



NEWS VISION LAB 13556 - JOUR 313 01 | CRN: 83497

Jennifer C. Thomas, Assistant Professor

Rm# W5-233-O | 202-806-4833

Jennifer.thomas@howard.edu

Office Hours:

Mondays & Wednesdays: 2:30pm – 5:00pm

Tuesdays: 10am – 1pm

& by Appointment

Class Location:

C.B. Powell Room 221

Course Description

NewsVision is designed to give practical, hands on experience in reporting, writing, and producing for broadcast media and online. The course will give a sense of what it's like to be a multimedia journalist and improve skills in storytelling and critical-thinking. Students will explore—through lectures, guest speakers, and case studies—how ethics impact media professionals, and how governments—especially local and state—work and impact communities and individuals. The students will conduct news meetings and learn the intricacies of newsgathering skills and techniques. They will pitch story ideas, report, write, shoot, produce and edit reporter packages as well as help write, produce, anchor, report a (live or recorded) news broadcast featuring their original work. They will also produce a multimedia project—including but not limited to text, graphics, video, and photo galleries—to be published in conjunction with the department's online news website, www.hunewsservice.com. Students will also maintain ePortfolios (websites) featuring their packages, projects, and resume reels.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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

- Apply First Amendment principles and the laws appropriate to professional practice after covering a variety of news and feature stories.
- Demonstrate how to be a truthful, ethical and professional multimedia journalist who can think critically, creatively and independently and analyze news as both gatherer and consumer.
- Acknowledge a deepened understanding of the watchdog role of journalism in a democratic society.
- Illustrate a knowledge of newsroom positions, roles and etiquette and understand how they fit into the newscast, station and organizational structure
- Understand front-timing and backtiming as it pertains to newscast production as well as the vital impact of time management in all phases of news production.
- Illustrate knowledge of current events, and local and national governments, and speak intelligently and thoughtfully on a variety of related issues.
- Explain the importance of diversity of groups in a global society and the sensitivity and professionalism required of professional journalists.
- Critically evaluate one's own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate styles and grammatical correctness.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they may work.
- Understand and demonstrate the ethical use of digital communication.
- Understand the history of broadcast news and impact of convergence in media.
- 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 traditional and converged media.
- Create a reel and ePortfolio website to prospective employers which demonstrates professional abilities and related work highlighted from the student's collegiate career.

Required Text:

Writing and Producing Television News by Schroeder, Alan (2009)

Oxford University Press ISBN 0195311930, 9780195311938 (Should be in the book store, but also available at Amazon.com)

Suggested Reading Materials:

Another great book which is suggested but not required: *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

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

Equipment

Students are required to purchase the following:

- (1) External hard drive with at least 300 GB of memory.
- (2) Be prepared to buy 9-VOLT batteries when you are in the field for the Beachtek (sometimes the Tech Center runs out).

Tech Center Equipment

This class will involve your shooting, editing, producing packages and other “elements” for a newscast. The following is the list of equipment that will be available for check out. **All students must sign the Statement of Responsibility and take a brief equipment test before equipment can be checked out. All equipment is expected to be checked out and returned as agreed on the sign-out sheet. Any student who fails to return tech center equipment will receive a failing grade for the assignment(s) and possibly the course.**

Beachtek or equivalent

Canon Ti4 or Ti5

Tripod

Headphones

Shotgun microphone

Lav mic

Handheld mic

Spare 9-VOLT battery, if possible

Blackboard:

Class announcements, online materials, lecture notes and other resources, will be available via Blackboard. This will be the primary source for the collection of assignments for this course. Please log in immediately to make sure your user name and password work and try sending an Email. Be sure to correct your Email address on the Blackboard system and check it frequently.

Expectations:

Students should conduct themselves as professional journalists. They 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 and to the students' global view. This class will offer practical instruction on learning basic newsroom culture, terminology and newsgathering, while also researching, writing, recording, editing and producing news stories for broadcast and digital distribution. 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 Hilltop, and Hilltop online

<http://www.thehilltoponline.com>, *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-forjournalism-students/>, and cultural magazines such as www.blackprwire.com/, and slate.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 has an excused absence with proper document substantiating same. *(Doctor's notes / funerals etc will be verified.) 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 with two (2) or more unexcused absences will receive a final grade of D.** Three 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 SUBMITTED AFTER A GIVEN DEADLINE OR NOT SUBMITTED AS INSTRUCTED, WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.** 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. The same policy stands for students who arrive late for quizzes. 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 are expected to maintain personal blogs for grades, and select signature assignments should be uploaded to the student's ePortfolio website as instructed.

Attire:

Students are expected to dress professionally (at least business attire) when in the field, or while representing Howard University, this course and professor. During classes when newscasts are being produced/aired, students are expected to dress in business attire. Anchors are expected to wear proper attire and makeup which will not interfere with virtual set backgrounds.

