

Fall semester, 2009

COURSE: Journalism 395 B

BROADCAST NEWS PRACTICUM

Instructor/News Director: Keith S. Goldstein

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Hours: by appointment

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REQUIRED TEXT: Sound Reporting: The National Public Radio Guide to Radio Journalism and Production, Marcus D. Rosenbaum and John Dinges, editors.

Chapters to be assigned.

Additional articles and material from other resources will be distributed.

Course prerequisite: J-315 (Must have a "C" or above)

Incoming students will be asked to show proof of grade.

I. FOCUS:

Journalism 395B is a course in radio news broadcasting in which students are involved in writing, gathering, producing, and reporting LOCAL NEWS pertaining to the San Fernando Valley, the Santa Clarita Valley, and greater Los Angeles County. This is done on KCSN-FM, 88.5 during a morning news block (from 5:00 to 8:05 a.m.), and on a thirty minute news program entitled "The Evening Update", which is broadcast from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. The emphasis is on broadcast news writing, and putting together informative and relevant newscasts in conformance with the highest possible professional standards. There will also be instruction on operation of broadcast news equipment; such as conducting telephone interviews on digital recorders, dubbing sound bites to cart machines, digital editing, use of mini-disc recorders in the field, production of

features, and use of network resources. Students work together as part of a team to broadcast a quality newscast to the audience.

II. REQUIREMENTS:

1) Students enrolled in 395-B are required to perform a minimum of six hours a week in the KCSN Newsroom. The longer shifts are geared towards "The Evening Update". Shifts will NOT be subdivided, except in the case of a student who is working two days a week on the morning news. Students will submit three choices for assignments and shifts. Final scheduling will be determined by the News Director. There is a wide range of assignments, as described in a handout outlining all the jobs that need to be filled in the KCSN Newsroom.

2) Shift attendance and punctuality are compulsory. KCSN News is a team effort. Your role and contribution is vital. Show up on time for your scheduled shifts. In the event of an emergency, students are responsible for finding a replacement.

3) The one p.m. Monday and Wednesday class meetings are an essential part of the course. Attendance and participation are mandatory. It is an opportunity to share how things are going in the newsroom and to discuss ideas, problems, etc. There will be presentations on principles of writing radio news and instruction on feature and spot news reporting. Workshops will be held on specific subject areas such as engineering, digital editing, and use of network sources. Tapes of professional newscasts will be played in class for discussion and critiquing. Guest speakers will be invited to talk about topics related to broadcast news.

NOTE: Irregular class attendance will adversely affect the final course grade. Excessive lateness will be a negative factor in the grading process.

4) The most important assignment will be writing for broadcast. A student's copy must be airworthy prior to getting any other assignment, and prior to getting a passing grade. Basic standards include accuracy, conversational style, objectivity, correct grammar, ability to meet

deadlines, neatness, speed, and clarity. All scripts should be copy-read prior to being used on the air.

5) Periodic **QUIZZES** on current events---local, state, and national, will be given in class. Quizzes will also include KCSN style guide questions, lecture material, matters covered on critiques, topics discussed in class and in handouts, and questions from assigned textbook chapters. Quizzes are not always announced in advance. The quizzes are graded on a numerical scale, with a score of (100) representing all correct answers. At the end of the semester, an average will be compiled.

IMPORTANT

a) Students who fail to show up in class on the day a quiz is given will receive a score of zero. These cannot be made up.

b) Quizzes will be given at the beginning of a class. A time limit for completion will be established. If a student arrives late and misses any oral questions for extra credit, these will not be repeated. Late students will not be given any extra time.

6) **ANCHORING**, or being on the air in any manner, is a privilege and not a right. We will endeavor to maintain a highly professional sound in the choice of the air people for KCSN News. Students who want to be considered for on-air positions are encouraged to make a five minute audition tape. Delivery, clarity, and level of skill will be evaluated by the News Director, who selects and assigns the anchors for the morning and afternoon news. Audition tapes must also be done for business, sports, and health reporter positions. Anyone who abuses on-air privileges by behaving in an immature or unprofessional manner while broadcasting, will immediately be taken off the air.

