

JOMC 121 – Summer 2014
Jesse Abdenour

Writing for the Electronic Media

School of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNC-Chapel Hill
JOMC 121 – Summer 2014
Monday-Friday, 1:15-2:45
Carroll Hall 132

Instructor: Jesse Abdenour Office: 366 Carroll Hall Email: abdenour@live.unc.edu	<u>Office Hours:</u> 11am-12pm Monday-Wednesday and by appointment.
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JOMC-121 cannot be taken concurrently with any course in which the lab or group meeting conflicts with JOMC-121 time periods.

Be sure your registration is up to date. If you are not officially registered for JOMC-121 by this semester's deadline you will not be permitted to continue in the class.

National Standards:

The standard expected of every student enrolled in the School's JOMC-121 sections is at the level of national excellence. By the time you complete JOMC-121 you will be a **competent broadcast news writer and storyteller**.

The Discipline and the Course:

The study of broadcast journalism combines the skills of news writing, storytelling and production. To succeed in the course, you'll need to achieve competence in all three areas. JOMC-121 is the **first course in the broadcast journalism sequence**, which consists of JOMC-121, JOMC-221, JOMC-421 and JOMC-422. All four courses are required to complete the Electronic Communication Sequence in the School.

Oral Communication Component:

Unlike many courses in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication this course includes an oral communication component. Broadcast journalists **must be able to speak clearly and confidently** into microphones, and those working in television must be able to do so in front of cameras. You cannot receive a passing grade in this course if your oral communication skills are deficient. If you have any doubts about your ability to achieve competency in this area before completing the course, check now with the instructor.

Basic Objectives:

Objectives of JOMC-121 include the following:

- Improving your broadcast news **writing, production, and storytelling.**

More specifically, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. You can learn more about them here:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you a solid grasp of all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. Our advanced courses will provide you with more detailed guidance based on your specific area of specialization. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- Understanding concepts and theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrating an understanding of professional ethical principles in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- **Thinking critically, creatively and independently;**
- Writing correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

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- Critically evaluating students' own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Applying tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Required Equipment:

Recorder - To record material for your stories you will need to purchase a voice recorder. A file listing the various options available will be available on the course Sakai site.

Microphone & Cable - JOMC will provide you with a **mic and cable** to use for your recorder this semester, **for free**. Please respect the equipment. At the end of the semester, you must return the mic and cable in good condition before receiving a grade for the class.

- Pickup from Matt Bachman in Equip. Rm., Carroll Hall **Rm. 239**, open **9am-12pm & 1-3:30pm, Tue. May 13 - Thurs. May 15**

Required Reading:

1. Textbook - Tuggle, C.A., Forrest Carr and Suzanne Huffman, *Broadcast News Handbook*, Fifth Edition, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, ©2014.

- Amazon Prime: New for \$82.98
- UNC Bookstore: New for \$95.35
- E-Book Rental: Can be rented for 180 days for \$56.16 at CourseSmart website:
<http://www.coursesmart.com/broadcast-news-handbook-writing-reporting/tuggle-c-a-carr-forrest-huffman-suzanne/dp/0077526449>
(Free trial available)

****Note: This textbook will also be required for JOMC 421.**

2. New York Times subscription - Online or print.

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- Four-week trial online subscription available for **99 cents**:
<http://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/Multiproduct/lp5558.html?adxc=209338&adxa=301138&page=homepage.nytimes.com/index.html&pos=HPTopNav&campaignId=3F696>
- Student Rate for print delivery: \$3.00/week:
<http://homedelivery.nytimes.com/HDS/StudentHome.do?mode=studHome>

Note: Each current events quiz will have **at least 1 item from the N.Y. Times**

Like a professional journalist, I expect you to have a daily working knowledge of **major news developments**. This includes **national, international, state, local** and **on-campus** news items.