Class Participation:

A newsroom is an interactive environment where ideas are exchanged, discussed and debated. Students 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 or electronic devices will only be allowed during designated class time as directed by the instructor. 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 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 HBook 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.

ACADEMIC CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

(Revised 2010)

Approved by the Board of Trustees, June 29, 2010

Retrieved on November 19, 2013 from:

<http://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm>

Howard University is a community of scholars composed of faculty and students both of whom must hold the pursuit of learning and search for truth in the highest regard. Such regard requires adherence to the goal of unquestionable integrity and honesty in the discharge of teaching and learning responsibilities. Such regard allows no place for academic dishonesty. To better assure the realization of this goal any student enrolled for study at the University may be disciplined for the academic infractions defined below.

Definitions of Academic Infractions

1. **Academic Cheating**—any intentional act(s) of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements. This offense shall include (but is not limited to) utilization of the assistance of any additional individual(s), organization, document, or other aid not specifically and expressly authorized by the instructor or department involved. (Note: This infraction assumes that with the exception of authorized group assignment or group take-home assignments, all course or program assignments shall be completed by an individual student only without any consultation or collaboration with any other individual, organization, or aid.).
2. **Plagiarism**—to take and pass off intentionally as one's own the ideas, writings, etc. of another without attribution (without acknowledging the author).

*Note: Also, included is **self-plagiarism** - the reuse of one's own writing taken from another written document (published or unpublished) without acknowledgement. Self-plagiarism has also been identified in cases of 'duplicate publication,' and consists of a person re-purposing their own written material without citing the source of the original content. Therefore, students are discouraged from submitting the same paper to more than one course.*

3. **Copy Infringement**—Copy infringement occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner.

Administration of the Code and Penalties..... For details regarding the policy, refer to Howard University Student Academic Code of Conduct URL:

<http://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm>

Two copies of all relevant paperwork related to any infraction of these policies shall be kept in the SOC: one by the chair of the student's department and the other in the Dean's office.

Incomplete Grades:

**School of Communications
Office of the Dean
Policy for Assignment of Incomplete Grades**

School of Communications Incomplete Policy

Faculty in the School of Communications (SOC) are to assign Incomplete (I) grades only, in instances when the student has the potential to pass the course and has completed the majority of the work. In addition, the university policy must be followed with regard to considerations for assignment and implementation of "I" grades as outlined under university guidelines for *Academic Standing*. See statement below:

Howard University Incomplete Policy

Incomplete grades may be assigned ONLY to students who, as a result of circumstances beyond their control (e.g., illness or family emergency) are unable to complete their coursework. Although the student initiates the request for an incomplete grade, the decision to assign an incomplete grade rests solely with the instructor. If the student's request is approved, the instructor establishes and submits specific "make-up" conditions on an Incomplete Grade Processing Form (IGPF). Each incomplete designation ("I") must be accompanied by an alternative grade ("B," "C," "D," or "F"). The alternative grade will become the permanent grade, if the incomplete is not removed.

Retrieved on November 19, 2013 from <http://www.howard.edu/academics/standing.htm>

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, and logs of television broadcasts, assignments, quizzes, and exams.

1. Attendance, Class Participation = 10%

2. Final ePortfolio (website) /Resume Reel = 15%
3. Blogs, quizzes, assignments = 20%
4. Midterm/ Packages = 25%
5. Newscasts & Production= 30%
(Production = Newsroom roles, Meeting participation, rehearsals, pre/post production, rundowns, etc.)

Total= 100%

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. The instructor will advise of any significant changes.

Week 1 – Introduction to NewsVision

Jan 13

Introductions, review syllabus, prerequisites
Review final PKGs/projects from last term
Blog review
The First Amendment – examples
Discussion of NewsVision & WHUT TV pkg projects
In-class Assignment: TBD
Homework: Blog TBD
Homework: Text (Schroeder) - Ch.1 “The Newsroom” | Roles in the station:
<http://www.nab.org/documents/television/NABTelevisionCareersSecondEdition.pdf> (also in Blackboard)
Homework: Newscasts dissections – segments, stories, social media, etc.

Week 2 – Anatomy of Newsroom & Station |The Multi-platform Journalist

Jan 20

Quiz
Newsroom Discussion
Station roles reviewed
General Manager, Sales, Master Control; Commercials, PSAs
Challenges, expectations for Backpack journalists

Importance of digital journalists

ePortfolio review

In-class assignment:TBD

Homework: Text- (Schroeder) Ch. 2 – “The Language of Television News” & Ch. 5 “The On-Camera Journalist”

Homework PKG: What School of C Means to Me- **Due Feb 10, 10pm**

Homework: **1st reporter PKG pitches** (HU reaction to a National story) typed, printed and presented in class Jan 27. Three paragraphs each. **1st PKG due Feb 16, 10pm**