7. IN-DEPTH FEATURE REPORT ASSIGNMENT:

All students are required to produce a four and a half minute in-depth story on a serious subject that will air on KCSN, on "The Evening Update". A feature story is one that informs and engages listeners. The subject can be investigative in nature, or provide increased perspective on an issue that has some relevance to listeners in the San Fernando Valley and Santa Clarita Valley, and West Los Angeles. The feature report should capture a mood or provide a picture to the audience; and will integrate "natural sound" as well as a variety of interviews. Examples of features done in recent semesters include:

"The Orange Line Busway",....."Runaway Film Production",...."Homeless Shelters", "Child Support Enforcement",...."Internet Gambling",...."Heart Transplant Surgery",....."Date Rape",....."Teenage Prostitution,....."Army Recruiting in High Schools,....."The Home Foreclosure Crisis",...."Wheelchair Athletes",....."Violent Video Games",..... "Female Juvenile Boot Camp",....."Day Laborers",....."Drunk Driving Laws", "Alzheimer's Care Facility",....."Guide Dogs for the Blind",...."Emergency Room and Trauma Unit Closures",....."Pit Bull Dangers" and "Red Light Cameras".

A feature report must have the following elements:

a) Sound bites from interviews with multiple sources,...at least three different people. A variety of voices are needed for the story to remain interesting. Experts with credibility should be sought.

b) Some type of natural ambient sound integrated into the report.

This could be school bells ringing, cars on a busy street, manufacturing equipment, a train departing from the station, an ambulance siren, a bowling ball knocking down the pins, etc. The natural sound that you use must have relevance to the story. You will have recorded the sounds with KCSN News Department equipment.

NOTE: It is essential that interviews be conducted with a KCSN Professional mini-disc recorder and a microphone. No telephone

interviews will be permitted for the feature assignment. Dubs from video will also not be allowed.

The topic for your feature report must be approved in advance by the News Director and/or the Features editor. You will be asked to submit a brief written proposal, which explains the specific focus of the topic, and outlines who will be interviewed, etc. You should consider this in-depth feature assignment to be the equivalent of writing a major term paper.

The following chapters from the textbook are helpful for the feature assignment:

In Sound Reporting, Chapter Eight, "*Conceiving Features: One Reporter's Style*", by Robert Krulwich, pages 93 to 102.

Chapter Ten, "*Producing Features*" by Deborah Amos, pages 117 to 126.

A list will be handed out in class with firm due dates for each student's Feature Report.

IMPORTANT: (***)** Failure to complete the feature assignment will result in the final course grade being lowered by a full letter.

---The assignment must be submitted on the designated due date.

Your feature is part of a scheduled broadcast. Students are expected to meet this deadline. There will be penalties for any feature submitted late.

IV. GRADING POLICY:

The plus/minus grading system will be used for final course grades. This will be determined in the following manner:

Writing ability, overall performance of assignment on scheduled shift,

and
productivity.....45
percent

Quizzes on current events relating to the San Fernando and Santa
Clarita Valleys,...Los Angeles County,...national and international news
developments,...the KCSN Style Guide,...radio news writing principles
discussed in class, the chapters from the textbooks, and materials from
handouts distributed by the
instructor.....15
percent

Feature Report
Assignment.....17.5 percent

Attendance in class and
participation.....12.5 percent

Out of class writing
assignments.....10 percent

*(Extra work/hours in the newsroom and other forms of initiative such as
special reports, mini-series, and documentaries will be recognized as
positive factors in the grading process.)*

The definitions of grades in the California State University-Northridge
Catalog will be observed. This identifies an A as "...outstanding....",
B as "very good",.....C as average,.....D as barely passing, and F as
"failure".

Equipment and other technical problems are to be reported to the News
Director immediately so that purchases, repairs, and replacements can be
taken care of quickly.

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated.

Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade in the class and will be reported to the University for possible further disciplinary action. For a further explanation of behavior defined as cheating, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 588-589 of the 2008-2010 CSUN catalog.

Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U-S copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN'S plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

**** Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit in more than one course without authorization.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians, and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.