

COMM 208 - 201 Technology for Journalists

Spring 2014

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

School of Communication Room 015

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D.

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◆ Course Goals and Objectives

This course is designed to teach you the fundamentals of basic technologies used in today's newsrooms to report events and tell stories. The course will be divided into broad sections focused on blogs; Twitter and other social media; still photography; audio; video; and information graphics, with a small unit on studio, on-camera performance. Each section will be presented with a goal of making you feel comfortable and confident in using these technologies to produce well-written and well-edited stories across platforms. The aim is to help you brand yourself and your content as a legitimate source of journalism. Ultimately, this course aims to offer you a taste of different mediums and technologies to help you choose how best to tell your stories as well as your own path within journalism.

◆ You will need:

- Flash drive or external hard drive (minimum 4 GB)
- Notebook or folder for keeping numerous handouts and instruction sheets
- No textbook is required, though it will be helpful to have access to an Associated Press Style Book.
- Additional readings will be provided as the semester progresses.

The School of Communication has a variety of equipment that we can use for class-related projects. This equipment may be checked out through Andi Pacheco in SOC 004 (contact apacheco@luc.edu; phone 312-915-8830). Your own equipment and devices will likely be suitable for many assignments, as well.

◆ Assignments and Projects

Assignments, both in-class and on your own, will be designed to help you develop your skills using the technologies in a journalistic setting. The major sections will also include a larger project on which to demonstrate those skills. In addition, each person will maintain a blog and Twitter feed highlighting stories you cover, both on a beat of your choice and on general-assignment topics.

Other small assignments will aim to help you understand more fully the uses of these technologies, both by journalists and by the public.

Additional considerations:

- Story Subjects: In the interest of objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, or roommates as subjects. 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."

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is vital in journalism. Assignments not turned in on time will receive an automatic reduction in grade.

Final Project

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 several elements using the various technologies. 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, 9-11 a.m.

Attendance/Punctuality/Professionalism

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

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.

◆ Grading

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Web site, Blog, Twitter	30%
Other major projects	30%
In-class and smaller assignments	20%
Final project	20%

Grading scale

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the accumulated 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.

◆ 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 audio, video or visuals from the Internet, DVD, or any other source without proper attribution – and any use of such work in your stories should be limited to a few seconds and with a very clear purpose (e.g., YouTube video). You **cannot** use content from another journalist or organization in your 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

You may find class-related uses for your cell phone or computer, but you will be expected to show discretion and *not* use them for purposes unrelated to class. If you use a computer to take notes during lecture or instruction portions, you may be asked to send your notes to Professor Hood at the end of class.

◆ Electronic Communication & Information

Sakai: Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai, and you will be able to submit some assignments there. 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.

Technology for Journalists

Spring 2014 Schedule*

Tues Jan. 14 General introduction and expectations; role of technology in journalism

Thur Jan. 16 Blogging styles and purposes; setting up blogs and Twitter accounts
Journalistic-style writing

Tues Jan. 21 Beat reporting; evaluating blogs
Due: Blog site and Twitter account set up by this date
--Complete outside readings before class

Thur Jan. 23 Posting pictures to your web site, writing captions; using SEO to increase exposure

Tues Jan. 28 Using RSS feeds; using Twitter in real time
Due: First blog posts and tweets

Thur Jan. 30 Other uses of social media in journalism; HTML basics for bloggers

Tues Feb. 4 Photography unit: Uses, how-to, photo editing, building slide shows
Due: Beat names and ideas

Thur Feb. 6 Photography

Tues Feb. 11 Photography
Due: Twitter event "watching" assignment

Thur Feb. 13 Photography unit concludes
Due: Photos for slide show

Tues Feb. 18 Broadcast writing and story types; intro to audio types and technologies

Thur Feb. 20 Audio unit continues

Tues Feb. 25 Audio

Thur Feb. 27 Audio

Week of March 3 **Spring Break**

Tues Mar. 11 Photography and audio wrapup

Thur Mar. 13 Photo slide shows and Audio wraps due; in-class viewing of work

Tues Mar. 18 Video unit: Uses, how-to, video editing, basic story types

Thur Mar. 20 Video

Tues Mar. 25 Video

Thur Mar. 27 Video

Tues Apr. 1 Video

Thur Apr. 3 Video unit concludes

Tues Apr. 8 Information graphics: maps, timelines, polls

Thur Apr. 10 Information graphics

Tues Apr. 15 Information graphics; final project expectations

Thur Apr. 17 Studio work: Getting comfortable on camera

Due: Information graphics assignments

Tues Apr. 22 Studio work II

Thur Apr. 24 Semester wrap-up; last day of class

Tues Apr. 29 **Final Projects due; showing in class 9-11 a.m.**

** We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise. Expect additional assignments and due dates as the semester progresses.*