

The University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
School of Media and Journalism
MEJO 252.2: Audio Journalism

Class Times: Tuesday/Thursday, 8- 9:15 a.m. Location: Carroll 132

Instructor: Elizabeth Baier

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Office Hours: Tue. and Thurs. 9:15- 9:45 a.m., and by appointment

Credits: 3

Required Text:

Kern, Jonathan, *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production*, University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Course Description:

Welcome to MEJO 252, one of the foundation courses in the broadcast and electronic journalism program of the School of Media and Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This course presents the basics of writing, reporting, audio editing, voicing and production skills to work within the electronic/broadcast news industry.

This class will operate like a newsroom, so don't expect a regular college class. Effective newsrooms establish a climate where there is a healthy collision of ideas-- where story assignments, approaches, writing, production, etc., are discussed openly and honestly. This class will offer students a space where their curiosity will be engaged and challenged. Tension and conflict can and should be present to some degree. That tension and conflict should be tempered, however, with respect.

Broadcast writing and audio journalism are designed for a mass audience. If a story is going to be broadcast over a radio station, television station or other news medium, the reporter of the story must be prepared to justify and defend that story and the facts it contains at every level. It is difficult to be a broadcast journalist if one is thin-skinned. It is about the work; not the person. A news story is a news story. It is NOT the extension of an individual.

Course Goals:

The basic objectives of MEJO 252 include the following:

- To learn and demonstrate basic electronic/broadcast news writing and reporting skills.
- To integrate your news writing skills with basic reporting practices into the production of professional, broadcast-quality audio news and feature packages.
- To produce electronic/broadcast news stories acceptable under the standards generally established by reputable, professional news organizations.

Oral Communication Component:

No prerequisite exists for oral communication skills. Unlike other courses in the School of Media and Journalism, this course includes an oral communication component. 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 starting the course, check now with the instructor. You will not be

graded on your voice quality, per se, but performance improvement will be considered. If you plan to pursue a career on air, you should plan to take our program's voice and diction class.

Equipment:

Voice Recorder & Cable/Microphone

You will need to purchase a digital voice recorder. A list of recommended recorders will be posted in the Resources folder of Sakai. Please consult the list before purchasing your recorder. There will be an in-class discussion of the various options.

You will also need to check out from the MEJO equipment room a broadcast-quality microphone and cable to connect to your digital recorder. The equipment room is located in Carroll 239 and is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. and on Friday from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. It's your responsibility to keep the microphone and cable in good working order. There is no rental fee, but you are responsible for loss or damage of equipment. If you believe that you are not getting good quality audio from your recorder/microphone unit, please let your instructor or the equipment manager know right away so they can troubleshoot the problem. You must return the microphone and cable to the equipment room by the last day of class. **Failure to return the equipment on time will result in an incomplete grade and a possible lowering of your class grade when the incomplete is converted.**

Studio Space

To edit and produce your audio projects, use Adobe Audition, which is part of the Adobe Creative Suite you have access to as a UNC student. You will also have access to a broadcast studio for recording tracks. The studio is located in Carroll 135.

Professionalism, Attendance and Punctuality:

Several components of this class will focus on professionalism, and it will comprise part of your final grade.

As in the broadcast industry, punctuality is essential and deadlines must be met. Classroom experiences are a vital part of the educational process for this class. Therefore, regular class attendance is essential. The following policy governs absences and the potential impact on the final grade:

Each student is permitted two (2) absences during the semester. You do not need to offer an excuse or explanation for these two absences. After the two absences, each additional absence will result in one (1) point deduction from the professionalism portion of your final grade. Use your allocated absences wisely. No additional absences will be granted for job interviews, other courses or activities. Please do not request additional absences.

You are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the entire class period. You are also expected to sign-in to the roll sheet at the start of each course. Late arrivals will be counted as an absence and you may be asked to leave. If you need to leave the class before it ends, you must notify the professor by email prior to class. Otherwise, early departures will be considered an absence. Signing in for someone else is a violation of the Honor Code and will be treated as such.

