TV News Reporting & Producing (MEJO 421)

UNC School of Media and Journalism

Monday & Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Carroll Hall 132  
Spring 2020

Professor Lindsay King, 325 Carroll Hall, lindsamk@email.unc.edu

Office Hours: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Monday & Wednesday

Welcome to MEJO 421, one of the foundation courses in the broadcast and electronic journalism sequence of the School of Media and Journalism. The course teaches those interested in pursuing careers in broadcasting/electronic journalism the writing, reporting, packaging and producing skills required for what we broadly call television news. In addition, the course will reinforce the foundation of solid writing, reporting and field production taught in MEJO 252 and MEJO 121.

Both MEJO 121 and MEJO 252 are prerequisites for MEJO 421. If you have not completed these prerequisites, you will not be allowed to take this course.

Objectives: The student is expected to be able (1) to plan and execute video productions from concept to finished product; (2) to shoot clean and steady video with emphasis on composition, lighting and technique; (3) to understand the principles and practices of editing and other post-production skills; (4) to understand elements of producing both for the studio and the field; (5) to improve basic production skills necessary to achieve the above goals; (6) to employ proper grammar and writing skills with strict attention to accuracy, detail and industry standards; (7) to improve story development techniques and overall reporting skills.

Required Text: Butera, Jeff and Ed Sardella, Write Like You Talk: A Guide To Broadcast News Writing, 2015, ISBN: 978-0-578-20364-5.

Attendance Policy: Classroom experiences are a vital part of the educational process, especially in a skills course such as MEJO 421. As in the real world of broadcast journalism, it is expected that the student journalist will report to work (i.e., the classroom) and be on time, just as one would expect in a professional newsroom.

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The following policy governs absences and their impact upon your grade: Two absences – no penalty. Each absence in excess of two will result in one grade reduction on the final grade. In other words, if the student had an A- but had missed three classes, the final grade would be dropped to B+. And so on with each additional missed class. In other words, if you have to go to the clinic and it’s simply impossible to schedule an appointment for any time other than class time, that will be your single “free pass.” If you believe you will miss a class for a reason that falls within the policy of University approved absences, please communicate with the instructor in writing as soon as practical. http://www.catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/

If you cannot attend a class, please notify Prof. King by GroupMe or email prior to class. Tardiness (late on two occasions) will be counted as one absence.

**Zoom:** This class utilizes Zoom. Students enrolled in the class must sign a waiver to use the program. The classes will be recorded and uploaded to Sakai. Students are still expected to follow the attendance policy. It is the student’s responsibility to watch Zoom sessions and prepare for the next class.

**Participation:** You are required to actively participate in class. Effective news organizations establish a climate where there is a healthy collision of ideas – where story assignments, approaches, writing, etc., are discussed openly and honestly. Tension and conflict can and should be present to some degree, but temper that tension and conflict with respect for your fellow students and colleagues.

Traditionally, broadcast journalists delivered the news to a mass audience. Online and social media have created additional channels for the delivery of news. No matter what the media platform (television, online or social media), the reporter/producer of any story must be prepared to justify and defend that story at every level. Thin- skinned journalists don’t last long in the profession. If you’re serious about a career in journalism, remember that your job is about the work, not the person. A news story is a news story, not an extension of the individual reporter. So, accept criticism accordingly.

One of the major learning tools of MEJO 421 is the review of stories produced by students. One of the primary forms of participation in this class will be the discussion, even debate, surrounding your work. We will talk as a class and in groups, thinking through issues together and critiquing our own work and the work of others. If you are uncomfortable having your work reviewed in such a public fashion, the broadcast/electronic news business probably is not for you. Again, this process will be civil, constructive and courteous.

Late Work: Assignments are due prior to class on the dates noted in the course schedule. Work submitted after the due date will be accepted, but will be docked one letter grade for each 24-hour period that it is late.

Grading: There are a number of components considered in the final grade for MEJO 421. As mentioned earlier, class participation is important. In addition, there will be five projects including the final project, and three quizzes primarily on the textbook,

Write Like You Talk: A Guide To Broadcast News Writing. You have one week from the date of the quiz to make it up. Quizzes can be made up during office hours or a mutually agreed upon time between with the professor.

