2684 - Broadcast News Practices  
M, W, F  9 - 10AM  
Spring, 2011

Classroom: Bliss 2019 or Dept conference room

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Texts:


Description: Organization, preparation, and presentation of radio and television news programs. Includes study of journalistic requirements of broadcast media and broadcast newsroom operation. The equivalent of three hours lecture and two hours lab per week. Prereq.: TCOM 2682 and 2683 with a grade of C or better in both. 3 s.h.

Exception: To provide continuity in the production of Light the Wick, the 2682 and 2683 prerequisites will be waived this semester.

KSA’s: refer to domains of learning (Blum) comprising Knowledge (or cognitive learning, meaning what you know or understand or remember), Skills (or behavioral learning, meaning what you are able to do), and Attitudes (or affective or emotional learning).

We will plot a path of skills needed to create a news program. This path will include:

- How do you spot a news story?
- How do you gather the story content?
- How do you plan a lead?
- How do you use the XL-1's, the JVC's, and the FCP editors?
- How do you shoot good video that’s easy to edit?
- How do you edit video into powerful media packages?
- How do you write conversational English?
- How do you prepare useful scripts?
- How do you produce a story by making cold calls and working references?
- How do you build a brand - by defining the program’s essential character?
- How do you reach beyond low-hanging fruit for stories?
- How do you script for teleprompter?
- How do you use the teleprompter on camera?
- How do you read news on-camera in a credible, conversational manner?
- How do you prepare a 10-minute newscast with beginning, middle and end?
How do you plan supers?
How do you use the standard forms of video stories?
How do you time stories and shows?
How do you look at the camera and pitch a story?
How do you operate the studio equipment to make a 10-minute newscast?

How do you avoid the tragedy of the last minutes?
How do you get others to bring stories to you?
How do you set up lights for a shoot?
How do you shoot available light?
How do you white balance a camera?

How do you shoot with onboard microphones?
How do you use lavallier microphones?
How do you shoot with headphones?
How do you shoot on telephoto?
How do you shoot handheld and not look amateur?

How do you populate the Z dimension?
How do you emphasize distance on the Z dimension?
How do you use depth of field?
How do you create and use future files?
How do you plan for evergreen stories?

How do you develop a marketing plan for a program?
How do you make a news-type program attractive for sponsors?
How do you create and work “beats” for a program?
How do you use news-type program elements in your professional portfolio?
...and many more!

As we cycle through our first 2 or 3 shows, we will focus mainly on learning these “how-to” skills. Then, as we get comfortable with these basic skills, we'll pay more and more attention to why-type questions and to developing a set of attitudes about professional communication. And, of course, as we continue to cycle through show planning and show execution, we’ll pay even more attention to how to make our program segments excellent.

We will collaborate with students in Seminar in Telecommunication, taught by Dr. Crawford. As of December 20, here are the rosters:

4897 - Seminar in Telecom
1. Cunningham, Barry
2. Davis, Kevin
3. Janacone, John

2684 - News Practices
1. Baniecki, Jory
2. Kountz, Lee
3. Mesik, Stephen
By prior arrangement, Jessica Sirakis will serve as the student executive producer of Light the Wick. She will work with the other 13 students to see that a show is produced and uploaded each week and that Light the Wick is effectively marketed.

Light the Wick began in September, 2009. Hence, this is its fourth semester of production. Historically, we have compiled each week’s show on Friday between 8AM and 10AM. It’s important that the program be “in the can” by 10 AM so that the studio is ready for the TV production and Directing classes. So preceding days – Monday and Wednesday (Tuesday and Thursday for the Seminar) have been used review scripts, compile supers, ingest teleprompter files, ingest story files into the video server, and otherwise prepare the program for production.

Here are a few observations from earlier semesters about how to become an effective production unit:

1. Each person must become a go-to player. That means everyone can be relied on to deliver what he’s asked to or volunteers to provide.
2. Learn from mistakes. The idea is to make beginner mistakes at the beginning, and then move on.
3. Use this course as a tool for learning everything about production. Each person should get experience doing everything.
4. Focus on details. Details must be correct. An out-of-place frame of black or a super with a name spelled wrong can wreck the program.
5. Conserve time. Get stories shot and edited as soon as possible.
6. Work to get ahead – to get stories in the can for future use.

And here are a few key things not to do:

1. Do not delay. All materials for a Friday show must be completed and in the hands of the producer by Wednesday at the latest.
2. Do not double-dip stories from the Jambar, the Vindicator or local TV stations.
3. On Friday morning, arrive and start production as soon as possible.
4. When shooting, do not rely on the camera mike except for nat sound; do not hand-hold except when on a wide angle; do not use available light when a spot is needed.
5. Don’t assume a camera will be waiting for you to check out and use. Make specific plans and confirm them.
6. Output your edited video/audio files as MEDIA FILES, not data.
**Grading:** Your media stories will be one basis for grading. You are expected to demonstrate increased understanding and skill as the semester progresses – in writing, shooting, editing, production and on-camera performance. I will plan to use two written exams. They will cover assigned parts of the textbook and also parts of the On Camera book. Grades will be lowered if absence or tardiness or disengagement become conspicuous. Grades will be elevated to recognize initiative and other leadership dimensions.

Materials must be turned in on time. A little bit late is late. Late material is unuseable. Unuseable does not receive a passing grade.

**Media:** Use of personal media during formal class meetings (during meetings of any kind, actually) is distracting and offensive. Turn them off during our formal meetings and during final show production. Otherwise, if we adjourn to a production meeting or a work session, you may use them at your discretion.