Guest: Fleeks Hazel, Account Executive WUSA 9

Homework: Blog on guest/topic

Week 3 – News Production 101 | Technical Workshops

Jan 27

Quiz

Discuss PKG pitches

Camera, editing workshops

Touring the NewsVision studio & WHUT TV studio

Technical roles – review

In-class assignment: NewsVision teleprompter practice

Homework: research report on PKG #1

Homework: Text- (Schroeder) Ch. 4- “Writing News Packages” & Ch. 7 “Newscast Producing”

Homework: Blog about difference between National and local newscast

Homework: ePortfolio updates

Week 4 – Do You Have the Juice to Produce? Navigating the Newsroom

Feb 3

Quiz

Newscast dissection, explainers

News meeting, producing roles; front-timing, backtiming

Creating rundowns for news breaks, newscasts

Newsroom Roles are discussed; working under deadlines

Covering breaking news

In-class group assignments: create a newscast during class.

In-class assignment: NewsVision studio producer/anchor practice

Guest: Anthony Wilson, NABJ Short Course/ Anchor/Reporter WTVD TV

Homework: *Handouts or email-* (Tompkins): Ethics and Broadcast Journalists: Seek Truth and Report It as Fully as Possible; Ethics and Broadcast Journalists: Act Independently

Homework: ePortfolio page formatted (link emailed via Blackboard)

Homework: **Pitch #2 (DMV story) pitches due Feb 9 via Blackboard | PKG #2 due March 16, 10pm**

Homework: *Dealing with Ethical & Moral Journalistic Dilemmas in a Digital World*. Due TBD

Week 5 - Philosophy & Ethics in Journalism

Feb 10

Quiz

Ethical dilemmas in journalism

Historical perspective, current cases

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

How to handle ethical and moral dilemmas as a journalist

Review ePortfolio pages

Homework: Text- Ch. 3 "Writing Studio-Based News Stories"

Homework: Ch. 6- "News Judgments"

1st PKG due **Feb 16, 10pm**

Week 6 – Government & Political Affairs Reporting

Feb 17

News Quiz

How does government work? Review of three branches of government on local, state and federal levels and the watchdog role of what some have called the fourth branch, *the media*.

Government Public Meetings: To go or not to go? How to get the answer. And yes, that means, at least initially, going.

Your rights as journalists. Access to public meetings and information, including Freedom of Information Requests.

Guest: Keith Harriston, former editor, Washington Post/ award-winning journalist

Homework: Blog on guest/topic

Homework: **PKG pitch #3 (Govt/Pol Affairs TBD) due Feb 24, 10pm via Blackboard | PKG # 3 due April 13, 10pm**

Week 7 – Newseum Class Field Trip

Feb 24

We meet at the Newseum and spend the course reviewing pertinent exhibits ranging from Ethics, minorities in journalism, Civil Rights exhibits, etc.

Homework: Blog on Newseum

Homework: 1 min newscast scripts

Week 8 – Midterm

Tuesday, March 3 - MIDTERM

In-class assignment: NewsVision anchor & teleprompter practice

Week 9 Newscast Rehearsals

March 10

Homework: (Schroeder) Ch. 8 – “News Teases”

Review PKG #2 research

Guest: TBD

Homework: Blog on guest/topic

PKG #2 due March 16, 10pm

Week 10 – UNIVERSITY CLOSED – SPRING RECESS

March 17

Week 11 – Newscasts, Writing the “Vision” & Government

March 24

Quiz

Newscast- producer/director rehearsals (1st hour)

Homework: Text- (Schroeder) Ch. 9, “TV News Graphics, Titles, and Supers”

Review ePortfolio updates

Review PKG #3 topics

Guest: TBD

Homework: Blog on guest/topic

Week 12 – Newscasts, News Meetings, Live Shots

March 31

Quiz

Newscast production/ live shots/ special assignments

News Meetings are conducted in real time and day-of assignments given

Mini- newscast prepped and presented

Homework: Text- (Schroeder) Ch. 8 – “Television News on the Web”

Friday, April 3 – LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM COURSE

Week 13 - Newscasts

April 7

News Quiz

Studio rehearsals- practicing with graphics/ fonts/ etc.

Newscast production / sports & weather/ in-studio set rehearsals

Homework: Text-TBD

Homework: Final ePortfolio updates due

Guest: TBD

PKG # 3 due April 13, 10pm

Week 14- FINAL ePortfolio, Multimedia & Reel Presentations

April 14

Week 15 – FINAL NEWSCASTS

April 21 - FINAL CLASS FOR PROSPECTIVE MAY 2015 GRADUATES

Newscast production | Special Coverage

Homework: Text-TBA

Critiques of ePortfolios for updates

Thursday, April 23 FORMAL CLASSES END

Friday, April 24 READING PERIOD BEGINS

Week 16 (non-graduates)

TBD – FINAL EXAMINATIONS/BROADCASTS