

COMM 256-20W BROADCAST NEWS

Fall 2018

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-3:45 p.m.

School of Communication Room 003

Professor Sarah Dallof

Office: Lewis Towers, Ste 900

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:00-5:00 p.m.; Thursdays 1:15-2:15 p.m.

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➤ COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

“Writing well means never having to say, ‘I guess you had to be there.’ ”

Hans Hofmann

In an age where viewers are inundated with information, it's critical to deliver quality, concise and accurate broadcast news. We do so under tight deadlines, mixing carefully chosen words with strong images for maximum storytelling impact. During this course, you'll learn the foundation of broadcast news media and the techniques and nuances of broadcast news writing. We'll focus the first part of the semester on broadcast writing and fundamentals and writing for radio. The second part will introduce adding visual aspects for writing for television. We will also include some exposure to on-line presentations. You will learn script formatting for radio and TV, standard terms used in news production, how to produce a newscast, and a very basic introduction to the studio. You will be encouraged to develop a critical eye and ear as you watch and listen to newscasts: What was done well? What could be done better? Just because you hear a professional do it does not mean that's the best way! Becoming a critical listener/viewer will help you improve your own writing.

This course will also lay the foundation for more advanced courses in the broadcast curriculum, including COMM 358 Newscasting and Producing (the course where we produce and deliver newscasts).

➤ WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Required Text: Broadcast News Handbook: Writing, Reporting & Producing in the Age of Social Media (5th edition), by C.A. Tuggle, Forrest Carr and Suzanne Huffman (McGraw-Hill, 2014).

Audio equipment: To record your writing and for some radio lessons, you will need access to an audio recording device. The university has some of these devices available for checkout, or you may use your own. (Note: The device you use needs to have output capability, so you can download files for editing.)

Supplemental Materials

Expect a number of handouts to supplement the reading material. You may wish to use a folder or notebook to keep the handouts together. Some, such as the broadcast style handout, you will need as an ongoing reference.

Newscasts

You will be expected to listen to radio newscasts or podcasts and watch TV newscasts to see how the techniques covered in class are manifest in the “real world” of broadcast news. Also read credible online news sources. All of these will help you keep up on current events and follow ongoing stories. Knowledge of current events will greatly enhance your success in class, as well as help you develop habits and interests you will need for professional success in a journalism career.

➤ **GRADING**

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Writing Assignments	40%
In-class and Other Assignments	25%
Mid-Term	15%
Final Project	20%

Writing Assignments (40%)

A substantial portion of your grade will be based on writing assignments that you will work on outside of class. You will do well if you learn the ABC’s of broadcast writing:

- A – Accuracy
- B – Brevity
- C – Clarity (also compelling and creative)

It will be crucial to check your work for facts, and to use broadcast writing conventions. Automatic deductions will be taken for fact errors and broadcast style errors.

In-class grades and other assignments (25%)

- Expect regular short in-class writing assignments, to help you practice key concepts and writing on deadline while having the opportunity for immediate help and feedback. These assignments will be graded and cannot be made up, so being in class is especially important. (Note: At the end of the semester, we will drop the lowest in-class writing grade. In case you miss a class day with in-class writing that will be the one dropped.)
- Other assignments will cover key concepts. Also expect occasional unannounced quizzes on current events and/or other class topics.
- Your in-class grade also includes attendance and punctuality (see separate section below).

Reading reflections

Reading assignments have been carefully chosen to coincide with the topic covered in class on a particular day. To get the most out of the synergy between the readings and class, you should complete the assigned reading before class time. To help you synthesize the material, you will be asked to write short reflections on each

reading. For each chapter or part of a chapter assigned, write a short reflection (4-5 sentences) on what you got out of the reading and any questions or comments you have about the material. These may be submitted via Sakai or in hard copy (typed). Though each reflection is worth only 5 points, cumulatively they are worth 75 points. (Note: Sept. 13, Oct. 18, and Nov. 6 are double reflections, so be sure to write a separate one for each chapter or section assigned.)

While you should complete the readings before class, reflections for that week will be due by 5 p.m. Friday. They will not be accepted later than that.

Midterm Exam (15%)

Your mid-term exam will consist of a take-home portion and an in-class assignment, to allow you to demonstrate the skills you acquire in the first half of the semester, focused on basic broadcast concepts and radio writing. The in-class mid-term is scheduled for **Tuesday, Oct. 16**.

Final (20%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will turn in a final project that will consist of TV and multi-media elements. It will be due **Friday Dec. 14 by 5 p.m.** You may turn it in early if you wish. Class will not meet during the final exam time.

Deadlines

Deadlines are of the utmost importance in broadcasting. Newscasts and radiocasts begin on schedule, not when you're ready. Late assignments will receive a grade reduction of 10% per class day late.

Attendance and the Importance of Being Here

Part of your in-class grade will be based on attendance, punctuality and class participation. Being in class and being on time are vital. Some graded assignments will be in-class only and cannot be made up. Absences will be excused in the event of a genuine emergency or illness, but please notify me *prior* to class if at all possible.

