

COMM 284 - 201 TV Reporting

Spring 2014

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.

School of Communication Room 003

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D.

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◆ Course Goals and Objectives

This course is designed to help you learn reporting for TV, improve your broadcast-style writing, and develop the necessary camera and editing skills to communicate your stories visually. You will work on developing story ideas and learn how to present them for the television medium. You will work on honing your skills in the basics of news reporting -- how to find the sources and gather the information necessary to develop stories, with the extra demands of having a camera along with a note pad. You will practice writing, storytelling, and the art of writing to video. This class also provides the foundation for COMM 358 Newscasting and Producing, the course that produces newscasts in our state-of-the-art convergence studio.

****Please note: TV Reporting is not a performance class. Opportunities to practice on-air presentation will be in the context of reporting and conveying information.*

An informed public depends on journalists who are up to date on issues and events, both locally and around the world. Therefore, you will be expected to keep up with the news. Watch TV news and follow local, national, and international news events. Listen to news on radio and/or podcasts. Read newspapers and credible online news sources. We will discuss contemporary issues in news, to enhance your critical reflection about the practices of broadcast and other forms of journalism.

Covering news inevitably raises issues of ethics and diversity. We will assess the ethical implications of story selection and framing, word choices, "expert" opinions, fairness and balance. Your work also will be evaluated for sensitivity to issues of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other cultural issues on which news coverage often can improve.

Before taking this course, you must have completed COMM 205 Reporting & Writing, and it is also helpful to have taken COMM 256 Broadcast News. Please note: If you have not taken Intro to Video Production, you will need to learn videography and non-linear editing skills normally taught in that course.

◆ Text

(required) Television News: A Handbook for Writing, Reporting, Shooting and Editing (3rd edition) by Teresa Keller and Steve Hawkins, 2009, Holcomb Hathaway Publishers. *(Also available as an e-book.)*

◆ Supplies

For gathering video and sound in the field, you will need:

- Compact Flash (CF) Card(s), Type I, minimum of 8GB (two cards recommended)
- External hard drive that meets the following specifications:
 - Mac-formatted
 - Minimum USB 3.0
 - Minimum of 120GB (the larger, the more versatile)
 - Minimum 5400 RPM (though 7200 RPM is recommended)

Note: If your drive uses a Firewire connection, you will need a cable to convert to Thunderbolt. See handout for additional information on CF cards and hard drives.

Also needed:

- “AA” batteries (to power microphones)
- Lens Cleaning Tissue
- Clear Medical Tape (for affixing microphones)

Supplemental Materials

Expect a number of handouts to supplement the reading material. You may wish to use a folder or notebook to keep the handouts together. Some, such as the camera and editing guides, you will need as an ongoing reference.

◆ Grading

Grades will be weighted as follows:

TV stories & video assignments	45%
Other assignments, in-class activities	30%
Final project	20%
Attendance/Punctuality/Professionalism	5%

Grading scale

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the cumulative points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale:

A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%;
C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 64-66%

Loyola does not recognize a grade of D-, so a grade below 64% is failing.

TV Stories and video assignments (45%)

The main focus of the class will be on reporting and producing packages and other forms of TV stories, as well as learning the visual aspects required in telling those stories. Stories will be evaluated for accuracy, clarity, reporting effort and story impact, as well as writing and visual elements (both aesthetics and technical proficiency).

Basic requirements for packages:

1) You must work alone on at least one package, though may shoot other packages with one partner. (Each partner will write and edit their own story individually.)

2) At least one package must include diverse sources from a recognized community that is underrepresented in media coverage. Examples include: Identified racial or ethnic communities; the GLBTQ community; the disabled; the elderly; the poor
(Note: College-age students as a group, fraternity and sorority members are not examples of underrepresented groups for the purposes of this assignment. Please check with Professor Hood in advance if you have a question about whether your story meets this requirement.)

Additional Story considerations

- Script Review on Packages: To help you improve your stories before they air, script review with Professor Hood is required on packages **before editing**. You may do this by email, in person, or by phone. Plan ahead to allow enough time to shoot additional elements, if necessary. ***Failing to get script review will result in a deduction from your package grade.*** I also encourage you to discuss your story ideas with me before you even shoot, to help in developing well-balanced, well-sourced stories.
- Story Subjects: In the interest of objectivity and in keeping with standards professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't interview people you are related to or are particularly close to. Stories involving any of these individuals will receive a grade reduction.
- Fact error deduction: Facts are of vital importance in journalism. Therefore, fact errors in stories receive an automatic deduction. Take care to make sure names are spelled correctly and that other facts are accurately presented. In the words of the late President Lyndon Johnson, "In the arsenal of truth, there is no greater weapon than fact."

Assignment Redo's

Because the video assignments require technical proficiency, and videography and editing may be new for you, each video assignment (except the final project) can be redone and resubmitted for grading. They are subject to these provisions:

- 1) The redone assignment must be submitted within one week of when the original feedback and grade are returned to the class.
- 2) You will receive the average of the original grade and the new grade.

Note: This provision is only for video assignments (including packages), not other assignments.

Other Assignments (30%)

Some assignments throughout the semester will highlight information-gathering and formulation of story ideas, as well as story presentation on the web and other aspects related to TV news. There may be periodic short quizzes (*some unannounced*) on the readings, on class discussions, and on current events. Some of these quizzes will be oral, to help you practice news presentation skills.

There are two standing assignments throughout the semester:

➤ **Social Media Entries**

Similar to professional TV practice, you will be required to post social media entries to coincide with your TV stories. At least three need to be blog posts, but other entries can be tweets, Facebook or other social media. All posts must include a visual component. Points will be assigned as follows:

Blog posts – up to 10 points each

Tweets or Facebook postings – up to 5 points each

The total required for the semester is 50 points. Additional requirements and guidelines will be distributed separately.

➤ **Reading Reflections**

Reading assignments have been carefully chosen to coincide with the class topic for the day. To get the most out of the synergy between the readings and class, make every effort to complete assigned reading before class time. To help you synthesize the material, written reflections will be required for each reading. Instructions will be the same for each assignment: Write a short reflection (4-5 sentences) on what you got out of the reading and any questions you have about the material. These may be submitted via Sakai or in hard copy (typed). Though each reflection is worth only 5 points, cumulatively they are worth 75 points so will impact your Other Assignments grade.

Though you should complete the reading before class on the assigned day, written reflections for that week will be due by 5 p.m. Friday. They will not be accepted later than that. (Please note: The readings for Jan. 21, Feb. 13 and Feb. 18 include two chapters, so plan to write 4-5 sentences *on each*.)

Final Project (20%)

There will be a final project in lieu of a final exam, which will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. The final project will include a TV package and additional elements. Details will be distributed later in the semester and on Sakai. We will meet for showing the final projects on the day and time of our scheduled final, Tuesday, April 29, 1-3 p.m.

Attendance/Punctuality/Professionalism (5%)

You are expected to attend every class, and absences will impact your ability to get the most out of the course. If you have a genuine emergency, please notify me *prior* to class if possible. Assignments missed for unexcused absences may not be made up.

At Loyola, we respect that you may miss class due to religious observances. In these circumstances, please notify me ahead of time that you will be gone.

Because timeliness is an important attribute in TV News, as in many professions, your timely arrival to class will be part of your attendance grade. In addition, points may be deducted for excessive disruption or obvious disengagement from class sessions (such as Web surfing). Deductions are also given for not returning equipment on time.

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is vital in broadcast news. Assignments not turned in on time will receive an automatic reduction in grade. Packages and other TV stories will be reduced the equivalent of one letter grade for every day they are late.

◆ Rules and Responsibilities

Academic Dishonesty

Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity and have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SOC:

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes*;
- Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Specifically for this course:

*--You are not allowed to copy someone else's video work from the Internet, DVD, or any other source without proper attribution in the script and on-screen – and any use of such work in your stories should be limited to a few seconds with a very clear purpose (e.g., YouTube video). You **cannot** use video from a TV station or network in your work.*

-- You are not allowed to have people outside the class do any of the work on your stories, including shooting, editing and any other creative/editorial work.

Turning in work that is not your own and representing it as yours will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

**If you are in two courses that generate news stories (for example, this class and Mosaic), it may be permissible to cover the same story for both courses if: 1) the stories are in different formats (such as broadcast and print), and 2) both professors know about and approve of the arrangement.*

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). We will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

Classroom Conduct

Electronic devices are increasingly ubiquitous, and are often quite distracting. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices such as iPods before class begins. If you use a laptop computer to take notes in class, you will be required to send Professor Hood a copy of the notes at the end of class. Do not use your computer for any activity not directly related to the class.

◆ Electronic Communication & Information

Sakai: Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai, and you will be able to submit some assignments there (not counting scripts). Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email: I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays but will not always access it on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

◆ About your professor

This is my fifth year at Loyola, after moving from the University of Colorado. I have 18 years of experience in television news, including 10 years as a full-time producer. I worked at four TV stations in Denver, and before that produced and anchored newscasts in Huntsville, Alabama. My newscasts earned regional Emmy awards for hard news and spot news and a Colorado Broadcasters Association best newscast award. I also have experience in reporting (both news and sports), photography and editing, and worked in radio and newspapers before starting my television career. I hold a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Colorado. My research interests are local news and the audience relationship to it, as well as corporate and consolidation influences on local news and local news outsourcing. I have a master's degree from the University of Colorado and a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Missouri.

TV Reporting

Spring 2014 Schedule*

Note: Reading assignments are to be completed before the start of class on the assigned day.

Also note: Some additional assignment due dates may be added throughout the semester.

Tues Jan. 14 General introduction: What is news and how is it different for TV?
The power of the visual.

Thur Jan. 16 News characteristics and TV story forms
Reading: K&H Chapter 1 All About News (esp. pp. 14-30)
➤ Oral current events quiz

Tues Jan. 21 Basics of field videography and aesthetics
Reading: K&H Ch. 8 Shooting Video I (pp. 211-228 only; save other sections for later);
also, Ch. 9 Shooting Video II (pp. 255-273 only) (*double reading reflection*)
Due: TV viewing assignment I (via Sakai or hard copy)

Thur Jan. 23 Introduction to field cameras
***Begin working on first video assignment (will need CF cards by this point)

Tues Jan. 28 News sources and generating TV story ideas
Reading: K&H Ch. 3 News Sources (pp. 55-65 only; save the rest for later)
Due: TV viewing assignment II (via Sakai or hard copy)

Thur Jan. 30 Social media in reporting

Tues Feb. 4 Intro to digital, non-linear editing
Reading: K&H Ch. 10 Editing (pp. 289-308 only; skip section on Linear Editing; save
Laying the Audio Track and other sections for later)
Due: Raw footage for first video assignment
***Need external hard drives and new computer connectors by this point

Thur Feb. 6 Work day for first video assignments (video or editing help as needed)

Tues Feb. 11 Videography II: Gathering sound and shooting interviews
Due: First videography assignment, edited

Thur Feb. 13 Videography II continued: Interview aesthetics
Reading: K&H Ch. 8 (pp. 228-233, starting with "Shooting Interviews"; also, pp. 239-
253, on Lighting and Audio plus Conclusion –skip section on Standups for now); also,
Ch. 3 (pp. 65-84, starting with "Preparing for the Interview") (*double reflection*)

Tues Feb. 18 Broadcast writing review and Basic TV stories: vo's and vo/sot's
Reading: K&H Ch. 6 Storytelling and Writing for Broadcast (pp. 151-167 only, begin with
"Writing the Story" – save the start of the chapter and "Writing for Radio and the Web"
section for later); also, Ch. 7 Writing in Broadcast Style (*double reflection*)
(*Note: If you have taken COMM 256 Broadcast News, you may just need to skim Ch. 7; read it more fully
if you have not taken 256*)

Thur Feb. 20 Putting it all together: Writing, timing and editing vo/sot's
Due: Interview videos, edited

Tues Feb. 25 Law and ethics in TV
Reading: K&H Ch. 5 Legal Considerations

Thur Feb. 27 Viewing day for vo/sot's and interviews
Due: Completed vo/sot's; related social media posts due by 5 p.m. Friday

Week of March 3 SPRING BREAK

Tues Mar. 11 Packaging for TV
Reading: K&H Ch. 6 (pp. 143-151 only)

Thur Mar. 13 TV Packaging continued: intros, tags, and standups
Due: Package #1 story ideas

Tues Mar. 18 TV on-camera performance
Reading: K&H pp. 234-238 (section of Ch. 8 "Conceiving and Shooting the Standup");
Ch. 12 Presentation and Voice (beginning through p. 365 on live shots)

Thur Mar. 20 Package Editing Techniques
Reading: K&H Ch. 10, pp. 308-320 (start with "Laying the Audio Track")

Tues Mar. 25 Work day for Package #1
(No class session, but Professor Hood will be available for help as needed)

Thur Mar. 27 Package Screening Day
Due: Package #1 (edited and uploaded); related social media post by 5 p.m. Friday

Tues Apr. 1 Multimedia writing for TV
Reading assignment: K&H Ch. 6, pp. 167-179, Writing for Radio & the Web

Thur Apr. 3 Live Lab #1 (Bring video cards to class for field shooting)
Due: Package #2 story ideas

Tues Apr. 8 Using Public Records; Computer-Assisted Reporting overview
Reading: K&H Ch. 4 Using Public Records
Due: Web writing assignment

Thur Apr. 10 Work day for Package #2
(No class session, but Professor Hood will be available for help as needed)

Tues Apr. 15 Package Screening Day
Due: Package #2 (edited and uploaded); related social media post by 5 p.m. Friday

Thur Apr. 17 Live Lab #2 (Bring video cards to class for field shooting)

Tues Apr. 22 TV ratings, the audience, and contemporary news issues; news careers
Reading: Skim K&H Ch. 2 The Television Newsroom and Ch. 13 Careers in Broadcasting (*reading reflections optional*)

Thurs Apr. 24 Work Day for Final Projects
(No class session, but Professor Hood will be available for help as needed)

***Tues Apr. 29** Final Projects due; showing in class 1-3 p.m.

* We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise.