



News Vision

Fall 2013

Tuesday/ Thursday | 2:10- 5:00pm

Jennifer C. Thomas, Assistant Professor

Office Hours	Monday 12:30pm - 4:30pm Tuesday 1:00pm - 2:00pm Wednesday 12:30pm-4:30pm Thursday 1:00pm - 2:00 pm & by appointment
Class Location	Room 221 CB Powell Bldg
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Course Description

NewsVision is designed to give you practical, hands on experience in reporting, writing, shooting and editing for the broadcast media and online. It will give you a sense of what it's like to be a television reporter. You will produce television news stories suitable for air and your resume reel. You will pitch story ideas, report, write, shoot, produce and edit **news and feature packages as well as help write, produce, anchor, report** a (live or recorded) news broadcast. Selected students will provide content for other Howard University live broadcasts as well in conjunction with other sequences and university departments sequences including Print, and Radio, Television and Film to practice in-studio and to work on multi-platform news products. You will also likely spend several hours per week on your field assignments, in addition to the scheduled class sessions. You will share equipment and work to gain expertise in use of the equipment, to mic, shoot and edit packages for air. In addition to the newscasts, you will be called upon on occasion to work closely with the Convergence Media Lab on joint projects with students in other Capstone courses to engage in a realistic converged media newsroom experience.

All of this is intended to give you the most realistic experience in what it takes to get a product on air. You will produce a final portfolio and resume reel which can be used to demonstrate your talents and abilities as you seek employment.

Course Objectives

By the end of this semester you will be able to:

- Apply the First Amendment principles and the laws appropriate to professional practice after covering a variety of news and feature stories.
- Demonstrate how to be an honest, truthful, ethical and professional broadcast journalist.
- Produce news packages suitable for air which demonstrate your knowledge of what it takes to put together a good news package which meets the demands, obligations and deadlines of a television news operation, beginning with conceptual proposals, researched and reported well, approved by me in advance, then executed by you in the field, brought back, written for air, voiced over, produced and edited into a final package that adheres to predetermined time limits and deadlines.
- Think critically, creatively and independently to analyze news as both gatherer and consumer.
- Illustrate your knowledge of current events, and your ability to speak intelligently and thoughtfully on a variety of news issues of the day at any given time after extensive review of news stories and a variety of newscasts and case studies.
- Explain the importance of diversity of groups in a global society and the sensitivity and professionalism required of professional journalists.
- Define and employ the proper way to dress for air in the field and on set in the studio.
- Demonstrate a professional capacity to shoot, light, mic and edit stories for broadcast on the air and on the World Wide Web.

- Employ the tools necessary to conceptualize a story and write and deliver it more effectively.
- Demonstrate an ability to write and produce news packages for a converged media newsroom, while enlisting several forums to showcase your news packages—including but not limited to the ResNet, Glass House Radio, Black College View, (and where ever else we/you can promote your work.)
- Demonstrate a professional on-camera presence and voice-over delivery for television news after working extensively with professional equipment in the field and the studio.
- Distinguish and demonstrate professional techniques for interviewing a variety of subjects in multiple news and feature story formats for broadcast.
- Demonstrate the ability to research news stories and evaluate source materials.
- Critique news stories and demonstrate an ability to identify good news stories from bad ones, and well written ones from those which are poorly executed after undergoing extensive reviews and critiques of news stories by industry professionals and your peers.
- Submit a resume reel to prospective employers with news stories that have been critiqued by your peers and which demonstrate your talents as a broadcast journalist.

Required Text: “Aim for the Heart: Write, Shoot, Report and Produce for TV and Multimedia” by Al Tompkins - CQ Press/2nd edition, 2012 - ISBN # 978-1-60871-674-6 (Should be in the book store, but also available at Amazon.com

Blackboard

Class announcements, online materials, lecture notes and other resources, will be available via Blackboard. You will want to check the Blackboard site frequently. I encourage you to log in immediately to make sure your user name and password work and try sending me an Email. Be sure to correct your Email address on the Blackboard system.

