New York University
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
Syllabus JOUR-GA 1261-001
BROADCAST NEWSROOM
Spring 2021
Professor: Jason Gewirtz
Tuesdays, 7 p.m.-10 p.m. EST
Via Zoom virtual meeting

Course Description

This class is designed to give you the tools to work in a newsroom. For much of the semester we will mimic what it is like to work on stories from start to finish, just as you would as if you were working in a real life newsroom. The class is designed to make assignments as real as possible. We’ll also learn about the news business, ethical issues and today’s challenges.

More people continue to get their news from a television newscast, network or local, than any other source. Newscasts come in many different forms, styles and lengths, and can be viewed on the Internet and mobile devices. The goal of this class is to teach students how to produce a newscast, expose them to broadcast news editorial and operational processes, as well as shape a program that is relevant, engaging and distinctive. Students will be given practical experience as on-air reporters and in the process be exposed to news writing, audio recording and video editing, best practices in lighting and sound, on-air interviewing and production for digital and television media.

Over the course of the semester students will work toward producing a pre-recorded newscast to be published on the American Journalism Online Master’s in Journalism Program online publication, The Click. Each week students will rotate to a different newsroom role, i.e. director, producer, switcher, audio, anchor, reporter, camera, and so on. Special focus is given to writing, story selection and development, building a lineup, pacing, flow and anchoring techniques. Deadline pressures are emphasized because live broadcasts have to hit their scheduled marks on time. (This course is restricted to students in the American Journalism Online Master’s Program. Because of the intense technical skills required, this class is capped at 10 students.)

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- Demonstrate awareness of journalism’s core ethical values.
- Engage in critical thinking, independence, and creativity appropriate to the role of journalism in a democratic society.
- Interview subjects, conduct research, and evaluate information.
- Work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diverse perspectives.
● Master the technological tools to record, edit and produce broadcast stories in video.
● Practice journalistic storytelling equivalent to the standards and quality in the broadcast industry.

Course Structure

Because this is a flipped class, you will spend time outside of the classroom engaging with asynchronous interactive materials, learning editing techniques, how to record interviews, and the like. Class itself will be run as a broadcast newsroom, with much of the time devoted to workshopping and preparing video and audio pieces for broadcast. There will also be discussions related to the topic of that week covered in the reading and other class preparation.

Readings, Resources & Tools

Required texts:

Course eBook delivered via NYU’s course platform, which consists of video ‘how tos’ and technical primers on hardware and software courtesy of LinkedIn Learning, as well as links to each week’s assignments and materials for your review. There will be additional course readings, fieldwork and story production.

We’ll also use the following tools:

● Google Drive Shared Folder: You’ll upload your work to our Class Folder in Google Drive. Please add your own folder to the drive based on the naming convention “Firstname Lastname” before the first assignment is due.
● Adobe Audition: Each student will be provided a license to the Adobe Creative Suite for the duration of the course.

The American Journalism Online Master’s in Journalism Program will provide a lavalier and a tripod compatible with smartphone devices. Each student should also have:

● A pair of headphones for mixing. We recommend the classic Sony 5706’s. For cheaper headphones, try the Koss Porta Pro, Sennheiser HD 202 II, the KZ ATE in-ear monitors, which are $15 and supposedly fantastic. If you have questions, ask your instructor.
● SD card (16 GB recommended)
● External hard drive (1TB minimum recommended)

Weekly Assignments

News quizzes: Each week we’ll have a news quiz. You can use sources online to help you find the answers, but the key is to be quick and to be well read so that you can find the right answers without having to look too far.
Weekly media presentations: Each student will choose a print news/or digital entity, a news radio station and a television news station or network to follow for the semester. Each day you'll give the class a 1:00 rundown on what you read, heard and saw. If you're having trouble choosing I'll help you. Ideally your radio station and newspaper will be in the same local market but exceptions are possible.

Grading

50% is your writing and reporting
10% is the average of a weekly news quiz
10% is the average of your scores from weekly media presentations
20% is the final project

Grading Scale
97-100%: A+
93-96%: A
90-92%: A-
87-89%: B+
83-86%: B
80-82%: B-
77-79%: C+
73-76%: C
70-72%: C-
67-69%: D+
65-66%: D
Below 75%: F

*Note, you must maintain a 3.0 (B-average) to remain academically eligible in the program.

Zoom Etiquette
By now, we'll assume you have a basic understanding of Zoom. You know enough to sit within range of your router and to dress appropriately for class. Treat classes held on Zoom like you would in-person classes. Don’t forget that while you are watching your professor and classmates on Zoom, they can also see and hear you.

Academic Honesty
All work (homework included) submitted by the student shall be his/her own work. Work taken from others shall be deemed as unacceptable. Any doubts will initiate a ZERO on the required effort.