Professionalism, Class Discussions:

One of the primary forms of participation in this class will be discussion, even debate. We will talk as a class and in groups, thinking through issues together and critiquing our own work and the work of others. To create a climate conducive for participation by everyone, please follow these discussion guidelines:

- Be ready to share and explain your opinions. Feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your assertions and back them up with evidence.
- Listen carefully and respond to other members of the group. Be willing to change your mind when someone demonstrates an error in your logic or use of facts.
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification of any point or term you do not understand.
- Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition and stick to the subject.
- Be honest but sensitive in critiquing the work of others, whether you know the people involved or not. Keep the focus on the work, not the individual, and critique the work product as you would hope to see someone else critique your own work.
- When critiquing your own work, try to separate yourself from your emotional connection to it -- your prejudices and opinions. Be as objective as possible.

Communication & Sakai:

Your instructor will communicate through email and the Sakai listserv. It is your responsibility to read the emails. There will undoubtedly be updates and changes to assignments throughout the semester and these will be communicated through email. The UNC Sakai service is located at www.unc.edu/sakai.

You may email me at ebaier@email.unc.edu. In the subject line of your email, please put "MEJO 252." I will be available to talk anytime after class (9:15- 9:45 a.m.) I am also happy to arrange another mutually convenient time to talk.

Other Considerations:

Cell phones/ laptops: Unless otherwise discussed with your instructor, please turn off these devices during class. They are to remain off at all times unless you're asked by the instructor to turn them on.

Food and beverage: Please be mindful of building requirements and of your colleagues.

Your email: Every enrolled student in the School of Media and Journalism is required to have a UNC email address. Always check your email within 24 hours before class for any late changes to assignments.

Changes in syllabus: Please check the syllabus before each class. The professor reserves the right to change the syllabus as needed. In the event of changes, students will be notified in advance via email and all changes will be reflected in the online syllabus accessible via Sakai (www.unc.edu/sakai).

Inclement Weather: In the event of inclement weather, please check your email and/or the UNC website to see if class has been canceled. Also, please be sure to check your email for any messages.

Readings: It is expected that you complete required readings before coming to class. Class time will be devoted to application of knowledge, not a review of your readings.

Staying Informed: Students are responsible for staying informed at all times about local, national and international news events. You can succeed in the news profession only if you have a broad scope of issues and events happening in the world around you.

Academic Freedom: The instructor retains the academic freedom to deliver course content to achieve academic rigor and to serve the best interests of students.

Original Work: All work must be original and solely for this class. No assignment may be submitted for credit that was prepared for another class. Under no circumstance should a journalist fabricate a source, quote or sound bite. Do not ask a source to stage a sound or read from a prepared text. Staging is a form of fabrication and is an Honor Code violation. Also, do not use sound effects. Use of archival audio must be approved by the instructor.

Note: Students are welcome to pitch stories to Carolina Connection but must get prior approval from this course's instructor.

Assignment Deadlines:

Assignments are due at the start of class on the due date, unless otherwise noted. You will not receive a passing grade in this course unless all assignments are completed. The assignments must be turned in even when it may receive zero points due to missing a deadline. Submit projects electronically via email as an MP3 file. Turn in scripts at the beginning of class on the due date.

Naming Assignments:

When submitting a project, use the following naming convention for your files: Lastname_Firstname_P#. E.g., For project #1: **Baier_Elizabeth_P1.mp3**.

Late Assignments:

Likely at some point in this class, students will encounter real-world, last-minute problems over which he/she will have little or no control -- problems that will compromise one's 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. In other words, don't wait until the last minute.

Late assignments will result in a 1-point drop in grade every 24 hours after the due date/time. An assignment that's not turned in within a week of its deadline will result in a zero grade for that assignment. Missed quizzes can only be made up within a week, either during the next available office hours or at another mutually-agreed upon time.

Sources:

Every source you contact must be told at the outset of your conversation that s/he is being interviewed for a story that may be used on the air. You must have the source's permission to be quoted and/or recorded in an interview. It's the law, along with being an Honor Code violation if you do not follow this procedure.

Also, on the back page of each assignment, students are required to write the name and phone number of each source interviewed for that story or project. Failure to include sources names and phone numbers will result in a 2-point deduction for that particular assignment.

"Brag" Sheet:

Part of being a successful journalist is the ability to talk about your work in a professional, informed manner. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to write a "brag" sheet that describes what you have learned in class about audio journalism and how that is helping you become a competent broadcast news writer. It should include details that explain how your thinking about various aspects of the craft has changed over the semester, as well as how you are able to conceive, produce, script and voice an audio story. Keep a journal or other notes of your progress and thoughts as you move through the semester -- your brag sheet will help the professor evaluate your professionalism in the course.

Evaluation:

You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course. Grades will be determined from scores on the following:

1- Professionalism	20 points	5- Project #3	15 points
2- Writing quizzes	30 points	6- Project #4	20 points
3- Project #1	10 points	7- Project #5	25 points
4- Project #2	15 points	8- Final Project	30 points

Final Grades:

A	155-165	B+	145-149	C+	128-132	D+	112-116	F	100 or less
A-	150-154	B	138-144	C	122-127	D	101-111		
		B-	133-137	C-	117-121				

Assignments/ Rubrics

1- Professionalism - 20 points

Your classroom professionalism will be based on the quantity and quality of your participation and discussion. Did you attend class regularly and on time? Is it clear that you've read and thought about the readings?

11 or less	12-13 points	14-15 points	16-17 points	18-20 points
No participation in any class activity.	Minimal (or less) participation in classroom experiences, discussions, etc. Work level inadequate.	Appropriate participation in classroom experiences, discussions, etc. Work level adequate.	Very good participation in classroom experiences, discussions, etc. Work level strong.	Exceptional participation throughout classroom experiences, discussions, etc. Work level exceptional.

2- Writing Quizzes - 30 points

You will complete a total of 10 in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz will contain four (4) questions worth one (1) point each and will evaluate some aspect of broadcast writing. *Note: Performing well on quizzes will allow for up to 10 bonus points.*

4- Project #1 - Newscast spot, cut & copy - 10 points

This assignment requires you to identify a news story, gather tape, write and produce a 1-minute cut and copy for a newscast. This should include a host lead.

6 points or less	7 points	8 points	9 points	10 points
Poor writing. Each sentence conveys multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions.	Adequate writing. Each sentence conveys more than one idea. Transitions are choppy.	Good writing. Each sentence conveys one idea. Not all sentences provide seamless transitions or summary of the story.	Very good writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choice, active voice, etc.) Some sentences convey one idea. Some sentences provide seamless transitions and summary of story.	Extremely tight writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choices, active voice, etc.) Each sentence conveys one idea and together sentences provide a seamless summary of the story.

				Engages listener.
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5- Project #2 - Newscast spot, wrap - 15 points

This assignment requires you to identify a news story, gather tape, write and produce a 1-minute wrap for a newscast. This should include a host lead.

Note: This is the only assignment you will have an opportunity to re-do. If you choose to do so, I will give you my feedback and you will submit a new wrap for a chance to get as many as three (3) extra point back. A re-do is optional.

6 or less	7-8 points	9-10 points	11-12 points	13-15 points
Poor writing. Each sentence conveys multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions.	Adequate writing. Each sentence conveys more than one idea. Transitions are choppy.	Good writing. Each sentence conveys one idea. Not all sentences provide seamless transitions or summary of the story.	Very good writing with proper elements of style (grammar, work choice, active voice, etc.) Some sentences convey one idea. Some sentences provide seamless transitions and summary of story.	Extremely tight writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choices, active voice, etc.) Each sentence conveys one idea and together sentences provide a seamless summary of the story. Engages listener.

6- Project #3 - Superspot, feature - 15 points

This assignment requires you to identify a feature story, gather tape, write and produce a 2-minute superspot with a host lead. You must use acts, tracks and ambi. Two sources minimum.

6 or less	7-8 points	9-10 points	11-12 points	13-15 points
Poor writing. Each sentence conveys multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions. Presentation and delivery are poor. Use of sound is unclear and detracts from the story. Audio is not clean or understandable and mixing technique is poor.	Adequate writing. Each sentence conveys more than one idea. Transitions are choppy. Presentation and delivery are adequate. Adequate use of sound that provides some scene for the story. Adequate mixing technique.	Good writing. Not all sentences provide seamless transitions or summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are good. Some voices are identified and some facts attributed. Good use of sound that enhances story. Good mixing technique.	Very good writing with proper elements of style (grammar, work choice, active voice, etc.) Some sentences convey one idea. Some sentences provide seamless transitions and summary of story. Voices are identified and most facts attributed. Very good use of	Extremely tight writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choices, active voice, etc.) Each sentence conveys one idea and together sentences provide a seamless summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are natural and conversational.

			sound that enhances story. Very good mixing technique.	All voices are identified and facts attributed. Excellent use of sound that enhances story. Mixing technique is seamless.
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7- Project #4 - Superspot, hard news - 20 points

This assignment requires you to identify a hard news story, gather tape, write and produce a 2-minute superspot with a host lead. You must use acts, tracks and ambi. Two sources minimum.

11 or less	12-13 points	14-15 points	16-17 points	18-20 points
Poor writing. Each sentence conveys multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions. Presentation and delivery are poor. Use of sound is unclear and detracts from the story. Audio is not clean or understandable and mixing technique is poor.	Adequate writing. Each sentence conveys more than one idea. Transitions are choppy. Presentation and delivery are adequate. Adequate use of sound that provides some scene for the story. Adequate mixing technique.	Good writing. Not all sentences provide seamless transitions or summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are good. Some voices are identified and some facts attributed. Good use of sound that enhances story. Good mixing technique.	Very good writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choice, active voice, etc.) Some sentences convey one idea. Some sentences provide seamless transitions and summary of story. Presentation and delivery are very good. Voices are identified and most facts attributed. Very good use of sound that enhances story. Very good mixing technique.	Extremely tight writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choices, active voice, etc.) Each sentence conveys one idea and together sentences provide a seamless summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are natural and conversational. All voices are identified and facts attributed. Excellent use of sound that enhances story. Mixing technique is seamless.

8- Project #5 - Non-narrated feature - 25 points

This assignment requires you to identify a source with an interesting story, gather tape, write and produce a 3-minute non-narrated feature with a host lead. You must use acts, ambi and/or music. One source.

14 or less	15-16 points	17-19 points	20-21 points	22-25 points
Poor story structure.	Adequate story structure.	Good story structure.	Very good story structure.	Extremely tight story structure.

<p>Cuts convey multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions. Story lacks logical flow of information from beginning to end. Transitions from one section to another are poor. Use of sound detracts from the story. Poor mixing technique.</p>	<p>Not all cuts convey one idea or seamless summary of the story. Story reflects important information with some flow from beginning to end. Transitions from one section to another are adequate. Adequate use of sound that enhances story. Adequate mixing technique.</p>	<p>Not all cuts convey one idea or create a seamless summary of the story. Story reflects important information with some flow from beginning to end. Transitions from one section to another are good. Good use of sound that enhances story. Good mixing technique.</p>	<p>Most cuts conveys one idea and together they provide a summary of the story. Story reflects important information with a logical flow from beginning to end. Transitions from one section to another are mostly invisible. Voices are identified and most facts attributed. Very good use of sound that enhances story. Mixing technique is very good.</p>	<p>Each cut conveys one idea and together cuts provide a seamless summary of the story. Story reflects important information with a logical flow from beginning to end. Transitions from one section to another are invisible. Excellent use of sound that enhances story. Mixing technique is seamless.</p>
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9 - Final Project, Feature, hard news - 30 points

This assignment requires you to identify a hard news story, gather tape, write and produce a 4-minute news feature with a host lead. You must use acts, tracks and ambi. No music. Three sources minimum.

17 or less	18-20 points	21-23 points	24-26 points	27-30 points
<p>Poor writing. Each sentence conveys multiple ideas and sentences lack transitions. Presentation and delivery are poor. Use of sound is unclear and detracts from the story. Audio is not clean or understandable and mixing technique is poor.</p>	<p>Adequate writing. Each sentence conveys more than one idea. Transitions are choppy. Presentation and delivery are adequate. Adequate use of sound that provides some scene for the story. Adequate mixing technique.</p>	<p>Good writing. Not all sentences provide seamless transitions or summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are good. Some voices are identified and some facts attributed. Good use of sound that enhances story. Good mixing technique.</p>	<p>Very good writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choice, active voice, etc.) Some sentences convey one idea. Some sentences provide seamless transitions and summary of story. Presentation and delivery are very good. Very good use of sound that enhances story. Very good mixing technique.</p>	<p>Extremely tight writing with proper elements of style (grammar, word choices, active voice, etc.) Each sentence conveys one idea and together sentences provide a seamless summary of the story. Presentation and delivery are natural and conversational. All voices are identified and facts attributed.</p>

				Excellent use of sound that enhances story. Mixing technique is seamless.
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Course Schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Presentation/ Discussion</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
<u>Week 1</u> 8/21	Course introduction; review objectives and syllabus; student expectations			
8/23	Discussion: review media ethics; review audio terminology and recorders	PR; SR: Chap 1 & 2	Review journalism ethics and telling stories with sound.	
<u>Week 2</u> 8/28	Intro to field recorders + Adobe Audition	PR	In-class WQ #1; Guest speaker: Gary Kirk, UNC broadcast engineer	
8/30	Writing for broadcast overview; Review scripts, logs and file management	PR; SR: Chap 3	Review WQ	Bring recorders to next class.
<u>Week 3</u> 9/4	Recording techniques	PR; SR: Chap 5	In-class WQ #2	
9/6	Assign Project #1; Discussion: Reporting, finding stories and media ethics	PR	Review WQ; Guest speaker: Will Michaels, Daily News Producer, WUNC	
<u>Week 4</u> 9/11	Reporting and interviewing: preparing for an interview	PR; SR: Chap 4	In-class WQ #3; practice interviewing	
9/13	Class critique of project #1; assign project #2	PR	Review WQ	Project #1 due

<u>Week</u> <u>5</u> 9/18	Broadcast writing	PR; SR: Chap 10	In-class WQ #4	
9/20	Writing for broadcast news		Review WQ	
<u>Week</u> <u>6</u> 9/25	Review of audio editing	PR; SR: Chap 12	In-class WQ #5; Guest speaker: Gary Kirk, Broadcast Engineer, UNC	
9/27	Class critique of project #2; assign project #3	PR	Review WQ	Project #2 due
<u>Week</u> <u>7</u> 10/2	Audio production: voicing	PR; SR: Chap 8	In-class WQ #6	
10/4	Discuss story structure; halfway point reflections		Review WQ; practice writing	
<u>Week</u> <u>8</u> 10/9	Broadcast writing: structure	PR; SR: Chap 6	In-class WQ #7	
10/11	Class critique of project #3; assign project #4		Review WQ	Project #3 due
<u>Week</u> <u>9</u> 10/16	Finding stories	PR; SR: Chap 12		
10/18	No class - Fall Break		No class - Fall Break	
<u>Week</u> <u>10</u> 10/23	Audio Production: using ambient sound	PR; SR: Chap 13	In-class WQ#8	
10/25	Class critique of project #4; assign project 5		Review WQ	Project #4 due
<u>Week</u> <u>11</u> 10/30	Feature reporting: non-narrated features	PR; SR: Chap 16	In-class WQ#9 Guest Speaker: Anita Rao, Executive Editor, State of Things, WUNC	
11/1	Project #5 pitch session		Review WQ	

<u>Week 12</u> 11/6	Feature reporting: writing in and out of tape	PR	In-class WQ #10	
11/8	Project #5: script reviews, peer edits		Review WQ	Bring Audition sessions for project #5 to next class
<u>Week 13</u> 11/13	Audio Production: using ambient sound; project #5 mix reviews	PR		
11/15	Class critique of project #5; assign Final Project			Project #5 due; prepare 2 final project pitches for next class
<u>Week 14</u> 11/20	Final Project Pitch session	PR		
11/22	No class - Thanksgiving Break		No class - Thanksgiving Break	
<u>Week 15</u> 11/27	Final Projects: planning/ brainstorming session	PR	Work on final projects	
11/29	Final Project: log/script reviews		Work on final projects; write "brag" sheets (in class)	
<u>Week 16</u> 12/4	Final Projects: mix reviews	PR	Work on final projects	

FINAL EXAM: 8 a.m., Thurs., Dec. 13. - Final Project Due for everyone. Project presentations.

SR: "Sound Reporting" by Jonathan Kern; PR: posted readings on Sakai; WQ: Writing Quiz

AEJMC Values and Competencies:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) requires that, irrespective of their specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies.

The values and competencies associated with this course include being able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientations and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions.

Honor Code:

It is expected that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (www.honor.unc.edu). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class, which includes outside writing assignments. Use of former student's writing assignments constitutes a breach of the honor code. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Dr. Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor during office hours or to set up an appointment for another time. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem -- whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity:

The School of Media and Journalism adopted Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals (www.mj.unc.edu/diversity_home).

UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities based on age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2017-2018 Undergraduate Bulletin (www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin).

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities, visit the Department of Disability Services website (<https://ars.unc.edu>).