Additional Suggested Reading Materials:

Other books, articles and media clips, and materials related to current events* will be used to supplement classroom instruction, These will be assigned by the professor.

Expectations:

*Students should be familiar with current local and national news and events, and be prepared to discuss in class. Professor may assign in-class papers, discussions, and quizzes regarding news stories, wires, *blogs, local, regional, and national news as well as information from broadcast, print, new media and magazines. These news events are of vital importance to the chapters and news cases and events discussed in this course.

This class will offer practical instruction on learning basic newsroom culture, terminology and newsgathering, while also researching, writing, recording, editing and producing news stories and audio news packages for broadcast and digital distribution. Students who successfully complete the course will have the beginnings of an online portfolio of their work including story pitches, scripts and audio packages.

Students are expected monitor various local and national media, such as live / online versions of local and national television broadcasts such as CNN, MSNBC, FOX News, newspapers such as *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Huff Post College*: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/college>, *The Washington Afro American*, etc., radio broadcasts such as National Public Radio, and other news and information blogs and websites, such as mashable.com, the Open Education Database's site containing top blogs for journalism students: <http://oedb.org/ilibrarian/the-40-best-blogs-for-journalism-students/>, and cultural magazines such as www.blackprwire.com/, slate.com

(*my blog is: <http://profjthomas.blogspot.com/>)

Attendance:

Broadcast journalism is driven by deadlines and time constraints. Student journalists are expected attend all classes and to be on time. Attendance, punctuality and participation will affect one's grade. Being absent is not acceptable unless a student is ill (with proper document substantiating same), or has experienced a personal or family emergency. An excused absence requires prior approval, and students with excused absences are expected to make up any missed assignments by the next class session. **Any student missing 3 or more classes (unexcused absences) will risk receiving a grade of D.** Four tardies equal one absence. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students who arrive 20 minutes (or more) late will be marked "absent."

Assignments:

Students are expected to complete all required assignments which should be submitted on time, typed, proofread, and free of grammatical errors. The deadline for turning in assignments is the beginning of each class, or uploaded per the professor. Homework will not be accepted after the deadline. Students will be held responsible for all class-related assignments, activities, and announced and unannounced quizzes. Whenever an assignment is missed due to an unexcused absence, a grade of “zero” (0) will be automatically assigned. If a student misses class, he or she misses any in-class assignments that count toward his or her grade, and he/she is still responsible for any homework assigned that day. The professor is NOT responsible for sharing information from class for students who are not in attendance. All out-of-class assignments should be typed or computer-generated and conform with expository or report writing guidelines. Student participation in each assigned activity is mandatory.

Students are expected to use proper grammar, spelling and punctuation according to AP Style. Mechanical errors will affect the student’s grade. Students may be expected to maintain personal blogs for grades, and select signature assignments should be uploaded to the student’s digital notebook (ePortfolio initiative)

Attire:

Students are expected to dress professionally (business attire) when in the field, or while representing Howard University, this course and professor.

Class Participation:

A newsroom is an interactive environment where ideas are exchanged, discussed and debated. In class all students are also expected to contribute to discussions and actively participate in exercises and group projects.

Classroom Etiquette:

Students are expected to maintain a positive learning atmosphere conducive of participatory collegiate discourse in which the opinions of others are respected. To maintain a positive learning classroom atmosphere, use of cell phones, I-Pods and/or other electronic entertainment devices, and the checking e-mails are not allowed in class and must be turned off and put away. In-class use of the Internet will only be allowed during designated class time as directed by the instructor. Remove all headphones and ear plugs during class. No foul language or inappropriate conduct will be accepted.

What you can expect from me.

I will begin class on time and will be prepared with lectures, discussions and assignments. I will return assignments in a timely manner. I will keep posted office hours, and return emails and phone calls promptly. I will inform you of any changes in my schedule, the syllabus or class assignments.