At Loyola, we respect that you may miss class due to religious observances. In these circumstances, please notify me ahead of time that you will be gone.

Grading scale

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the cumulative points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale:

A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%;
C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 64-66%

Loyola does not recognize a grade of D-, so a grade below 64% is failing.

➤ Rules and Responsibilities

Academic Dishonesty

Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity and have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SOC:

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes;
- Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- Copy from another student or use a “cheat sheet” during an exam.

Specifically for this class:

You will be rewriting stories from professional journalism sources. The source material will provide basic facts and information on stories, but it is **vital and expected** that you use your own words and do not copy the wording from the original source. (We will go over attribution and the use of quotes as part of the writing instruction.)

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). We will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>.

Classroom Conduct

Electronic devices are increasingly ubiquitous, and are often quite distracting. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class begins. If you use a laptop computer to take notes in class, you will be required to send Professor Dallof copy of the notes at the end of class. Do not use your computer for any activity not directly related to the class.

➤ **Electronic Communication & Information**

Sakai

Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai, and some assignments (though not writing assignments) can be submitted electronically. Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email

I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays, but will not always access email on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

➤ ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

This is my first year at Loyola, after moving to Chicago from Atlanta, GA. I have 15 years experience in television news, the most recent five at the network level as a correspondent for NBC News. My resume features an extensive mix of breaking news including hurricanes, mass casualty events, election cycles and public health emergencies. I've reported throughout the U.S. as well as in Canada and Asia. My work has earned multiple honors from the Society of Professional Journalists. In addition, I have experience in radio, photography and editing.

Class Schedule*

*Note: Reading assignments are to be completed before the start of class on the assigned day.
Also note: Some additional assignment due dates may be added throughout the semester.*

Tues, Aug. 28: Introduction – Broadcast news versus other journalistic writing

Thurs, Aug. 30: Broadcast writing and style

Reading: Tuggle Foreword, Preface & Ch. 1

Tues, Sept. 4: Broadcast writing and the art of the lead

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 3 (to p. 38; save Beyond the Lead section for later)

Due: First writing assignment

Thurs, Sept. 6: Different sources of news & selecting stories; writing tight

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 2

Due: Recording of first writing assignment

Tues, Sept. 11: Radio story types and formats

Reading assignment: Tuggle Ch. 6

Thurs, Sept. 13: Other writing styles; writing issues and word precision

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 3 pp. 38-50, Ch. 4; skim Appendix A (*reflections on both chapters*)

Due: Second writing assignment, Writing Tight (with recording)

Tues, Sept. 18: Broadcast Interviewing

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 5

Due: Radio listening log

Thurs, Sept. 20: Choosing and incorporating sound; writing into & out of bites

Due: Narrative writing assignment (with recording)

Tues, Sept. 25: Digital audio editing

Thurs, Sept. 27: Digital editing II: putting radio stories together

Tues, Oct 2: Radio newsgathering on deadline – field practice in class

Assignment due end of class

Thurs, Oct. 4: Producing Radio News

Due: Interview assignment & actuality stories

Tues, Oct. 9: FALL BREAK, no class

Thurs, Oct. 11: Producing Radio News II; Mid-Term Review & Prep

(Recommended reading: Appendix C; no reflection due)

Tues, Oct. 16: Mid-Term in Class (*Take-home section due beginning of class*)

Thurs, Oct. 18: Broadcast Law & Ethics

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 13 & Appendix B (*note: reflections on both*)

Tues, Oct. 23: TV story forms and incorporating the visual element

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 7 (save pp. 116-top of 122 on graphics for later)

Thurs, Oct. 25: Incorporating sound for TV; writing & scripting vo/sot's

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 8

Tues, Oct. 30: Work day, VO, VO/SOT Writing Assignment

Thurs, Nov 1: Writing to graphics

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 7 pp. 116-122

Due: Vo writing assignment

Tues, Nov. 6: Media convergence and social media in news

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 14, skim Ch. 15 (*double reflection*)

Due: Vo/sot writing assignment

Thurs, Nov. 8: TV newsgathering on deadline – field practice during class

Due: Election night reflection

Tues, Nov. 13: Packaging for TV

Reading: Tuggle Ch. 9

Thurs, Nov. 15: Packaging II, Writing leads and tags; standups and other elements

Tues, Nov. 20: Perfecting your writing (writing help as needed)

Thurs, Nov. 22: THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

Tues, Nov 27: The TV industry – organization, audiences, issues

Due: Package writing assignment

Thurs, Nov 29: On-air performance for radio and TV

Reading: Skim Tuggle Ch. 12 (reflection optional)

Tues, Dec. 4: TV performance & studio production

Thurs, Dec. 6: Broadcast & other media jobs; review of final project requirements

Reading: Skim Tuggle Ch. 16 (reflection optional)

FRIDAY, DEC 14: Final Projects due by 5 PM. (turn in only; class will not meet)

* We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise.