

# Journalism 620 TV News Syllabus

## Course Goals

- Further develop producing, reporting, writing, shooting and editing skills
- For reporters, demonstrate the ability to turn a TV package story in one day
- Demonstrate enterprise reporting by developing multi-source, non-deadline trend and issue stories suitable for sweeps
- For producers, web producers, social media managers and promotions managers demonstrate the ability to produce well-organized, well-written, smooth flowing content under deadline pressure
- Compile an audition reel that will lead to a job
- Start building a contact network

## Student Learning Assessment

To address Learning Outcome 1 and Learning Outcome 2 under Advanced Education Goal 6, each student will meet with a current or former TV news manager who will review the student's "audition tape." The audition tape is the entry point and a key to getting a job in television news. The first review will take place at the mid-term. The final review will occur during the last week of class.

This capstone course synthesizes the theory and practice of previous courses. We will examine the stories and newscasts to assess whether and to what extent the students achieve that synthesis of theory and practice. We will assess the professional quality of student generation of story ideas, newsgathering, news judgment, and professional production standards.

## Lab Activities

Students in J20 TV News will work approximately 8-10 hours per week outside of class. Each student will opt for his/her "lab." Selection of that lab will be based largely on the student's career plans. The student will work with the instructor to develop news products that will enhance the student's portfolio and audition tape..

Current lab opportunities include: reporter, producer, web producer, social media manager, promotions manager.

## J620 Class Calendar--Spring 2016

(Revised 1/12/16)

(Calendar subject to change to accommodate guest speakers)

Jan 19 Opening Day—Get acquainted/General Course outline/Blackboard Tour/Write to pix/Sequencing/ Using the Nut Graf to Format a TV Story/

Read: Ch. 1, 2, 19

Jan 26 VO's/VOB's/Interview Structure/Quotes and Bites/ What is News?/ Storytellers Wayne Freedman, reporter, KGO-TV San Francisco/ Chris Bacon—Visualization/ Keys to Better Writing/

Read: Ch. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21

Feb 9 Quote and Bites/ Live Reporting Workout/ Sources and Sourcing/More story structure/Speed reporting/Storytellers Steve Hartman/ Guest—Katie Mahr, producer, WDAF-TV, Kansas City

Read: Ch. 8, 9, 12, 15, 17

Feb 16 Standups—Jenn French, WCMH-TV, Columbus, OH/Deconstructing a story

Read: Ch. 10, 18, 20

Feb 23 Visual Storytelling/Storytellers Anne Thompson, NBC News

Read: Ch. 22, 23

Mar 1 Show and Tell with Gerry Roberts, former assistant news director, KMBC-TV

Mar 8 Guest—Elliott Metz, KCTV-TV, Kansas City

Mar 15 No class Spring Break

Mar 22 Storytellers Boyd Huppert-Greg Vandergrift/ Skype--Wayne Freedman, reporter, KGO-TV, San Francisco

Mar 29 Skype—Kelly Duffy, News Director, KOAA-TV, Colorado Springs

Apr 5 Show and Tell—Jon Janes, news director, WIBW-TV, Topeka

Apr 12 Guest—Samantha Anderson, KWCH-TV, Wichita/Skype Jim Serra, GM, KPLC-TV, Lake Charles, LA

Apr 19 Max out of town National Association of Broadcasters/Broadcast Education Association Convention

Apr 26 Skype--Bob Clinkingbeard, Tampa, FL, News Director

May 3 Show and Tell—Mike McDonald, former News Director, Fox4 TV, Kansas City

May 6 Stop Day

## Grading Criteria

**100-93% A, 92 -90% A-: Excellent.** This grade is for work of clearly professional caliber (publishable or broadcast-ready). The writing is clear and well organized and only minor editing is required. The reporting is complete and leaves no significant questions unanswered. The work is turned in by or before deadline, needing no changes to submit to clients or editors. These papers, stories and presentations get results, win awards and feature creative concepts executed with comprehensive research, interesting presentation, and nearly flawless writing.

**89%-87 B+, 86-83% B, 82-80% B-: Good.** This grade is for work that could be raised to professional standards without radical editing. Writing is grammatically correct but may lack the sparkle and fine organization of "A" work. The reporting answers the main questions but may miss the proper emphasis or the best sources. Work is in by deadline with little or no prompting and needs minor revisions such as reorganizing, rewriting, reformatting, or providing more or better sources. "B" work doesn't necessarily have anything wrong, but it could be better, often with a stronger topic or subject, a more artistic presentation, better information, or improved writing. "B" work demonstrates basic broadcast or print style.

**79-77% C+, 76-73% C, 72-70% C-: Adequate.** Work needs significant revision in at least one major area. Does not measure up to professional quality but could be salvaged with considerable rewriting. Writing has rough spots, and grammar and style errors are present in significant amounts. Reporting may be incomplete, or timid, or factually flawed. Work is incomplete by deadline and needs major revisions before submitting to a client or editor. These papers and presentations have weak ideas, concepts or presentation problems. They draw attention because they don't do the job

**69-67% D+, 66-62% D, 62-60% D-: Unacceptable performance.** Work clearly unacceptable even in a classroom setting. The writing is confused and ungrammatical. The reporting is flawed and may contain major factual errors and/or omissions or may show little concept of basic news judgment. Work is late; deadline missed.

**59% and below F: Failing** Work not completed in a professional, timely way. Totally blows off the assignment. Such performance is usually caused by personal or time management problems that extend beyond a lack of skills or understanding of the research, writing, or production process.

## **Assumptions**

- All projects start with the assumption the work is "good" which earns a grade of "B." (See "good" definition above).
- You may write a story with no errors that earns a "B."
- Clever and strong leads, exceptional storytelling, effective use of traditional English devices such as alliteration/metaphors/parallel construction/exceptional reporting will help boost stories to the "A" category.
- Fact errors, disjointed story construction, grammar/spelling/usage errors, verb problems, missed leads, unsound news judgment, failure to follow proper style will lower the writer's grade.