Ethics: Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Misconduct:

Please keep in mind that the School of Communications maintains a **zero-tolerance policy** on plagiarism, cheating, fabrication (including fake sources and quotations), forgeries and duplication, which also includes submitting the same work to more than one class or media outlet without prior faculty approval. **All of your work must be original and created by you.** Joint projects must be pre-approved with clarity and documentation of the division of labor. Committing any of these infractions could result in:

- **A failing grade for an assignment or the course**
- **Suspension for a semester or more**
- **Delayed graduation**
- **Expulsion from the university and/or**
- **Revocation of your degree – even if the infraction is discovered years after you graduate.**

Plagiarism is a reprehensible offense. It is an act of dishonesty and undermines the credibility that is essential to all professional communicators. The Howard University H-Book for Academic Offenses (Section II.1.b) defines plagiarism as: “to take and pass off as one’s own the ideas, and writings of another, without attribution (without acknowledging the author).”

The copying does not have to be exact to be plagiarism. Shuffling the order of ideas, moving paragraphs around, loosely paraphrasing, or changing a word here and there does not mean you have made the work your own.

Students in the Department of Media, Journalism and Film are expected to do original analysis, reporting, writing, editing, filming or capturing of audio. This includes social media and other forms of communications. Students are expected to explicitly cite the sources of any information that is not derived from their own independent work.

Here are a few don’ts:

- **Don’t use excessive citations from a single source, which can result in a copyright infringement. Put in the work to make the story your own.**
- **Don’t include excessively long quotations without attribution. That’s plagiarism.**
- **Don’t use images or audio without permission.**
- **Don’t assume that information widely available to the public on the Internet or through other means is fair game. This includes many instances of “common knowledge.” For example, if you’re thinking, “Everyone knows that.” Ask yourself, “How do they know?” Go to the source of the information, and cite the source.**

Here's a rule to live by: If you have any doubt about the need to cite a source, cite the source. Err on the side of over-attribution. If you don't know, ask. In addition, please review the plagiarism information under Library System at www.howard.edu.

All instances of plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct are documented in the student's academic record, filed in the dean's office and require a meeting with the instructor and the chair and/or assistant chair of the Department of Media, Journalism and Film at minimum. The department will seek the immediate suspension of any student whose academic record includes previous punishment for plagiarism or similar misconduct.

Incomplete Grades:

University policy permits incomplete grades only in extenuating circumstances for emergencies occurring near the end of the semester that prevent completion of the course AND only if 70 percent or more of the coursework has already been completed. You must meet both conditions. Emergencies must be documented beforehand in the dean's office or Academic Advising in the School of Communications and/or the Office of Special Student Services.

If you fall behind for other reasons, don't ask for an incomplete grade. Make plans to retake the course- even if it means delayed graduation.

You must submit a request for an incomplete grade in writing with the appropriate documentation before final grades are due. You are also required to sign a document justifying the incomplete grade, verifying the current grade of Incomplete/F (I/F) and outlining remaining assignments with due dates to be completed before the university deadline. Copies of the form will be distributed to you, the dean's office and the Department of Media, Journalism and film. Your incomplete grade will automatically convert to an F if the terms of the agreement are not fulfilled.

The HU Statement on ADA Procedures:

Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Special Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University or the beginning of each semester. The dean of the Office of Special Student Services, Dr. Elaine Heath, can be reached at (202) 238-2420.

Course Requirements:

The requirements for this course will include and may not be limited to: audio packages, broadcast scripts, blogs, logs of radio and television broadcasts, assignments, quizzes, and exams.

