COMM 4520: TV Journalism (TVJ)
COMM 3570: Newsbreak

Fall 2012
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 7:30-9:25 am
LNCO 2750

INSTRUCTORS:
Craig Wirth
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Stephanie Bor
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COURSE OBJECTIVE: This is a hands-on course designed to teach the fundamentals of television news journalism (COMM 4520: TVJ) and visual broadcast production (COMM 3570: Newsbreak).

COURSE OVERVIEW: Contemporary news stations operate in converged newsrooms where reporters are expected to understand production techniques and the technical staff is expected to understand reporting methods. To reflect this change in news organizations we have converged the two courses—COMM 4520 and COMM 3570—in an effort to better prepare you for your future professional environment. While students in each course have specific responsibilities, you will notice that there is a great deal of crossover, and communication between the two classes is crucial to the successful outcome of weekly newscasts.

Your instructors have extensive experience working in the field of broadcast news. We will conduct this course in a professional manner and hold similar expectations to those represented in the journalism field. We have both experienced the satisfactions, challenges, and excitements associated with working in the world of broadcast and hope to bring these elements to our classroom. Television journalism MUST bring satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment, and frankly a great deal of fun. Otherwise we would suggest a different vocation!

This course has a 40-year reputation as a respected provider of sound journalism and solid production values. Your work will be transmitted to audiences on several media outlets including over-the-air television, cable, and the Internet. Dozens of local and national journalists started their careers in this class. This semester we will strive to not only continue the legacy of the past, but also work to raise the bar.

COURSE MATERIALS: Due to the constantly updated practices and technology within the industry there is no required textbook. As a result, ALL instruction will be given IN CLASS.

PARTICIPATION POLICY: We maintain a strict attendance policy in this class. You are responsible to sign the roll sheet every class period BEFORE class begins at 7:30 am. You may earn up to 10 points every day that you sign the roll on time and participate for the entirety of the class period. You may earn up to 7 points if you sign the roll after 7:30 am and participate for the entirety of the class period.
In the case that you cannot attend class we require communication (email or phone call) from you that explains your absence. It is imperative that you contact either of your instructors as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary adjustments as applicable to your role in the newscast for that day. For example, if you were anchoring the show we would need time to find a replacement anchor. Similarly if you were operating a camera we would need to find someone to step in and take over in your absence.

Regardless of classes missed, all assignments are due by their scheduled due dates/deadlines unless negotiated with one of the instructors. We have a product that must be delivered to the broadcast center every week with no exceptions!

University-approved absences include: military obligations, religious holidays, personal emergencies, sickness that would cause further damage to your wellbeing by attending, sickness that would cause others to be exposed and/or sicknesses that university protocol asks for isolation. See official university policy for further explanation.

*Note: You need to be here. There is no way to earn a satisfactory grade in this course if you are absent or late numerous times. YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE IF YOU MISS MORE THAN SIX TIMES. Please evaluate your ability to commit to regular attendance in this course before you commit to your peers.

**IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION:** A major portion of your grade will result from your participation in the IN-CLASS organization, rehearsal, taping, and evaluation of the newscast. As previously noted, you are not responsible for reading a textbook or completing exams in this course; rather your grade will be contingent on your consistent, high-quality effort and regular contribution toward our weekly newscasts. There is NO INSIGNIFICANT ROLE IN TELEVISION NEWS PRODUCTION; you are an important part of a complex synergy necessary to successfully produce newscasts.

**OUT-OF-CLASS PARTICIPATION:** In addition to your in-class responsibilities both TVJ and Newsbreak students will be assigned to cover, photograph, and edit news events outside of class. Plan on spending time before and/or after class periods to prepare for upcoming newscasts. Again, please evaluate your ability to commit to this time demand as well as your flexibility to negotiate schedules with others in covering and photographing events.

*Note: Historically, students have needed to work on some weekends and evenings in order to produce high-quality work on deadline.

**FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT:** The department will provide cameras and editing suites in the Telecom Lab. There are additional editing suites for use on campus in the Marriott Library.

Often, students desire to use their own cameras or editing programs and computers. You are welcomed to use any edit suites, **BUT you are responsible to ensure the compatibility of any files, tapes, or graphics you create to the technical standards, requirements, and practices of the newbreak lab record and playback systems.** It is a good idea to check that your project “works” in the playback computer prior to the show.

**Telecom Lab Hours:**
- Mon/Wed/Fri 7:00am to 5:00pm
- Tues/Thurs 8:30am to 8:30pm

All equipment must be reserved online prior to check out. Click the Telecomm Lab Reservations box on the lower left of the Department of Communication homepage or open the browser on any Telecom Lab
computer to make your reservation. Maximum check out period is 24 hours per reservation. Weekend reservations are 72 hours.

**SCHEDULE:** During the first third of the semester we will have at least two newscasts to introduce you to the “feel” of broadcast news production. This will provide us with relevant content to evaluate as a class and indicate in what area(s) we need supplemental instruction and guidance. Therefore, lectures and/or hands-on activities will occur in the meanwhile to further develop our shooting, reporting, writing, and producing skills. We will progress into regular, weekly newscasts by about midterm and continue this schedule until the conclusion of the semester.

**CLASS OPERATION:** Throughout the semester both Newsbreak and TVJ will meet together to cover common material. As noted previously, is important for the technical side (Newsbreak) to understand the production side (TVJ), and the production side to understand the technical side.

Once we begin regular newscasts, we will dedicate our class time to the rehearsing, taping, and evaluating of our work. Our formal class sessions adopt the operation as follows:

**MONDAYS** are reserved for **rehearsal**.
**WEDNESDAYS** we **record** the newscast.
*Thursdays our newscast airs on KUEN at 10pm.
**FRIDAYS** are for **evaluation** and **meetings**.

*Note: This schedule will be explained in greater detail in class. But note that on **Fridays**, the Producer, Assistant Producer, and Director will have 30 minutes at the start of class to conduct a meeting with the reporting (TVJ) and technical (NB) staff. **It is imperative that you attend these meetings. If you are not present for this meeting another student will fill your role for the upcoming show.** For example, if you are scheduled to do a live segment in the upcoming show and you are absent without explanation the Friday prior, the producer will be encouraged to cut your segment and replace it with something else. Similarly if you are signed up to operate the audio board for the upcoming show and you are absent the Friday prior to the show, you will be replaced.

Following evaluation of the newscast, Fridays are also a good day for the technical staff to set up the studio by constructing sets and setting lights. The studio should be completely arranged and prepared for use on Monday morning **before class begins.**

**GRADING:**
**TVJ:**
- Reporting (field stories) \( \approx 20\% \)
  - Reporters must complete 4 stories OR 3 stories + 1 producing stint.
- Participation \( \approx 80\% \)
  - See attendance and participation policies for details on how to receive full credit

**NEWSBREAK:**
- Rotating through production schedule \( \approx 20\% \)
  - Each role will be explained in greater detail later
- Participation \( \approx 80\% \)
  - See attendance and participation policies for details on how to receive full credit

*Note: **We encourage you to track your grade throughout the semester using Canvas. There are no “extra credit” opportunities… you have enough work!**
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: The ADA requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact Craig at the beginning of the semester to discuss your need for any accommodations for this course.

