

TELEVISION NEWS TECHNIQUES J325

Fall 2009: Friday 9-10:50am Friday noon-1:50pm

Lincoln Harrison

Manzanita Hall MZ150

(818) 677-4989

Email: lincoln.harrison@csun.edu or harrisli@earthlink.net

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to techniques and equipment needed to photograph and edit television news stories. Students will learn how and what to photograph in the field, including interviews, standups, and cover footage for hard news and feature stories. Students will also learn news editing using a nonlinear system. J325 will usually involve one hour of lecture and an average of one hour of lab or field activity per week. The lab work will usually be completed in the second scheduled hour of class meetings. If not finished then, students will be required to complete them at other times during the week, depending on equipment availability.

Equipment and supplies:

Mandatory

Each student needs one blank 60-minute miniDV cassette by Friday, September 4th. You will work in teams, but each team member will need his or her own tape. Sharing tapes does not work well for some assignments.

Optional

A student may use his or her own personal miniDV camera for assignments if the student also has a stable tripod. The camera must accommodate a good-quality **external** mic, and headphones, which the student must also provide. Students may not use a DVD camera, a flash memory camera, a hard drive camera, or any camera that does not record on standard-definition miniDV tape.

Recommended Reading:

Aside from the reader, I encourage you to participate in the Journalism Department's common reading experience. This semester's book is "Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America" by Bruce Shapiro (Editor).

Expectations:

Lab and field equipment must be kept in good condition. In particular, no food of any kind -- including fruit, chips, candy, and chewing gum -- is allowed in any part of the lab. If you must eat, step outside. Students may bring unflavored water into some areas of the lab, but the water must be kept away from all editing systems and writing computers. Water is **absolutely prohibited** in the control room (MZ150D).

Cameras, batteries, tripods and audio kits are to be reserved, checked out, and returned in accordance with procedures outlined in the "MZ150 Lab Rules." The Rules are posted in the newsroom. If you, individually or as part of a team, fail to return equipment, or if equipment is damaged while checked out to you, you will be expected to pay repair or replacement costs, at the discretion of the Journalism Department. The total replacement value of a single J325 camera and audio package exceeds \$2,500. Complete and timely return of equipment is critical to your own success and that of your classmates.

Course Requirements:

Final grades will be based on the following:

Assignments: Students will have team and individual assignments. These projects are due on particular dates, at the beginning of class time. Generally, team assignments are reviewed and not graded, but failure to contribute to team assignments will result in points being deducted.

Points are given for *individual* assignments on the basis of proficiency and timely completion. Two individual editing assignments are planned.

Two unannounced quizzes (totaling five points) and a midterm (ten points) will cover the reading material and concepts discussed in class.

The final exam will cover the entire semester's work (20 points).

The quizzes, midterm, and final exam can be taken only at the scheduled class time on the scheduled day. No early or late testing will be available. In particular, do not schedule travel that conflicts with midterm or final exam times. If you have already made such plans, you must reveal them at the start of the semester so that we can discuss the implications.

Class participation: Class attendance is critical because each technical concept builds on prior ones. Additionally, your team needs your contribution. Failure to appear for class sessions or lateness will result in points being deducted. Each absence will result in the loss of five points. Each instance of lateness will result in the loss of two points.

The loss of two or five points will drop your letter grade for the course to the next lower grade if your overall performance places you at or near a grading breakpoint. 90 points will be the lowest A, 80 the lowest B, 70 the lowest C and so on. This course does not employ the plus/minus system. Remember, attendance is key.

The two paragraphs you just read practically beg you to attend each class and to be on time. If you incur one absence in J325, I strongly suggest that you avoid any more absences -- or instances of tardiness -- in order to prevent further point deductions.

Students must earn a 'C' or better in this class in order to enroll in J335 or J415.

I do not expect the furlough process to affect this course. If that changes, I'll let you know.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will fail the course and be reported to the University for possible further action. For a further explanation of the behavior defined as academic dishonesty, and a more detailed discussion of disciplinary procedures, consult the CSUN catalogue. Please also remember that U. S. copyright laws protect much of the information posted on the Internet. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy and carries the penalties outlined above.

Diversity:

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.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Lec 1: Overview of course. Separate into six teams, with three or four members per team. Introduce concept of sequences. View raw tape. Reading assignment for next week: **ENG Television News**, chapter three excerpt, pages 90 through 122.

Lab 1: In teams, log raw tape.

Lec 2: View “Hold the Camera Steady” and “Compo---sition” sections of **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape. Detail operation of miniDV cameras.

Lab 2: In teams, shoot properly sequenced and framed video outside Manzanita Hall on miniDV. Sequences must involve people, not just still life.

Lec 3: Review raw camera video. View “Good Shots” section of **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape.

Lab 3: Shoot again, but with more of a storytelling purpose in mind. Use the sequences to tell a forward-moving visual story.

Lec 4: Review raw camera video. View “Interview” section of **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape.

Lab 4: Shoot properly framed interviews on campus.

Lec 5: View interviews. View “Interview Cover Shots” sections of **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape. Discussion of proper framing, reverse angle shots, and screen direction issues.

Lab 5: Shoot seated interviews with reverse angle shots.

Lec 6: View seated interviews. Look at and discuss “Standups” section of **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape.

Lab 6: Shoot individual standups to be used within an editing project later in the semester.

Lec 7: View standups. Discussion of field audio issues, multiboxes and lighting. View interview with bad sound on **DOs AND DON'Ts** tape. Using Shure mixer and Panasonic camera, demonstrate distortion or low-levels that can result from multibox feeds. Discuss “PCM.”

Lab 7: Record individual project voiceovers for late semester editing project.

Lec 8: Midterm

Lab 8: First look at nonlinear editing. Explore the editing workflow.

Lec 9: Second session on nonlinear editing. Demonstrate making projects folder, firewire hookup, capturing, naming of clips, in and out point selection.

Lab 9: Each student will create an individual, named folder in a computer.

Lec 10: Third session on nonlinear editing. Detail manipulation of clips on the timeline and making adjustments using simple tools (razor tool, delete, audio level adjustments).

Lab 10: Each student will capture his or her standup into the previously created folder.

Lec 11: Advanced FCE session with top ten FAQs. View “Burning Car” edited story once.

Lab 11: (Team assignment) Edit “Burning Car” story, using preloaded elements in newsroom edit computers.

Lec 12: Review “Burning Car” stories, explain “Marie and Flo” individual nonlinear editing assignment.”

Lab 12: (Individual assignment) “Marie and Flo.”

Lec 13: More editing techniques (simple supers, avoiding jump cuts). Explain final project.

Lab 13: (Individual assignment) Commence work on final project.

Lec 14: Studio and newsroom operations (cameras, editing systems, printers).

Lab 14: Control room operations (prompter, audio console).

Then, on Friday, December 11 at 8am, the 9am class section will have a final exam.

The final exam for the noon class section will be at 12:45pm that same day, Friday, December 11.