

**MEJO 129/523.2
SPORTS XTRA
SPRING, 2024**

Mon. 9am-12:30pm
Curtis Media Center 101
office hours: F, 1-3

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PRE-REQUISITES: Ability to shoot and edit video and to record and edit audio. Familiarity with broadcast writing guidelines. Strong work ethic.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is entirely hands-on. Under the direction of the newsroom managers, students will write, produce, and broadcast a twice-weekly TV sports program and provide sports content for other MJ-school platforms. Students will fill all normal newsroom positions.

OBJECTIVES:

As a group, show staff will work toward producing programs that contain no technical mistakes, are precisely written, impart important and interesting information, and flow as a cohesive whole while documenting the breadth and depth of Carolina athletics.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Approach this class as you would a job in the news business. We can't tolerate you being late or absent. Only a death in the immediate family (including your own demise, of course) will be accepted as a reason for missing class. Each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of one grade mark. For example, if you do B work but miss a show, you'll get a B- for the course. The same deduction applies for failing to submit video stories as per the class requirement. In other words, **failing to submit a video story in a given week is equivalent to missing class.**

LATE WORK:

There'd better not be any. Pay close attention to deadlines and details.

DETERMINATION OF GRADE:

Your grade will be based on objective and subjective criteria, as will whether you're hired and subsequently retained by a news or sports operation after you graduate. We'll assess both the quality and quantity of your work. You don't want to make the same mistake twice, such as not lighting interviews, editing with jump cuts, turning in blue video, not mic'ing interviews or worst of all, missing your deadline. In addition, a big factor will be the extra effort you expend outside of class preparing shows we can all be proud of. There's always something to be done. Ask. Look. Ask again. Be productive. Merely filling space and breathing air during class time each week won't get you very far. If you're enrolled in the class, you're expected to turn video content for the shows

each week, with a minimum of **three** TV packages, **six** VOs that you shoot and **six** others that you take from file or that you screen grab. **The three packages must be spread evenly across the semester for you to get full credit for them. Packages from veterans are due at or before noon on Feb. 8, March 7 and April 11. Package from newbies are due at or before noon on Feb. 22, March 21 and April 25. These must be approved at all levels by this time. You cannot make an outright A in the class if you miss even one of these deadlines.** Every package must include a standup, shot at the same location that you shot the bulk of the story. Readers and FSGs count toward extra effort, but don't count toward fulfilling your required weekly assignments. **Each analysis segment can replace a screen grabbed VO.** Content for social counts toward extra effort.

When we sit down to calculate grades, we'll be looking to see which of the following categories best describes you and your efforts:

Grading scale

A: 92-100

A-: 90-92

B+: 88-90

B: 82-88

B-: 80-82

C+: 78-80

C: 72-78

C-: 70-72

D: Below 70

A: nearly perfect in execution... quality and quantity of work is exceptional

A-: stands out from crowd (in a good way!)... good attitude... work is impressive in terms of quantity and quality... very few problems all term... works like career depends on it B+: very good performance... would get an unqualified job recommendation... consistently does more than required... a self starter

B: solid effort... would have no problem recommending this person

B-: with a bit more polish, this person should make it in the business... good team player

C+: good in one phase of job, but consistent problems in another phase or contributed in only one phase

C: acceptable work... follows instructions... understands basics... but didn't perform/contribute across the board... punches the clock.

C-: has glimpses of potential in a limited range of jobs

D: needs to consider a different field

F: wouldn't have gotten this far

Also, remember that absences (for any reason other than those listed) will affect your grade. Pieces (or portions thereof) we drop strictly because of time constraints will still count toward your total. Pieces (or portions thereof) we drop because of quality issues **will not**. So, if you do a VO/SOT and the SOT is dark to the point that we drop it, that counts as a VO only. If the only reason we drop the SOT is time, you'll get credit for having shot a VO/SOT.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT:

It's your responsibility to be very cautious regarding the field gear and editing equipment. 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'll be responsible for the cost of repairs. So, return every piece in the same condition it was in when you took it out.

****NEVER LEAVE EQUIPMENT UNATTENDED!!!** BE AS PARANOID AS YOU HAVE TO BE, IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!!! DO NOT LEAVE EQUIPMENT IN YOUR CAR.**

Honor Code:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself 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. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation 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 [Associate Dean Julie Dixon-Green](#), 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. 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 University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. 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 on the basis of 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 Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

ACCREDITATION

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. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:

Jan. 12 – Anchor auditions. Go over policies and procedures, update Teams, shooting and editing tutorials, begin covering events and features

Jan. 19 – practice shows, more tutorials

Jan. 26 – first Friday show of semester

Jan. 29 – first Monday show of semester

After Jan. 29 – shows every Monday and Friday except when the university is closed. We'll do shows after holidays, for example., the Monday after spring break.

NOTE: Always be professional in your dealings with your fellow workers and the people you meet as you gather news. Hiring managers say they want people with good attitudes as well as solid journalism skills.

SHOW SCHEDULE

by noon two days before - send all package scripts for approval. Packages about events are to run on the next available show.

Scripts for events due within 3 hours after you leave the venue

By noon the day before –edited packages submitted for approval

By 4:00 PM the afternoon before- videos due for Friday & Saturday/Monday/Wednesday events

By 6:00 PM the evening before – scripts due for Sunday/Tuesday/Thursday events that finish by 4

By 8:00 PM the night before- videos due for Sunday/Tuesday/Thursday events that finish by 4

9:00 am on show day – late event scripts approved, weekly quizzes (Mondays only for quizzes)

9:10 am – check SOTs and FSGs, anchors dressed and in place, reading for SWAP

9:30 Packagers for the previous week meet with instructor to get feedback

10:00 – step through

10:30 - run through

11:30 live

Carolina Week/Sports Xtra Guidelines

Everyone enrolled in the class or listed as a reporter is responsible for **one video story per week**. We expect volunteers to turn pieces as well. Those interested in reporting careers should naturally gravitate toward packages. Even if you double up in a given week, you're still responsible for at least one piece the next week. This applies regardless of any other title you might hold: producer, director, etc. EVERYONE is responsible for content.

Always set up shoots/interviews with several days' notice, if possible. If that isn't possible, give as much notice as you can. Do NOT show up at a sporting event expecting to be able to shoot without setting it up in advance. You may not report about/do analysis about a team or organization you're part of unless it's a first-person report.

See Dr. T to chat about story development before you go out to shoot a package. This isn't a suggestion, but a requirement.

PKGs

Packages should span 1:30 (or less!) . . . the Gettysburg address was only 2:30 Anchor leads & tags – what the anchor(s) will be reading on desk before/after your package.

These do not count toward the TRT (total run time) of the package. You should learn to write these, though your wonderful producers will certainly help you out when necessary.

Packages must include standups and nats pops. Packages about events are due on the next show after the event.

Front pad – 1.5s. For packages, front pad should be just video with natural sound – wait 1.5s to start your voice track. SOTs that are part of VO/SOTs have 1 sec. of silent front pad.

Back pad – at least 5s of the **same** shot AFTER the last words in your package, meaning your last shot should be at least 8 seconds long (freeze frame if absolutely necessary)

Back pad on packages includes low nats, back pad on SOTs is silent

Track like you mean it; if you sound bored, imagine how the viewer feels. Emphasize the ‘power’ words in your sentences, because the goal is to sound natural and conversational.

Similarly, don’t write things in your scripts that nobody in his or her right mind would say in a regular conversation. Coordinate with others doing stories about the same sport so we don’t repeat ourselves.

Close-ups & sequencing – close-ups are your friends! Makes it easy to avoid jump cuts and can turn a boring-looking action into something more interesting. Use them frequently.

Nats pops – good way to keep people watching; can be used to transition between locations/time. Use them frequently. (at least two per PKG)

Primary sound should be mixed to about **-12db**. Nat sound should be mixed to about **-24db**. Your natural sound should NOT compete with your track or interviews. It is very important to make sure the audio is even throughout your package – your audio person will appreciate it.

Package scripts go to Dr. T for approval prior to editing, and the earlier the better. You can't do much without a finalized script.

Write to your video and edit to your script – keep in mind the footage you have when writing your script. Good writing is often wasted by wallpaper video.

For each person in your package, make a lower third – or 'super' – to identify him or her. Both Carolina Week and Sports Xtra supers are posted online at

www.cwhelp.wordpress.com. It would behoove you to download the appropriate one and save it to your hard drive, otherwise you will have to download it every time. Be sure to read the lower third guidelines on the website. Supers should appear on camera for 46s and dissolve on/off.

Note: every story goes through two rounds of checks: script, editing. Packages go through a third round; audio mix

VOs

About 20-25s, depending on the topic

Write an anchor lead, but no tag necessary

No front pad, but the first shot should be at least **four seconds**.

Back pad – your video should be about 10s longer than needed, so your last shot needs to be fairly long. If it takes about 25s to read the script, then the video should be at least 35s (with the last shot lasting about 13s). Have an anchor (preferably the one who will read it during the show) read the script while you are editing and see how it matches up. The shot should not change in the pad.

SWAP – Synchronized Words and Pictures – if the anchor says something, the viewer should see it. If we're talking about one player hitting a 3, you shouldn't see a different player miss a free throw.

Because VOs have only natural sound, they should be mixed down to -24db. Nats pops are possible in VOs, but can be tricky. Make sure your anchors know when/what they are.

For game highlights, use a healthy dose of close-ups and/or cutaways so the video isn't just one play after another from the same angle (i.e. anything that isn't the main game action – fans, coaches, hero shots, mascots, etc.). Close-ups and sequencing are still good ideas when appropriate.

The script should be more than a dictated box score. Watch some highlights and try to focus on the writing and how it matches the video.

VO/SOTs

This will require two separate videos – one with the VO and the other with the SOT. The VO is structured just like a regular VO, but the last line of the script should transition into the SOT.

The SOT should have one second of muted front pad just before the person starts speaking. Add at least 5s of muted back pad to the SOT.

Make sure the SOT really adds something to the show. Roy Williams might say “Daggum, we need to score more points than the other team to win” . . . but that doesn’t mean we need to use it on the air.

The person talking in your SOT should have a super.

The SOT audio should be mixed to -12db.

FSGs – Full Screen Graphics

When you’re assigned an FSG, you need to write the script for the anchors (including a lead). It is generally a good idea to run graphics ideas by your producer and director.

The length of graphics depends on the content, though it’s important not to have graphics cluttered with unnecessary text. Less is more when it comes to graphics.... **BIG** and **BOLD** are the key words here. Too much text is actually distracting. No single page should be up for more than 10 seconds. If the script is longer than that, we’ll need a second page.

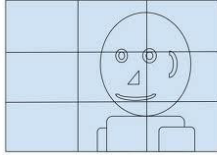
Shooting

Things to keep in mind for general camera use:

- NEVER leave your camera unattended
- Be prepared – have your batteries charged, have the appropriate mic(s) and know how to use them, have a memory card, etc.
- White balance whenever you change locations to shoot. Video shot without doing so just looks bad, and is often unsalvageable.

- Check/adjust your audio levels; overdriven audio is unusable. Use headphones while shooting.

When shooting interviews:

- Use the 'rule of thirds' – imagine the screen gridded into thirds; the person you are interviewing should have plenty of nose and head room, as seen here:
 
- Make sure your tripod is level – use walls, pillars, etc. to match the verticals of your framing and ensure that you aren't shooting at an odd angle.
- Use the 'five eye rule' – you, the person being interviewed, and the camera eye should all be on the same level. Shooting people from below makes them look powerful and intimidating, while shooting people from above makes them look meek and unimportant.
- Be sure to barrel focus before starting the interview. With your camera on manual focus, zoom all the way in on the person's eye, grab a focus, then zoom back out to frame your interview. Interviews that are out of focus (or "soft") look bad.
- Be conscious of what's behind the interviewee:
 - Avoid shooting into open windows and reflective surfaces
 - Don't shoot into really boring backgrounds or cluttered backgrounds that will distract the viewer
 - Don't shoot people with lighter skin against black backgrounds; don't shoot people with darker skin against white backgrounds.
- When conducting an interview, position yourself right next to the camera. You don't want the interviewee looking right into the camera. Note that this is much easier to do if you have someone else shooting the interview.

- Fight the urge to say “uh-huh” or “okay” during interviews; just nod. The mic often picks it up, and can sound awkward on air.

Light all standups and bites. No exception.

When	Where
F – Sun. night	SXM
M afternoon/Tues. night	CW
Wed. afternoon/Thur. night	SXF

Arrive 15 minutes before game start and check in with the SID.
Go through the SID for postgame interviews.

Every Friday between 4 and 5, send by email a running list of your contributions to the show, using this grid:

Packages

Shot VOs

VOs from file or screen-grabbed

Other (includes FSGs, control room work, helping with tours, analysis segments, etc.

For vets only: interactions with newbies

Include dates with all entries.

