



**HOWARD  
UNIVERSITY**

**Broadcast Journalism I**

**Fall 2013**

**Monday/Wednesday | 10:00am-11:30am**

**Jennifer C. Thomas, Assistant Professor**

<b>Office Hours</b>	Monday 12:30pm – 4:30pm Tuesday 1:00pm – 2:00pm Wednesday 12:30pm-4:30pm Thursday 1:00pm – 2:00 pm & by appointment
<b>Class Location</b>	Room 254 CB Powell Bldg
<b>Office Location</b>	Room 329 CB Powell Bldg
<b>Office Telephone</b>	202- 806-4833
<b>Email</b>	TBA

**Course Description:**

Broadcast Journalism I is designed to introduce the skills needed to be an effective broadcast journalist to work in multimedia platforms. It emphasizes writing for broadcast news with concise, accurate, thoughtful copy and producing quality packages for broadcast and digital distribution. Students are expected to produce audio stories for the Howard University communication outlets. Students will learn and master reporting various techniques including researching stories, news and information gathering, natural sound collection, and interviews resulting in final enterprise broadcast pieces.

**Course Objectives:**

At the successful completion of this course, it is expected that students will be able to:

- Apply First Amendment principles, ethics and laws appropriate to professional journalistic practice.
- Demonstrate how to be an efficient, truthful, ethical and professional broadcast journalist.

- Develop and improve writing skills with a focus on writing for broadcast news.
- Develop practical skills for packaging and delivering broadcast news and feature packages in multi platforms.
- Develop and sharpen interviewing skills and techniques with practical application.
- Critically analyze current news stories and real-life scenarios.
- Respect the core principles of journalism with emphasis on news concepts of “accuracy”, “fairness” and “balance.”
- Practice proper techniques for recording and producing natural sound and interviews
- Learn and practice newsroom terminology
- Discuss related news and media events relating to topics and issues discussed in class.
- Edit and mix sound elements to produce packages
- Understand and develop broadcast voice and ‘style’
- Build digital platforms for self-publishing
- Explore internship and career opportunities in broadcast/digital newsrooms
- Be excited about a career in broadcast journalism!

**Prerequisites:**

Students must have successfully completed all prerequisite courses listed below, including Reporting and Writing (Jour 202), Introduction to Broadcast News (Jour 204) and Radio Production (RTVF 322). Students should also have basic computer skills and a familiarity with audio recording devices and software. Students may be required to submit transcript to professor to verify required prerequisites prior to the beginning of this course.

**See prerequisites below:**

JOUR 201	Writing for the Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ English 002 (Grade “C” or Better)</li> <li>▪ English 003 (Grade “C” or Better)</li> </ul>
JOUR 202	Reporting & Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JOUR 201 (Writing for the Media)</li> </ul>
JOUR 204	Intro to Broadcast News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ JOUR 201 (Writing for the Media)</li> </ul>
RTVF 231	Introduction to Media Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sophomore Standing RTVF/Jour 111</li> </ul>
RTVF 322	Radio Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ RTVF 231</li> </ul>

**Required Text:**

*“Writing Broadcast News: Shorter, Sharper, Stronger”* by Mervin Block, third edition, CQ Press, ISB #978-1-60871-417-9. Various other online articles, archival and current broadcasts via online links.

### **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.

(\*my blog is: <http://profithomas.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](http://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 = 10%
2. Scripts, blog = 15%
3. Quizzes, assignments = 20%
4. Exams = 25%
5. Packages (short & long form) = 30%

**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/ Blogs**

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%

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*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

### **Course Calendar:**

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. 26, 28

#### **Why Media Matters**

First day of class....introductions, syllabus review, expectations.

The Importance of the First Amendment to Broadcast Journalists

Homework Assignment: March on Washington blog (to be uploaded),

Research on a broadcast journalist

Quiz-1 – Current News

Homework Assignments due

8 forms of media & Convergence

What is News?  
The Moral Agent

**Week 2**  
Sept. 2

**The Newsroom**  
**Holiday – Labor Day**

Sept. 4

Who does What? Roles in the news station & newsroom  
Homework Assignment: Text Assignment – Chapter 1 – *Dozen Deadly Don'ts: Mistakes that mar scripts* – pp. 3 – 17

**Week 3**  
Sept. 9, 11

**Writing for Broadcast News**

Quiz-2  
Writing for broadcast  
Types of scripts, In-class writing assignment  
*"Writing Broadcast News"* Text Assignment Due – Chapter 1 – *Dozen Deadly Don'ts: Mistakes that mar scripts* – pp. 3 – 17  
Homework Assignment: Sept 11 blog (posted online)

Differences between local, network, cable, radio newscasts  
What makes a story newsworthy?  
Homework Assignment: Identify (in writing) 5 potential news stories on or near campus dealing with students, the university, or HU community (people and businesses)  
\*This research will be a part of Package #1

**Week 4**  
Sept. 16, 18

**Radio**  
Homework Assignment due: discuss results in class  
War of the Worlds  
Current radio/online broadcasts  
Writing for radio: NPR newscast  
Homework Assignment: *"Writing Broadcast News"* Text Assignment – Chapter 2 – *Venial Sins: Words that hurt copy* – pp. 19 – 30.

In-class workshop

**Week 5**

**Evaluating the Message**

Sept. 23, 25

In-class writing assignment

Long form radio story and a short form radio story (same content) due.  
Elements of audio packages – analysis of short vs. long form storytelling