As a journalism student at New York University, you are part of a community of scholars at a university recognized for its research. A scholar’s mission is to push forward the boundaries of knowledge; a journalist’s mission is to serve the public by seeking out and reporting the facts as
accurately as possible. Good journalists and scholars share a commitment to the same principle: integrity in their work.

By enrolling in this course you agree to maintain the highest standards of honesty and foster ethical behavior at all times. Anyone who fails to uphold these ethical standards has committed a serious violation of this agreement. Penalties can range from an F on an assignment to a failing grade in a course to expulsion from the University, depending on the decision of the instructor in consultation with the director of the American Journalism Online Master's Program at NYU and deans at the Graduate School of Arts & Science.

All work submitted by students shall be their own work. When working on teams, each student is responsible for contributing original work.

Examples of unacceptable activities can include (but are not limited to):

- Plagiarism: Attempting to pass off someone else’s words or ideas as your own without proper attribution or acknowledgement. In both journalism and academia, this is akin to theft. Examples: copying in whole or in part material created by someone else, borrowing language or concepts, lifting quotes, recordings, sound effects or music without proper attribution.
- Fabrication: Making up information, faking anecdotes or sources, falsifying quotes, creating fictitious sources, citing non-existent information or fudging data.
- Multiple submission: Recycling assignments from one class for use in another, or submitting assignments to one class derived from research in another without prior approval from all professors involved. A student may not take published material and pass it off as fresh material.

**Accommodations**

Students with disabilities that necessitate accommodations should contact and register with New York University’s Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at (212) 998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu. Information about the Moses Center can be found at www.nyu.edu/csd.

**Diversity & Inclusion**

The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. We embrace a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions.

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1**
- Introductions
- Who are you?
What have you done in journalism?
Class overview
Audio presentation: radio news, the building blocks of broadcasting (media)
Television presentation: the power of TV news (media)
Introduction to wire copy
Writing a lead
Homework: writing leads

Week 2
Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
News gathering: where does it come from?
Ethics in modern journalism and issues of privacy
Newsroom responsibilities and newsroom positions
Writing a lead and producing a full radio story
Producing a radio rundown
Writing a radio newscast
Principles of using, writing to and choosing sound
Homework: a full radio newscast

Week 3
Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
Using your voice
Finding a lead when it isn’t so clear
News release challenges
Breaking news
News conferences
Homework: your first reporting assignment, find something interesting to observe and take some good notes

Week 4
Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
Sourcing, attributions and getting the most out of an interview
Working with multiple sources
Write another full radio newscast
Homework: put it all together… and find something interesting to tell the class that you haven’t read about, seen on tv or heard on the radio

Week 5
Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
Writing for TV news
Shooting, framing and editing
How to pitch a story
Homework: a full pitch (by midweek), shoot video and write to it (by week’s end)
Week 6
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- The business side: ratings, sales, how everyone makes money
- Sponsored content
- Teamwork: how to work with a team, producers, associate producers, anchors, reporters, assignment desk, photographers and management
- Work on framing
- Principles of a TV interview
- 60 Minutes: How to fix the New York City Subway System… a lesson in interviewing from Bill Whitaker (media)
- Homework: shoot and conduct an interview

Week 7
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- The state of local news: special guest, David Friend, Senior Vice President of News for the CBS Television Stations Group
- Review: radio and tv writing
- Homework: write a pitch for a full story including interviews

Week 8
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Creating and writing to graphics
- More writing to video
- Creating a story with graphics and video
- Review pitches
- Homework: full report #1

Week 9
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Present full report #1
- Focus on shooting and editing
- Introduction to digital writing
- Homework: find a story, pitch it (midweek) and write a digital story (due the following week)

Week 10
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Present pitches, discuss the progression of the story and present our digital story
- Taking and framing photos for digital stories
- Caption writing
- Working to set-up quotations
- Homework: Pitch (midweek) a digital story, full story due the following week
Week 11
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Different kinds of digital stories
- Special digital productions: Dinner around the world, Chinatown and September 11th in sound (media)
- Practice “quick write-ups” on breaking news
- Write a detailed pitch for a story you’ll do in different formats

Week 12
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Present the pitch
- Writing workshop for radio, TV and digital
- Homework: produce the story that was pitched in all three formats… radio, tv and also digital

Week 13
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Present our repurposed story from radio to tv to digital
- Writing sports and writing business news
- Homework: a sports and a business assignment and to think of a subject for the final project

Week 14
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Present our sports and business assignments
- Go over our pitches for the final assignment
- Review radio, tv and digital writing
- Homework: gather the video, sound and information for the final project

Week 15
- Weekly news presentation and weekly news quiz
- Produce our final projects