News quiz questions will be drawn from **major events** that receive coverage in the mainstream media during the **3 days prior** to each quiz. Generally, stories I see in **two different sources** will be included. When looking for news quiz questions, I usually rotate through these sources:

- N.Y. Times
- CNN
- Google News
- News and Observer
- Daily Tar Heel
- WUNC (NPR affiliate, 91.5 FM)
- WCHL (CBS affiliate, 1360 AM)
- Local TV stations (WRAL, WNCN, News 14 Carolina, etc.)
- Network TV News (ABC, NBC, etc.)

To monitor what's going on in the broadcasting and journalism world, I recommend the following websites:

- TVSpy.com
- Poynter.org

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Some information about local radio:

- [WUNC-91.5](#) NPR. Streaming audio available.
On WUNC you will hear award-winning local and national radio newscasts. [This American Life](#), an award-winning radio documentary series, airs Saturday afternoons. Segments are repeated Sundays.
The quality of your work in JOMC-121 is expected to rise to the level of National Public Radio.
- [WCHL 1360](#) CBS. Live streaming available.
This station provides the only Chapel Hill news coverage available on a commercial radio station. A podcast of the morning newscast is made available each morning after 10AM. Several JOMC-121 students have worked for WCHL after successfully completing this course.
[Carolina Connection](#), the weekly radio newscast produced by UNC students, airs on WCHL on Saturday mornings at 8:30. Past broadcasts are archived and available. Stories you produce for this class may be recommended for use on Carolina Connection.

Recommended Resources:

Stern, David Alan, *The Speaker's Voice*. Three CDs with companion text/drill manual are available from [Dialect Accent Specialists](#). A copy is on reserve at the Park Library. This is an excellent resource for anyone doing self-guided voice work.

Dr. Stern has also produced a series of recordings to help speakers who hope to [reduce their accents](#), whether domestic American or foreign. I strongly encourage anyone who is dealing with an accent issue to order the appropriate recording.

One fast way for a broadcast journalist to call her/his credibility into question is to mispronounce a word. [Dictionary.com](#) now provides audible word pronunciations, as well as definitions and synonyms.

Class Rules:

1. Participation: **I expect you to participate** in class. One way we practice being good verbal communicators is through public speaking. In this class, you will be critiquing your own and others' work. **Keep the focus on the work, not the individuals**. Please be respectful to your instructor and your classmates at all times.
 - Note: When receiving constructive criticism about your own work, try to divorce yourself emotionally from it and realize it will help you in the long run. In the news business, **it helps to have a thick skin**.
2. Professionalism: Treat this class as you would a business meeting and **pay attention at all times**. Please do NOT text, check e-mail, Facebook, play games...you get the picture.

As part of your professional approach, please be prepared. That means you are **responsible for having read that session's material ahead of time**.

3. Attendance

As in the broadcast industry, punctuality is essential and deadlines must be met. Classroom experiences are a vital part of the educational process. Therefore, regular class attendance is essential. The following policy governs absences and their effect upon your grade:

- I expect you to arrive on time, and to stay for the entire class period. For an entertaining way to check the time, visit [The Human Clock](#). **Arriving late, coming in and out** during class, and **leaving early** will impact your **participation/professionalism grade**. Do not schedule other activities that will conflict with your ability to attend these class sessions.
- Attendance Grade =
$$\frac{\text{Number of times present in class}}{\text{Total Classes (23)}}$$

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Attendance exceptions may be made in the following situations:

- o Extreme medical cases or emergencies
- o School-sanctioned activity (e.g., participation in a UNC athletic event)

If you are dealing with one of these situations, notify me in **advance** of class by phone or e-mail to avoid grading penalties.

- If you are absent the day a quiz is given, the grammar section of the quiz may be made up if I am notified within 24 hours. Current events quizzes may not be made up.

Grading Breakdown:

Course Element	% of Grade
Participation/Professionalism	5%
Attendance	10%
Story Pitches	10%
Exam	10%
Quizzes & In-class Assignments	15%
Four Reporting Assignments	50%
Total	100%

You cannot receive a passing grade in the course unless all assignments in the course are completed. A numerical grade scale will be used on all papers and tests. Here are the letter equivalents:

FINAL GRADES

- 94 -100 A
- 91 – 93.9 A-
- 88 – 90.9 B+
- 84 - 87.9 B
- 81 - 83.9 B-

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78 - 80.9	C+
74 - 77.9	C
71 - 73.9	C-
68 - 70.9	D+
64 - 67.9	D
61 - 63.9	D-
60.9 and below	F

Quizzes

Weekly quizzes will cover current events, grammar, and broadcast writing style. Grammar and word usage are the tools we use to tell effective stories. Without these tools, you can't construct a compelling story. Thus, grammar and word usage will be emphasized through quizzes and in-class assignments. Your **first quiz is scheduled for Friday, May 16.**

Story Pitches

Much like a professional newsroom, we will "pitch" stories in class for consideration. At these pitch sessions, you will be required to bring at least **two (2) story ideas, in writing**, for consideration. Each story idea must contain a few sentences about the importance of the story, and how you would like to pursue the story. At least **one relevant source with a phone number is required for each story** idea. Story ideas should be generated with your upcoming audio project in mind. Tips about pitching stories will be available on Sakai. *Note:* your **first pitch is due Friday, May 16.**

The instructor in the course serves as news director/executive producer with final determination over the acceptability and quality of any story.

Exam

There will be one exam. The exam will cover material from in-class discussions and the Tuggle et al. textbook.

Assignments

You will produce four (4) audio news stories by the end of the class.

Note: your **first audio project is due Friday, May 23**. Project value increases as the semester progresses:

Project One:	7.5%
Project Two:	12.5%
Project Three:	12.5%
Project Four:	17.5%
Total:	50% of your grade

Stories displaying considerable intellectual **depth, originality, creativity, news value, flawless writing and production** will earn the highest grades. The best stories will be considered for use on the Carolina Connection radio program. More information on project requirements will be provided later in the semester.

All scripts and other written assignments must be printed and turned in via hard copy. No assignment will be accepted in longhand. Please **do not print during class** lectures or discussions. Audio story files should be uploaded to your Drop Box on Sakai.

Late Assignments:

Audio stories and other assignments are due at the beginning of class. You are responsible for getting your project turned in on its due date even if you will be absent from class that day. Projects will be accepted after their due dates, but **late projects will face a 10% penalty** (A- to B-) for each day they are late. You cannot receive a passing grade in the course unless all assignments are completed.

- *Note:* Final projects will not be accepted late (due June 12th).

A word of warning: At some point in this class you will encounter real-world last-minute problems over which you will have little or no control – problems that will compromise your ability to get an assignment turned in on time. Stories shift. Plans fall through. Interviewees cancel appointments. Equipment malfunctions. Illness strikes. Know this and **build a time cushion** for yourself. To prevent such problems from damaging your grade I strongly encourage you

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to set your own personal deadlines, planning to have all elements for each story **recorded 48 hours in advance** and to have all **editing completed 12-24 hours in advance** of the deadline.

Notifying Sources:

Each source you contact must be told at the beginning of your conversation that she/he is being interviewed for a story that may be used on the air. If you do not follow this procedure, you may be committing an Honor Code violation.

Additional Considerations:

All work must be original and solely for this class. No assignment that was prepared for credit as part of any other class may be submitted for credit in JOMC-121.

In the news business, accuracy is vital. Misspellings on assignments will result in point deductions. Misspelling of a **proper name**, or a **factual error**, will result in a **10% deduction**.

Finally, under no circumstances should a journalist fabricate a source, a quote or a sound bite. If you engage in such a fabrication, you risk failing the course and being referred for an Honor Code violation.

Inclement Weather:

In the event of inclement weather, please check the [UNC Website](#) to see if class has been canceled. Also be sure to check your UNC e-mail for any messages from me.