1. Attendance, Class Participation = 15%

2. Scripts, news writing = 15%
3. Quizzes, assignments = 20%
4. Exams = 20%
5. Packages, broadcasts (short & long form) = 25%

Total= 100%

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance, Class Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, and be prepared to discuss current events, and in class or homework assignments. This class will have several class assignments. Students are expected to be “read in” on the day’s news and likely be assigned in-class activities. Student participation in each assigned activity is mandatory. Students are also expected to be prepared for class guests; knowing background information on guests and be prepared to ask relevant questions. Students may also be provided the opportunity for out-of-class / on-site visits of guests

2. Scripts/ News writing

Students will be required to write broadcast-style scripts in class and as part of homework assignments. The scripts should be concise, factual, interesting and adhere to the journalistic objectives of this course. Additionally, students are expected to maintain a blog for this course which will be updated as assigned. The blog should be as professional as possible, and its content be uploaded on occasion to the student’s ePortfolio. These will show the student’s progression and expression.

3. Quizzes, Assignments

There will be regular quizzes and in-class and homework assignments that test your knowledge of current events, and your understanding of the reading assignments. Quizzes take place at the beginning of or during class and cannot be made up. A weekly quiz may also include questions from *Writing Broadcast News*, or current events that are discussed in class or given as take-home assignments. Heavy emphasis is placed on writing. You have in-class writing assignments that cannot be made up. You will also receive weekly homework assignments.

4. Exams

There will be a midterm exam and possibly a final exam.

5. Packages

You will report, write and edit reporter packages- both audio packages and at least one video package using pro tools, final cut, as well as other editing suites provided by the tech center. We will offer workshops with other departmental professionals to assist in refreshers for these

projects. These projects will utilize the terminology, ethical standards, and scenarios learned throughout the course of this semester. One of the packages will likely be the final project for the course.

Final grades are based on the following performance standards:

- A** **Excellent Work: 90% - 100%**
Student attends all classes, participates, and completes all work on time. Quality is excellent. Work and effort are excellent without error.
- B** **Above-Average: 80% - 89%**
Student attends all classes, participates, and completes all work on time. Quality is above assignment expectations. Work and effort are very good and above average with minimal error.
- C** **Average: 70% - 79%**
Student attends most classes, participates, and completes most work on time. Quality is mostly consistent with assignment expectations. Work and effort are average with minimal error.
- D** **Below-Average: 60% - 69%**
Student attends some classes, participates, and completes some work on time. Quality is not consistent with assignment expectations. Work and effort are below average with error.
- F** **Unacceptable: Below 60%**

I can do two things in life; I can dissolve into the mainstream, or I can be distinct. To be distinct, I must be different. To be different I must strive to be what no one else but I can be.

--Unknown

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes or modifications to this schedule to accommodate professional media, adhere to university class suspensions, and other Departmental or University mandates. Likewise, the instructor reserves the right to administer “pop” quizzes, and other impromptu in-class assignments. Please regularly for advance notice of any significant changes.

Week 1

Aug 27

Welcome to News Vision

Introductions, review syllabus, manuscript format, grading criteria

Review prerequisites

The First Amendment

In-Class Assessment

Homework: Dissect a local & national news broadcast 30 min or 1 hr

Homework Assignment: Blog: Research a broadcast journalist

Week 2 **Anatomy of a Newsroom**

Sept. 3 Homework Due | Class Discussions

What is News? Review video clips

Roles in a Newsroom

How is news selection decided, and by whom?

Affiliates and news generation

Quiz

History of Broadcast News & Changes

The Moral Agent

Week 3 **Anatomy of a Newscast & News Story**

Sept 10 Handout: *The Power Producer*

Editorial & Technical - Roles in a newscast

Covering Breaking News: Covering Sept. 11 Terrorist Attacks

Terminology

Homework Assigned: TBD: *The Shut Up and Shoot Documentary*

Guide

The News Meeting

In-Class assignment

Homework Assignment: Story Pitches for pkg #1 (HU community)

Week 4 **Philosophy & Ethics in Journalism**

Sept 17 Ethics in Journalism

Historical perspective

Stereotypes, Conflicts of Interest, Moral & Ethical Dilemmas,
Affiliation

How to handle ethical and moral dilemmas as a journalist

Week 5 **News Production 101**

Sept. 24 Quiz

Video Journalism: Shooting the story

Camera workshop & editing workshop (*the editing may be
rescheduled)

Class guest (TBD)