IN GENERAL:

Today more people get their news from a television newscast, network or local, than any other source. Newscasts come in many different forms, styles and lengths, and they can now be seen on the Internet and mobile devices. The goal of this class is to teach you how to produce a newscast, the editorial and operational processes that are followed, and how to shape a program that is relevant, engaging and distinctive.

In this class students will actually produce a LIVE newscast. The newscast will air Tuesdays at 6:00pm on NYU television as well as on the web. Each week students will rotate to a different newsroom role, i.e. director, producer, switcher, audio, anchor, camera, and so on. Special focus is given to writing, story selection and development, building a lineup, pacing, flow, anchoring techniques, special segments like sports, health or politics. Deadline pressures are emphasized because live broadcasts have to hit their scheduled time.

NEWSCAST CONTENT RESOURCES:

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

**Reporter Set Piece**: Commentary, analysis, guest interview, sports.

**TV Beat Classes**: We will check to see what packages may be available for use.

**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.

**REQUIRED READING-posted on NYU Classes.**

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

*RTNDA Ethics* (handout)

*Characteristics of Broadcast Writing* (handout)
NOTE: Students must read a newspaper before class-and be up to date on daily news. Current events questions may appear on a quiz.

NEWS TEAM: Students work together as a team, supporting each other, effectively communicating, providing story ideas for the broadcast, suggesting guests, performing live-shots via Skype. This class is highly collaborative. Students are also encouraged to utilize experimental approaches to story telling.

STAFFING: Given the size of the class, we will make specific essential assignments in advance and rotate them each week. In some cases will have to double up functions. However, everyone will have to write copy. We will make adjustments during the semester.

Executive Producer and Video Producer: As EP Creates the rundown, edits all copy, manages the staff. As VP gathers all of the video onto a drive, and uploads it into the central server according to the proper order, then plays it back on the director's command.

Director: Runs the live production, executes the rundown.

Technical Director (TD) Sits next to the director and presses various input buttons according to the director’s instructions.

Audio: Coordinates all sound

Teleprompter: Runs the scripts that are read by talent.

Anchor

Camera/Floor Director: We will have to preset all cameras.

Sports segments/commentaries/interviews will have to be prerecorded, at about 5pm, and rolled into the broadcast.

WEEK-TO-WEEK SCHEDULE

9/2: Class orientation--including terminology, organization, video news standards, review newscast forms, production staffing, production tools (i.e. ENPS), production strategies and creating a lineup, elements of a newscast, TV writing, video ingest and editing, control room functions (i.e. switching, audio, graphics), studio positions (i.e. camera, teleprompter). Beats will be identified and week two positions assigned. The executive producer (EP) will be in charge of the broadcast; the senior producer will help and then move up to EP the following week.
9/9: Class will work on the production and rehearse an actual newscast. Executive producer will create a “rundown” on ENPS while other students will produce, write, gather content primarily from CNN Feeds. Some will be assigned to work at studio functions. This will be followed by a feedback session. The class will then receive assigned positions for the following week.

9/16: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Team will attempt its first LIVE broadcast. Special attention will be given to constructing a rundown, writing anchor copy and teases, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers and graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Beats will be discussed and assignments for the following week identified.

9/23: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST. Continue to perfect 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/segments for the next week. Production team identified for next week.

9/30: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Continue to perfect broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

10/7: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Continue to perfect broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

10/14: NO CLASS

10/21: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: QUIZ on Breaking News, RTNDA Ethics, and terminology. Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Identify production team for next week.

10/28: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. More pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.
11/4: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Identify production team for next week.

11/11: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Identify next production team.

11/18: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. Include stories about JFK assassination. Assignment: pitches will be solicited--attached to franchise segments. Identify production team for next week.

11/25: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Identify production team for next week.

12/2: PRODUCE LIVE BROADCAST: Review TV writing skills, broadcast writing, preparing elements including copy, video clips, packages, teases, bumpers graphics. How to anchor, read teleprompter. Identify production team for next week.

12/9: FINAL LIVE NEWSCAST: Create something special!

GRADERS: Participation/productivity 40%, Packages/segments 25%, Broadcast writing skills 25%, Quiz 10%

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.

Productivity: The more produce you are, the more feedback you will receive, the more you will learn. Productivity will be a factor in your grade.

Packages: There will be a minimum requirement of 2 original pre-approved packages, either a spot news or feature story. Of course, the more you do, the more you will learn.
You will also be required to do a repurposed package using third party content, i.e. CNN. Each package will be graded using writing, structure, production quality and relevance as the key metrics.

A spot news story is either a day of story or a sidebar and runs about 1:45 in length. A feature story may run up to 3:00 in length, and will provide more depth, i.e. a franchise piece--health, consumer, entertainment--or a beat story.

**Sports/Entertainment or other segments:** These segments will be graded based on its content, writing and production qualities. A sports/entertainment package will be graded the same as a news package. And a sports feature will count as a feature package.

**QUIZ** On 10/21 there will be a quiz on Breaking News and RTNDA Ethics. Remember to always be up to date on the day’s news.

**Homework:** Everyone will be expected to provide “original” content for the newscasts over the course of the semester, as noted earlier. However, you should also regularly watch newscasts throughout the term using your critical eye in order to better understand how they are produced. What is the lead? How is it presented? Does the news flow smoothly from topic to topic?

Local newscasts are targeted to local viewers, so they focus on news in the community, as well as weather and sports. Network newscasts are targeted to a national audience, and include stories from throughout the country and the world. The later seldom mention sports or weather news, unless there is major news.

**Broadcast Writing:** Writing for television news requires special skills. For a typical story, anchor copy runs about :20 to :30 seconds. The writer must condense an AP wire story, which may be several paragraphs long, down to a handful of sentences. They do so by concentrating on what is new and what is most relevant to the viewer.

**Writing Tips:**

- Begin with what’s new -- Don’t back into the story.
- Be direct and to the point -- Grab the audience right away.
- Use short sentences -- Break material into shorter bites.
- Keep it simple -- Subject, verb and object -- understandable.
- Active voice -- “A winter storm devastates the region.”
- Conversational -- not formal or stilted.
- Use strong nouns and verbs -- “The crowd jeered the speaker.”
- Keep phrasing positive -- “The sheriff says they will be charged tomorrow” instead of “The sheriff says they will not be charged until tomorrow.”
- Watch out for pronouns -- Minimize their use, it can be confusing for the viewer.
• **Make every sentence count** – Every sentence should include critical information.

• **In general – be CLEAN, CLEAR and CONCISE!** Television is a “one-pass” medium, meaning the viewer has only one chance to get the story.