the AP Daybook
- **Entertainment**—for instance, the Oscars, new releases and personalities
- **Environment/Technology/Science**—what’s new?
- **Consumer/Business**—consumer news resonates with the audience or business trends
- **Health**—changes in Obamacare
- **Investigative**—expose a problem
- **Politics**—The Trump Presidency
- **International**—Russia, Europe, Mideast, NATO, UN
- **New @ NYU**—interesting stories on campus
- **New York Stories**—homeless problem, crime, transportation, neighborhood profiles
- **Sports**—pro highlights, college teams
- **Features**—long or shot form stories about people of neighborhoods
- **Commentary**—either in-depth analysis or opinion
- **Weather**—New York Forecast

**Students are welcome to suggest beats.** Beat reports can be a self-contained package or segment, or they can include a live set appearance at the top and close of the package with pre-scripted questions from the anchors.

**Interviews**—you can invite a guest in and interview them on a subject of interest. These are best when they are pre-recorded and edited into a well-produced segment. Interviews must be approved in advance by one of the professors and the executive producer.

**RESOURCES**

**NEWSCAST CONTENT RESOURCES:**

**Original Content:** Each of you will be **required** to provide a minimum of two field packages—one will be graded. Packages can be spot news stories, or a feature.

**Reporter Set Piece:** Commentary, political analysis, guest interviews, sports, entertainment.

**Franchise Segments/Packages:** Health, Consumer, Investigative, etc.

**CNN Newsource:** NYU has access via the web to CNN Newsource—which includes the latest videos and packages from the US and overseas.

**AP Wires:** Through ENPS, the AP newsroom management system, you will be able to check all the wires.

**Remotes:** Skype, Face Time or phoners.
REQUIRED READING-posted on NYU Classes.

Breaking News-A brief history of television news (handout)

RTNDA Ethics (handout)

Characteristics of Broadcast Writing (handout)

THURSDAY WEEK TO WEEK SCHEDULE

NOTE 2: The following schedule is to give students an idea how the semester will play out. However, portions of this schedule could change because of news events, student interests, or a special guest appearance that would take place in the second portion of the class.

1/26: This first orientation class will be divided into two groups. Each group will spend part of their time with each professor. Professor Peyronnin will introduce the newscast portion, Professor Mihai the video reporting portion.

The newscast orientation includes production staffing, production tools (i.e. ENPS), production strategies and creating a "rundown," elements of a newscast, TV writing, control room functions (i.e. switching, audio, graphics), and studio positions (i.e. camera, teleprompter).

The video reporting orientation includes all aspects of shooting video for TV, the Web, and mobile devices. It will also include a review of the similarities and differences in identifying and covering the essential visual elements, composition and framing, style and tempo, sound recording.

At the end of the first class a team will be selected for a newscast rehearsal that will take place the following week, while other students will be assigned a video exercise.

2/2: A portion of the class will work on the production of a run-through newscast. Those working on the newscast will produce, write, gather and edit video content primarily from original pieces, and CNN Feeds, create a lineup on ENPS—as well as work at studio functions to create a live newscast.

This will be followed by a feedback session. There will then be a discussion on similarities and differences in editing for TV, the Web, mobile devices. Sequence tempo in short-form vs. long-form, the use of natural sound and voice-overs. And finally, students will be instructed on the use of text and other types of media. The class will then receive assigned positions and packages for the following week.

2/9: The students who participated in the previous week’s newscast will produce a LIVE newscast.

Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

The second portion of the class will analyze student work and provide instruction of how to “pitch” a story. A production team for next week will be listed.

2/16: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE newscast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter.

The second portion of the class will be used to analyze student content.

2/23: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE newscast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter.
The second portion of the class will be used to analyze student content and provide instruction on video interviewing techniques. Identify production team for next week.

3/2: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE newscast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

The second portion of the class will be used to analyze student content and how to shoot a breaking news story. Story pitches will be solicited. Identify production team for next week.

3/9: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE newscast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

The second portion of the class will be used to analyze student content and how to use applications, such as Skype, Face Time or Periscope for LIVE reports. Story pitches will be solicited. Identify production team for post Spring Break.

**SPRING RECESS 3/11 – 3/19**

3/23: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. By this time the basic techniques of newscast producing and multimedia field reporting have been established.

Second portion of the class will be used to analyze student reports, and to discuss how to “target” the audience. Over the next 6 weeks, the professors will challenge the students to develop their own ideas of how to make the newscast and its content more immediate and exciting to a young adult audience, as well as a discussion about how to choose the tools you need to report certain stories in the field.

3/30: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. Include REMOTES using Face Time, etc. Story pitches will be solicited--attached to Beat segments.

Second portion of the class includes analysis of student content and how to integrate social media with the broadcast, i.e. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Identify production team for next week.

4/6: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

Second portion of the class will review student work, and to go over the different story styles, i.e. Web/mobile versus broadcast. Story pitches will be solicited--attached to BEAT segments. Identify production team for next week.

4/13: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. The second portion of the class will review student content and go over the business aspects of journalism. Story pitches will be solicited. Identify production team for next week.

4/20: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

Second portion of the class will include a discussion of “new” trends in video reporting. Story pitches will be solicited--attached to Beat segments. Identify production team for next week.
4/27: Some students will rotate production roles to produce a LIVE broadcast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

Second portion of the class will review student content and discuss career opportunities.

5/4: FINAL BROADCAST – usually something very special in which everyone participates LIVE!

**GRADES** will depend on your performance in the following key areas:

1. **Participation:** Fully engaged in the process at all times, and active contributor, completing assigned tasks, putting forth a strong effort and showing continuous improvement. We recognize that many of the studio functions are new to you, so what we look for most is your best effort and general understanding of each function. Critical discussion of packages, including writing and technique, are desired in screenings.

2. **Content:** While we encourage you to be as productive as possible, we will include for your final grade our evaluation of your three best examples of work from any of the following categories:
   - **Spot news story** — a breaking video news package/set piece that typically runs about 2:00 minutes.
   - **Feature story** — a pre-planned more in depth video story about an issue, trend, personality, invention that runs about 3:00 minutes in length.
   - **Beat reports** — this includes but is not limited to sports, entertainment and the weather. In fact, we would like to offer weekly sports and entertainment segments. Franchise segments are a recurring “beat” story that combines a live on-set component with video and graphic elements, on topics like health, consumer, technology, the environment, and science.

**KEY BROADCAST POSITIONS**

- **Anchor 1&2** (ANC) News presenters.
- **Executive Producer** (EP) Decides what news is presented, in what form, and in what order. Creates The rundown. In charge of managing the daily writing, producing and reporting assignments. Writes headlines and teases.
- **Senior Producer** (SP) Second in command, manages the daily production of content as laid out in the rundown, to see that it is completed on time. Writes and edits copy.
- **Director** (DIR) Manages all control room functions, executes elements of the broadcast according to the rundown.
- **Associate Director** (AD) Assists the director, hands all pre-roll and timing.
- **Technical Director** (TD) Switches the program, including cameras, video and remotes.
- **Audio** (AUD) Controls all sound.
- **Graphics Producer** (GP) Creates lower third supers, and other graphics.
- **Video Producer** (VP) In charge of collecting all video on an external drive and uploading on server.
- **Web Producer** (WP) Oversees streaming of program and Social Media.
- **Telepromter** (TLP) Runs the telepromter, which anchors read.
- **Floor Manager** (FM) Manages the studio activity, including anchors.
Camera (3)  (CAM) There are three studio camera positions.

Remotes  (REM) Live reports from the field.

**PRIMARY TOOLS**

**ENPS** – Electronic Newsroom Production System, created by AP

**ADOBE PREMIERE** – Complete nonlinear editing software

**CAMERAS & EQUIPMENT** – Available on the 7th floor Equipment Room. Please update your account. If seeking to take equipment out for an assignment, please give the equipment room as much notice as possible

**BROADCAST WRITING BASICS**

- **We Get Only One Opportunity to Make Ourselves Understood:** We have to make every sentence we write very clear so audience members understand what we’re talking about. It’s a “one-pass” medium.
- **Story Structure Is Different:** In broadcast writing, we don’t use the inverted pyramid style. The broadcast story is more like a circle. The lead is the most important sentence, and the last line the second most important.
- **Broadcast Writers Use Conversational Tone:** Not formal or stilted.
- **In Broadcast Writing, We Use Short, Declarative Sentences**
- **Use an Active Voice in Broadcast Writing:** Active means the subject does something—as opposed to passive, which means something happens to the subject.
- **Broadcast Writers Use Present or Future Tense (Not past tense.)**
- **We Write Broadcast Stories in “Today’s” Language**
- **Broadcast Writers Put Titles First Ahead of the Name:** Texas Senator Ted Cruz, not Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.
- **In Broadcast Writing We Use Phonetic Spelling and Avoid Foreign Names When Possible**
- **Broadcast Writers Avoid Most Abbreviations and Are Careful with Acronyms:** i.e. CIA is ok but most people may not know what the NLRB stand for.
- **In Broadcast Writing, Keep Hyphenated Words on the Same Line:** Think Teleprompter.
- **Broadcast Writers Don’t Use Symbols:** Spell words like “dollars.” Think Teleprompter.
- **In Broadcast Writing, There Are Different Guidelines for Dealing with Numbers**
  It is better to say a budget of nearly two million dollars than to say a budget of one million—865 thousand dollars.”

  When you write numbers in broadcast, it’s important to make them easy for the anchor to read. Here are some simple guidelines.
  Numbers 1 through 9—write out the word
  Numbers 10 through 99—use numerals
  Numbers higher than 999—use a combination of words and numerals. For example: 37,915,776 should be written 37 million—915 thousand—776. But “Nearly 38 billion” is better.
  Write phone numbers and years using all numbers because that’s how we’re accustomed to seeing them. For example: 610-555-0201, 1776, 1492.

- **Often, Addresses and Ages Aren’t Important in Broadcast Writing:** Chances are most of the viewers in a given market wouldn’t know where 1600 Eagle Street is, but they might be familiar with a certain section of town. Hence, it’s better to refer to an area or point out landmarks close to
the place where an event occurred instead of giving a street address. Likewise, a person’s age usually isn’t important unless we’re talking about a 10-year-old college graduate or a 73-year-old snow-skiing champion. However, there are exceptions.

- **We Handle Quotations Differently in Broadcast**: In broadcast writing, we rarely use direct quotations in the script, but normally paraphrase a quote making sure we get the meaning accurate. In those few instances when a writer feels compelled to use a direct quotation, it’s important to make the sentence flow as smoothly as possible, as is always the case in broadcast writing. For example: THE PRESIDENT SAID . . . “I WON’T SIGN THE BILL UNLESS IT’S AMENDED TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR LOWERING THE DEFICIT” . . . MISTER OBAMA ADDED THAT HE DOESN’T EXPECT THE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE TO ADD THOSE PROVISIONS.

- **Broadcast Writers Are Careful with Pronouns**: He, she, they can easily get confusing for a listener.

- **Broadcast Writers Use Attribution Before Statements**: “Police Chief William Bratton said…”

**BROADCAST NEWS TERMS:**

These may vary among news organizations.

- **Intro**: Copy read by anchor/reporter preceding a package or segment
- **Tag**: Copy following a package
- **Tossback**: Like a tag but involves two or more people
- **Reader**: Copy that is read by the anchor without using video or graphic
- **VO**: Voice over video
- **VO/SOT**: Voice over video with sound on tape
- **SOT**: Sound on tape
- **VO/NATS**: Voice over tape natural sound
- **PKG**: Package, self-contained, pre-produced story
- **LIVE**: Can be LIVE/SAT (satellite truck) or LIVE/REM (remote)
- **Live Tag**: Reporter closes package on the set live
- **Donut**: Reporter opens and closes a package live on the set/or remote
- **CG**: Character generator
- **SCANDO**: Graphic device at NYU
- **ENG**: Electronic news gathering
- **SER**: Server
- **VTR or VID**: Video
- **ANC**: Anchor
- **RPTR**: Reporter
- **WX**: Weather
- **SX/SPTS**: Sports

**BACKTIME**: Literally timing the broadcast from back to front

**HITTIME**: The time the producer calculates anchor will hit a page/item

**PAD**: Sometimes producers may include a couple readers in case they are short

**VIDEO PAD**: Extra video at the end of a VO or package to keep picture from going black

**DIRECTOR CALLS STUDIO CAMERA SHOTS**

- **1 shot**: Anchor, centered, no graphics (H&S head and shoulders)
- **2 shot**: Two anchors on camera, centered, no graphics
- **OTS**: Over the shoulder
- **3 shot**: Three anchors/persons
- **Wide shot**: All anchors/personnel/desk
- **OC**: On camera
• **CK (Key):** One anchor with chroma key
• **Double box:** Anchor in one box/reporter-guest in the other
• **3 box:** Three boxes, anchor and two reporters/guests
• **Wipe:** Wipe from one element to another
• **Dis/Diz:** Dissolve between two elements
• **Fade to black:** Fade from an element to black
• **Colorbars:** Just that

**DIRECTOR CUES:**

READY SERVER “TAKE SERVER”
READY CAMERA ONE “TAKE CAMERA ONE”

**PROFESSORS:**

**Joe Peyronnin**

Professor Peyronnin has been an award winning producer and senior executive in broadcast journalism for 40 years at CBS News, Fox News and Telemundo/NBC News. He is currently an adjunct journalism professor at NYU, as well as an associate journalism professor at Hofstra University. He also is an investor and corporate adviser to digital media content and software companies. Peyronnin is also a regular contributor to The Huffington Post, where he writes and comments about politics, business and media.

Peyronnin created Telemundo’s first network news division in 1999 and ran it until his departure in 2006. During his tenure as Executive Vice President News and Information Programming for the Miami-based Spanish language network, he built an international news organization and launched many news programs. Telemundo received its first national Emmy award for its coverage of the terrorist attack on New York’s World Trade Center in September, 2001, and critical praise for its coverage of the Iraq War.

Peyronnin was President of Fox News in 1995-1996, where he put together the core of what is now the Fox News Channel and created *Fox News Sunday*, a public affairs broadcast.

From 1989 to 1995 he served as Vice President and Assistant to the President for CBS News where he was in charge of news programming, including *60 Minutes, 48 Hours* and *The CBS Evening News*, as well as world-wide news gathering. He had previously worked as CBS News Washington Bureau Chief and as a White House producer. As a CBS News producer he also covered all of the US-Soviet Summits, the Israeli invasion of Beirut, Lebanon, in 1982, President Reagan's visit to China in 1984, and several presidential elections and conventions. He has met every U.S. President from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush.

Peyronnin began his television career in 1970 as a local news producer at WBBM-TV Chicago. He earlier worked for WEXI-FM and WLSU as a radio announcer.

Over his career he has received two Emmy awards for breaking news, including Telemundo’s coverage of the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York’s World Trade Center in 2001. He led the team that received a George Polk award for CBS News’ coverage of the 1989 Tiananmen Square student uprising in Beijing, China. In 2012, Lambda Pi Eta, a national society of communications students, honored him for his career in broadcast journalism. The Mental Health Association of New York City honored him in 2005 for his work in the mental health field. He was included in the 1994 edition of *Who’s Who in America*.

Peyronnin is currently executive vice chairman of the board for the Mental Health Association of New York City, a trustee at New York’s Gracie Square Hospital, served as a trustee at Columbia College Chicago from 2003 to 2012. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He earned an MBA from Roosevelt University’s Walter Heller School of Business in 1977, and a BA from Columbia College Chicago in 1970.
Adrian Mihai

Professor Mihai is currently the broadcast operations manager of the NYU journalism department, where he is also active teaching all aspects of multimedia journalism to undergraduate and graduate students. Mihai oversees all aspects of the broadcast and technical operations.

Mihai has been teaching electronic newsgathering at NYU since 1996. He has also built a remarkable body of work as an independent producer and director, freelance videographer, photographer and as a web producer.

He produced and directed several documentaries, "E Pluribus Unum" (1994), a film that investigates the spiritual milieu of first generation immigrants from Romania, as they become integrated into the various folds of the American society, "Someone Has Killed The Sphinx" (1995), a film offers an analysis of Romanian social realities following the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship, as seen through the staging of"Oedipus", at the Romanian National Opera House, "Crossroads" (1998), a film that takes a look at Columbia University's Graduate Acting Program, created and steered by renowned Romanian-American director Andrei Serban, "E Biagoresqo Drom / The Endless Journey", a documentary about the Rroma/Gypsy communities of Romania.

Professor Mihai works as freelance cameraman for leading news organizations, including Bloomberg, BBC America, Austrian TV, and CNN. He is also served as an instructor for the New York Times Local East Village, which was published in partnership the NYU. He has a BFA and MPS from NYU.

Please contact either professor by email should you have any questions.