COMM 358 - 201 Newscasting & Producing
Spring 2023
Tuesdays 1-2:15 p.m.; Thursdays 1-4 p.m.
SOC 100 (Convergence Studio)

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D. (she/her)

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♦ Course Goals and Objectives

This class is designed to produce news content on multiple platforms: not only television but also audio (podcast-style) and social media. To that end, you will gather information, write, shoot and edit stories to present in these various formats.

In addition to learning the technical aspects of producing content on these platforms, to do well in the class you will need to keep up with the news – what's happening at Loyola and in Chicago, in the state, nation, and world. In addition, you will be expected to produce news that represents diverse perspectives and avoids misrepresentation or harm to individuals, groups, or alternative viewpoints.

♦ Prerequisites

As a capstone, Newscasting & Producing is an advanced-level course that requires proficiency in writing and scripting, videography and editing for a variety of story types. If you lack some of these skills, you will need to devote extra time outside of class to catch up so you can work quickly and efficiently on newscast days and for field reporting assignments. Before taking this course, you must have completed **COMM 135 or 145** Intro to Video Production (or equivalent) and either **COMM 256** Broadcast Newswriting or **COMM 284 or 327** Video Storytelling (or their equivalents). Graduate students should have completed **COMM 405** Story Development and Production and/or **Comm 420** Digital Production.

♦ Text

(optional) A Complete Guide to Television, Field, and Digital Producing by Sally Ann Cruikshank, Christine C. Eschenfelder, and Keonte Coleman, 2021, Routledge.
(This book is available through the university bookstore or online retailers.)

♦ Supplies

For some assignments, your main equipment will be your smartphone – with an external microphone such as the ones that can be checked out through the SOC's Owl Lab. For others we will be using the **Canon XF-405 camera**, which will be in backpacks. When checking out equipment, make sure to ask for the camera and backpack designated for our class.

For gathering video and sound with the XF-405, you will need*:*

-- 2-3 SD Memory Card(s), Class 6 or 10, min. 300 MB speed
-- External hard drive that meets the following specifications/recommendations:
  ➤ Mac-formatted, minimum USB 3.0, 120GB (the larger, the more versatile), minimum 5400 RPM (though 7200 RPM is recommended)

Also needed/recommended: "AA" batteries (to power microphones); lens cleaning tissue; clear medical tape (for affixing microphones)

♦ Class Organization

We will begin the semester by developing news for social media platforms – planning the style and elements, then producing news stories and social media newscasts. Then we will produce some audio podcast-style stories, and finally prepare to produce some TV-style newscasts in our convergence studio.

Tuesdays will be devoted to instruction on topics related to producing visual news, as well as planning meetings for that week's news material. After the first few weeks of the semester, Thursdays will be newscast production days. You will be assigned different tasks throughout the semester, with assignments in newsgathering and presenting and the technical side of visual news production.

Some news stories and posts you will produce ahead of time. You will also have opportunities to produce some same-day stories, both to practice reporting on tight deadlines and to enable us to cover more timely stories.

We will not operate as a traditional class, in that there will be no mid-term or final exam. You will present a final portfolio in lieu of a final exam. It will be due on **Friday, May 5, at 1 p.m.**, when we will gather to wrap up the semester.

♦ Story Considerations

For pre-produced stories, face-to-face interviews are ideal, but if necessary, you may conduct interviews via Zoom or other apps. Typical journalistic practice is to *not* build stories around immediate family members or close friends unless it is a special circumstance (e.g., a story about a challenge your friend or family member is facing). In those circumstances, you need to identify your relationship to the interviewee(s).

***Note: As this is a journalism course, anyone you interview must speak as themselves and about their own experience(s). I.e., *never* ask the person to pretend to be someone else or represent a situation that is not factually accurate.

♦ Graduate Students

Graduate students in the class will be required to complete one additional assignment during the semester, the topic and scope negotiated with Professor Hood.

♦ Grading

Grades will be based on your contributions to news posts and newscasts, a portfolio of your best work, along with other individual assignments. Points will be deducted for not doing your share of the work on joint projects, for tardiness and unexcused absences, and for disengagement during class.

Grades will be divided as follows:

Weekly story and newscast contributions	40%
Other assignments	20%
Portfolios	40%

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, accumulated points will be converted to a letter grade based on the following scale:

A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%;
C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 60-66%

There may be opportunities for extra credit for some assignments, but the total you can earn is capped at 100% of the total points available in that category.

♦ Other Important Notes

Attendance/Punctuality: Reliable attendance and punctuality are imperative not only in news organizations but in any profession. You are expected to be in class and on time. Punctuality and attendance points will count as part of your weekly grade. If you have a genuine emergency, please notify me *prior* to class, if possible. And see the note below about COVID protocols.

At Loyola, we respect that you may miss class due to religious observances. In these circumstances, please notify me ahead of time that you will be gone.

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is a fact of life in broadcast news. Assignments not turned in on time will receive an automatic reduction in grade.

♦ Rules and Responsibilities

Classroom Conduct: You may use your cell phone for calling news sources, but *do not* use it for purposes unrelated to class. Everyone will need to stay focused on the tasks at hand for us to get the most out of our time in preparing the news elements for each week.
  ➢ Also, you may use a laptop for taking class notes, but you may be asked to send the notes to Professor Hood at the end of each class period.

Academic Integrity
Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SOC:
1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g. failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:
  ➢ Turn in the same work for two classes*;
  ➢ Turn in work that you have not done yourself; or

> ➢ Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Specifically for this course:
> ➢ *You are not allowed to copy someone else's video work from the Internet, DVD, or any other source without proper attribution in the script and/or an on-screen credit, and any use of such work in your stories should be limited to a few seconds with a very clear purpose (e.g., YouTube video). In general, you __cannot__ use video from another TV station or network in your work.*
> ➢ *If anyone outside of the class helps you with a story, you must reveal their contribution so your work can be evaluated fairly based on your role in the story.*

*Note: If you are in two courses that generate news stories, it may be permissible to cover the same story for both courses if both professors approve. Please speak to me about such circumstances.

Turning in work that is not your own and representing it as yours will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:
http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support
These are extraordinary times that can sometimes feel overwhelming. Should you encounter a crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Center for Student Assistance & Advocacy (LUC.edu/csaa) to submit a CARE referral for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a virtual meeting with me. Learn more about the center here: https://www.luc.edu/csaa/forstudents/studentresources/

Special Needs
If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC)0. We will accommodate your needs as best we can. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SAC website: http://www.luc.edu/sac.

♦ Electronic Communication & Information
Sakai: Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai. Some assignments, such as the reading reflections, may be submitted there. Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email: I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays but will not always access it on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

♦ About your professor

This is my 14th year at Loyola, after having taught 9 years at the University of Colorado. In 2018 I was recognized with the national Edward L. Bliss award for distinguished broadcast journalism education. I have 18 years of experience in television news, mostly as a producer. I worked at TV stations in Denver, and before that produced and anchored newscasts in Huntsville, Alabama. My newscasts earned regional Emmy awards for hard news and spot news and a Colorado Broadcasters Association best newscast award. I also have experience in reporting (both news and sports), photography and editing, and worked in radio and newspapers before starting my television career. I hold a PhD in Communication from the University of Colorado. My research interests include journalistic uses of technology; local news and the audience relationship to it; as well as corporate and consolidation influences on local news and local news outsourcing. I have a master's degree from the University of Colorado and a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Missouri. I am a member of the Chicago regional board of directors for the National Television Academy (the group that awards the Emmys) and serve in leadership roles at the University and in the School of Communication. I am the faculty sponsor for Beta Rho, the SOC chapter of the Communication Honor Society Lambda Pi Eta.