SYLLABUS

Digital Newsroom will combine TV Newscast and Beat Reporting so graduate students can develop a comprehensive set of skills that will prepare 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 newsroom, 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 thirty-minute newscast that runs LIVE Thursday evening on NYU television and is streamed on the Web. The newscast 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 newsroom, which is necessary to effectively produce a newscast or publish with a web based organization.

Over the course of the semester, students will rotate between newscast production and in-depth field reporting. 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 news gathering, editing and publishing.

When working on the newscast, which is anchored from the NYU studio, students will rotate among each typical newsroom position. 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 on live on-set reports, live remotes, and special segments, such as sports, entertainment, health, and consumer stories. Students can also be free to propose any kind of segment they wish to try. Student 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, to reach a broader audience.

During the second half of the class news packages will be screened for everyone in class. Most 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.

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 prepare students for the real world of video journalism.
WEEK TO WEEK SCHEDULE

1/29: 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 segment, Professor Mihai the video reporting segment.

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, while other students will be assigned a video exercise.

2/5: A portion of the class will work on the production of a newscast; it will go live. 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.

2/12: The students who participated in the previous week’s newscast will produce a thirty-minute 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. There will also be a pitching session for field reports for the next week and for future stories as well. A production team for next week will be listed.

2/19: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

2/26: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

3/5: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

3/12: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Including SKYPE reports. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.
SPRING RECESS 3/16-3/22

3/26: By this time the basic techniques of newscast producing and multi media field reporting have been established. Now the students will develop these skills by “doing.” Over the next 6 weeks, the professors will challenge the students to develop their own ideas of how to make the newscast 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.

4/2: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Including SKYPE reports. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

4/9: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Including SKYPE reports. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

4/16: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Including SKYPE reports. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

4/23: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute 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. Including SKYPE reports. Green light pitches as some students will create original packages for the next week. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

4/30: Some students will rotate into newscast roles to produce a thirty-minute live newscast. Continue to perfect TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics.

5/7: Final newscast – usually something very special.

RESOURCES

1. Original video content shot by students in the class.

2. Video content supplied by NYU Beat classes

3. CNN NewsSource available through the web (login “NYU” – password “coven”)

4. AP wires available through ENPS

5. AP Daybook or other news event calendars

6. Other news publications
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.

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.
   - **Special & Franchise segments**—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.

   - **Set 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.

**KEY BROADCAST POSITIONS**

- **Anchor 1&2** News presenters.
- **Executive Producer** 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** Second in command, manages the daily production of content as laid out in the rundown, to see that it is completed on time. Writes.
- **Director** 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** Controls all sound.
- **Graphics Producer** Creates lower third supers, and other graphics.
- **Video Producer** In charge of collecting all video on an external drive and uploading on server.
- **Web Producer** Oversees streaming of program and Social Media.
- **Teleprompter** Runs the teleprompter, which anchors read.
- **Floor Manager** Manages the studio activity, including anchors.
- **Camera (3)** There are three studio cameras.
TOOLS

ENPS – Electronic Newsroom Production System, created by AP.

ADOBE PREMIER – Complete nonlinear editing software

CAMERAS&EQUIPMENT – Available on the 7th floor Equipment Room. Please register with the manager so they have your profile. 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 after having heard it only once"

- **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 Sentence**

- **Use an Active Voice in Broadcast Writing**
  Active means the subject does something/Passive means something happens to the subject.

- **Broadcast Writers Use Present or Future Tense When (Not past tense)**

- **We Write Broadcast Stories in Today Language**

- **Broadcast Writers Use Last Names and Put Titles First**

- **In Broadcast Writing We Use Phonetic Spelling and Avoid Foreign Names When Possible**

- **Broadcast Writers Avoid Most Abbreviations and Are Careful with Acronyms**
  CIA ok because most people know what that is, but otherwise use the full name.

- **In Broadcast Writing, Keep Hyphenated Words on the Same Line**

- **Broadcast Writers Don’t Use Symbols**

- **In Broadcast Writing, There Are Different Guidelines for Dealing with Numbers**
  "Certainly, if 163 people die in an airplane crash, the number is important. But it’s 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 to read. Here are some simple guidelines.**
  Numbers 1 through 9—write out the word (some news operations prefer that you write out the words through eleven)
  Numbers 10 through 999—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.
  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 instead, but don’t change the meaning. 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
CLINTON ADDED THAT HE DOESN’T EXPECT THE REPUBLICAN MAJORITY IN THE HOUSE TO ADD THOSE PROVISIONS.

- Broadcast Writers Are Careful with Pronouns
- Broadcast Writers Use Attribution Before Statements

CALENDAR OF 2015 EVENTS

February
- Sunday, Feb. 1: Super Bowl
- Monday, Feb. 8: Africa Cup of Nations ends
- Friday, Feb. 13: "Fifty Shades of Grey" movie release
- Saturday, Feb. 14: Valentine's Day
- Monday, Feb. 16: Presidents' Day
- Thursday, Feb. 19: Chinese New Year
- Sunday, Feb. 22: Daytona 500, Academy Awards

March
- Friday, March 6: NASA spacecraft Dawn is expected to arrive at Ceres, a dwarf planet and the largest object in the asteroid belt. Dawn will take high-quality pictures of the surface.
- Sunday, March 8: Daylight Saving Time starts
- Tuesday, March 17: St. Patrick's Day

April
- sometime: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are due to have their second child, a brother to Prince George. He or she will be fourth in line to the throne.
- Saturday, April 4: Passover begins
- Sunday, April 5: Easter
- Saturday, April 11: Passover ends
- Wednesday, April 15: Tax Day
- Friday, April 24: Arbor Day

May
- Saturday, May 2: Kentucky Derby
- Tuesday, May 5: Cinco de Mayo
- Sunday, May 10: Mothers' Day
- Friday, May 15: "Pitch Perfect 2" release
- Monday, May 25: Memorial Day

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 coordinator 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.*