PLAGIARISM: You will fail the course if you plagiarize. “Plagiarism” means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as a basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression.” (see Student Code, page 3).
**SPECIFIC TASKS FOR TVJ:**

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| Reporter           | Every other week (approx.)| - Select your own CAMPUS-related stories (with approval of the specific week’s Producer and Assistant Producer) or be given a story by the producing team.  
- Cover (research, report, produce, write, narrate) your story  
- Edit your story  
- Complete and upload you stories prior to the Monday rehearsal.  
- Update your story for web (due one week after live recording of newscast, i.e. the following Wednesday)  
*Note: You will have the school week to complete your assignment unless the stories take place on the weekend (such as sports). Take advantage of the Library edit facilities that are open over the weekend and to know that the LNCO lab will open at approximately 7:00 am in the morning on Mondays prior to rehearsal.* |
| Producer           | Once in the semester      | - Conduct editorial meetings  
- Select stories for an entire newscast  
- Track the progress of all stories with a “status production schedule”  
- Work closely with Director to discuss set design and camera angles (begin communication early!)  
- Organize stories in cohesive order  
- Collect written stories and compile them into the Final Draft newscast script (check out Lap Top over the weekend and complete prior to rehearsal on Monday morning)  
- Create script for teleprompter (complete prior to rehearsal on Mon. morning)  
- Work with Director to create rundown in Excel (the script MUST MATCH the rundown!)  
- Time show during live production  
- Make adjustments to script and rundown between Monday’s rehearsal and Wednesday’s live-to-tape (you may need to add or drop stories depending on backtime of newscast) |
| Assistant Producer | Once in the semester      | - Assist with all producing tasks at the discretion of the Producer  
- Operate teleprompter during live production |
| Anchor             | Optional                  | - Read the script on camera during show |
| Fill studio duties | Whenever necessary        | - Fill in for studio crew or other production duties as necessary (cameras, floor directing, CG operator) |
**SPECIFIC TASKS FOR NEWSBREAK**

*Newsbreak students will rotate through these roles until each person has completed every role at least once. Check the schedule posted in the control room or ask Stephanie to find out your role for any given newscast.*

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| Director                    | - Work closely with Producer to plan out all logistics of newscast (begin communication early!)  
- Conduct production meetings with technical staff (make sure everyone is prepared before Monday’s rehearsal)  
- Design sets including the arrangement of tables, chairs, backdrops, stages, etc. (prior to Monday’s rehearsal)  
- Light all sets (prior to Monday’s rehearsal)  
- Construct chroma-key (if being used in show)  
- Create camera shots on run-down (prior to Monday’s rehearsal)  
- Maintain order among staff in the control room, on the set, etc.  
- Call directions (camera shots, graphics, etc.) during rehearsals and live taping of show  
- Make adjustments to the rundown between Monday’s rehearsal and Wednesday’s live-to-tape (you may need to add or drop stories depending on backtime of newscast. THE SCRIPT MUST MATCH THE RUNDOWN.) |
| Technical Director (TD)     | - Verify that all stories and graphics are correctly uploaded to Broadcast Pics (verify the correct suffix and fix any black frames)  
- Operate video switcher (a device used to select between several different video sources, i.e. packages, live shots, etc.) at the direction of the Director  
- Follow rundown                                                                                     |
| Graphics Generator (CG Operator) | - Update newscast credits  
- Modify sequence of graphics for current newscast  
- Create lower thirds for all people that appear in newscast (use script)  
- Create over the shoulder graphics (use script)  
- Follow script                                                                                      |
| Audio Tech                  | - Patch all microphones (find out how many mics will be needed and where)  
- Check all microphones prior to the start of rehearsals and newscasts (replace batteries when necessary)  
- Operate the audio board during newscast                                                             |
| Audio Assistant             | - Assist audio tech with all tasks  
- Operate boom mic during show (if necessary)                                                        |
| Floor Director              | - Under the command of the Director relay all messages (camera shots, etc.) to talent and production staff in studio (relay all information between control room and set)  
- Direct talent under the command of Director  
- Direct camera operators under the command of Director  
- Call time cues, etc.                                                                               |
| Camera Operator             | - Follow the run-down and direction of Floor Director during rehearsals and live tapings of shows                                                |

*Prior to beginning our regular weekly newscast schedule Newsbreak students are also required to work in teams to create promotional segments of the newscast. One team will produce a 30 second open and one team will create a 30 second commercial. The details of these assignments will be discussed in class.*

*Newsbreak students are also required to assist reporters with videography and editing when necessary.*