You will be assigned to work in two-person teams, but you will receive an individual grad. The makeup of the teams could change as we move forward during the term. The first project will be a voice over (VO); the second will be a voice over to sound on tape (VO/SOT); and the final three projects will be full, reporter packages (PKGs), the last considered as the Final Project.

Each project will be judged on the following criteria:

1. Reporting, enterprise, depth and news value.  
2. Diction, enunciation and other elements of delivery (packages only).  
3. Steadiness, composition, aesthetic quality of video and use of natural sound. 4. Editing proficiency.  
5. Quality of writing.

Projects 1 should be 30 seconds; Project 2 should be 45 to 50 seconds in length, and Projects 3 through 5 should run between 1:30 and 2:00 in length, excluding the lead and/or tag. Projects 3 to 5 require editor scripts. All assignments will be submitted via Sakai by the assigned time and date. This will be discussed in class.

Standards: Under no circumstances should any student fabricate a source, a quote, a sound bite or a story. If you engage in such fabrication you risk failing the course, being referred for an Honor Code violation; and/or being suspended or removed from the University. Fabrication of a story or of sources is considered as serious an ethical violation as plagiarism.

Course elements and percentage of final grade:

Class participation 15% Project 1 5%

Project 2 5% Project 3 15%

Project 4 15% Project 5 (Final Project) 30%

Quizzes (5% each) 15%

Your final grade will have a letter grade. Here are the numerical equivalents:

Final grades

94 - 100 A 91 - 93 A-

88 - 90 B+ 84 - 87 B 81 - 83 B-

78 - 80 C+ 74 - 77 C 71 - 73 C-

68 - 70 D+ 61 - 67 D 60 and below F

You will not receive a passing grade in this course unless all assignments are completed, even if you received a grade of zero (0) because of a very late submission. In addition, during the course of the semester students will check out University- owned equipment for use in this class. That equipment includes cameras, recorders, tripods, etc. No grade will be issued until this equipment is returned in proper condition and so noted by the school equipment manager. Students should return equipment no later than Wednesday, April 22 (last day of class).

**Care of Equipment:** Students may be required to sign a usage contract to checkout equipment. Students are expected to use equipment responsibly and report any issues that they have immediately to the equipment manager. Students must return equipment on time. Checkout times will be discussed in class and monitored by the equipment manager. Failure to return equipment on time may result in suspension of lending privileges. Failure to use equipment responsibly may result in lending privileges being revoked. Failure to return equipment in proper order will result in an “incomplete” grade for the class. The School may take whatever actions it deems necessary for the return of equipment and payment for any damages or loss.

When you check out or reserve gear, take a moment to look it over to see if anything is wrong and report it immediately. If anything happens to the equipment while it’s checked out in your name, YOU will be responsible for the cost of repairs. Be aware these cameras cost thousands of dollars. Return every piece of equipment in the same condition it was in when you took it out. Be careful. Never walk more than two feet away from a camera even if it’s on tripod.

\*\*NEVER LEAVE EQUIPMENT UNATTENDED!\*\* BE AS PARANOID AS YOU HAVE TO BE. IT’S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY! DO NOT LEAVE EQUIPMENT IN YOUR CAR. IT SHOULD BE IN YOUR CAR ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO GET TO AND FROM WHERE YOU’RE GOING FOR THAT STORY/ASSIGNMENT.

Students will be required to purchase SD cards class 6 or 10, and they must be 128 MB or larger.

**Syllabus:** The syllabus will change. Just as events alter the day’s activities in a newsroom, events will change our plans. If schedules and/or assignments change, the instructor will make every effort to contact students via e-mail. (To be a student in this class you must have a UNC email address.) Every effort will be made to revise the syllabus posted on Sakai. You are encouraged to check the online syllabus frequently and to review the assignment section, as well. In addition, changes to the syllabus and changes in due dates for projects, exams, quizzes, etc., may be announced in class.

**Tentative Schedule**

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| Week 1  January 8th | Review syllabus, discuss course objectives. Discuss story forms. Assign project 1 | Read Chapt 1 & 2 for next class |
| Week 2  Jan 13th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Jan 15th | Review Chapters 1 & 2, Assign teams, discuss field equipment, write practice VOs  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Guest Speaker: Gary Kirk, review assigned reading and practice VOs. Discuss broadcast story forms. | Read Chapt 3 for next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Read Chapter 6 |
| Week 3  Mon, Jan 20th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Jan 22nd | NO CLASS  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review Chapt 6. Discuss framing, sequencing and production aspects of television news. | NO Class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Project 1 due at the beginning of the next class |
| Week 4  Mon, Jan 27th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Jan 29th | Project 1 due at the beginning of class. Discuss project 1. Assign project 2 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review/critique project 1. Review Chapter 8 | Read Chapter 8 & Preferred readings for Week 4 for next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  For next class read preferred readings week 4 |
| Week 5  Mon, Feb 3rd  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Feb 5th | Review readings, review material for quiz on Feb 5th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Quiz 1, critiquing local newscasts | Prepare for quiz 1 next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Project 2 due at the beginning of the next class |
| Week 6  Mon, Feb 10th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Feb 12th | Project 2 (vo/sot) due at the beginning of class. Discuss project 2. Assign Project 3. Review quiz. Discuss structure in television news packages  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review/ critique project 2. Review reading. Review student package examples for project 3. Brainstorm story ideas and narrative development for project 3. | Read Ch 10  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Read Ch. 12 |
| Week 7  Mon, Feb 17th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Feb 19th | Review reading, critique newscasts  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review reading, interview techniques | For next class, read Ch 13  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Week 8  Mon, Feb 24th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, Feb 26th | Review reading, discuss ethical issues in broadcast stories  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Project 3(pkg)due at beginning of class. Discuss project 3, assign project 4 | Project 3 due at beginning of next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Week 9  Mon, March 2nd  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, March 4th | Review/Critique project 3. Brainstorm ideas for project 4. Discuss quiz for next class \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Quiz 2, Audience Analysis & Story Selection | Prepare for quiz 2, preferred readings Audience Analysis  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Week 10  NO CLASS SPRING BREAK | NO CLASS SPRING BREAK | No Class Spring Break |
| Week 11  Mon, March 16  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, March 18th | Review quiz 2, project 4 examples, live shot reporting, prepare live shot script \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Live shot practice (all groups) | Prepare live shot script for next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Project 4 due next class |
| Week 12  Mon, March 23rd  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, March 25th | Project 4 (pkg) due at beginning of class. Discuss project 4. Assign Project 5 (final project)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review Reading | Read Chapter 9, Preferred reading (digital audience analysis)  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Read Chapter 11 (Digital producing) |
| Week 13  Mon, March 30th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, April 1st | Continue review of digital media, audience analysis  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Review reading/ Discuss lower third and full-screen graphics (Do’s and Dont’s) | Read glossary of MMJ terms  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Work on Project 5 |
| Week 14  Mon, April 6th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, April 8th | Story Development/ brainstorming session for final project  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Additional project 5 brainstorming |  |
| Week 15  Mon, April 13th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, April 15th | Review readings, prepare for quiz next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Quiz 3, Work on Project 5 |  |
| Week 16  Mon, April 20th  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Wed, April 22nd | Review quiz 3, project 5 due next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Final Project due beginning of class | Project 5 due next class  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Final Project due beginning of class |

Monday, May 4th, 4 p.m. (final exam day): Review/critique Final Projects

The Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct herself or himself within the guidelines of the University honor system (http://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. 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 Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students. Please note the Honor Code is in effect during all off-campus, class-based activities like the field shoots and the edit sessions at UNC-TV.

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it’s your responsibility to meet with the instructor. 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 - http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion.

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

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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.

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 Accessibility Services website at https://accessibility.unc.edu/

Professional Values and Competencies

Among the many skills students will learn in this course, it's expected that they will be able to fulfill the following values and competencies as enumerated  
by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication:

• 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 basic numerical and statistical concepts;  
• Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.