

# COMM 358 - 201 Newscasting & Producing

Spring 2020

Tuesdays 1-2:15 p.m.; Thursdays 1-4 p.m.

SOC 100 (Convergence Studio)

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-12:30 and 2:30-4:00 (or by appointment)

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## ◆ Course Goals and Objectives

This class will function as a television newsroom. You will gather information, write, shoot and edit stories, and produce webcasts on deadline for *Loyola News Chicago*. Our goal is to cover and present news, not just produce a “show.” Our programs follow a “live to tape” approach to simulate a live newscast, with no post-production. The course is designed to help advance your professional skills. If your goal is to work in news, there is no better experience than working on a newscast. If your goal is some other aspect of broadcast production or communication, the writing, presentation and video skills, as well as the experience of working on a deadline, will prove invaluable.

To perform well in this class, it is imperative that you keep up with the news. You will be expected to know what’s happening in current events, in our community, in the state, nation, and world through any or all of the following: TV and radio news (or podcasts), newspapers, credible online news sources, and news sites on social media. You will greatly enhance your ability to produce timely and relevant newscasts when you come to class informed. 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 TV 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** Intro to Video Production (or its equivalent) and either **COMM 256** Broadcast Newswriting or **COMM 284** Video Storytelling (or their equivalents).

## ◆ Written Materials

There is no required textbook for the course, though there will be readings assigned from various sources. Also, expect a number of handouts to supplement the reading material. You may wish to use a folder or notebook to keep the handouts together. Some, such as the Broadcast Style Guide, you will need as an ongoing reference.

## ◆ Supplies

We will be using the **Sony XDCAM**, 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 in the field, you will need:

- SD Card(s), class 6, minimum of 8GB (two cards recommended)
- 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

Our main focus will be on all aspects of TV/web newscasts: producing, reporting packages and other forms of visual stories, on-air presentation, and social media for reporting and audience engagement. 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 days.

Because we have a small class, we will have the opportunity to explore different styles and formats of news production and distribution. You will be assigned different tasks throughout the semester, with assignments in newsgathering and presenting and the technical side of TV production.

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 1, at 1 p.m.**, when we will gather to wrap up the semester.

## ◆ Video Stories

Throughout the 10 weeks of newscasts, you will need to contribute periodic video stories done outside of class and **completely finished** – *edited and uploaded to the server, with scripts submitted in their final form* – **by noon the day of the newscast.**

To practice developing stories in different formats, you must produce at least one vo/sot and two packages throughout the semester. Beyond that requirement, you may earn points in different combinations, depending on what best suits your professional preparation goals as well as your schedule. (Note that if you plan to apply for reporting jobs, packages will be more valuable.)

Additional details on the video story requirements will be distributed separately.

You will also produce some same-day stories, both to practice reporting on tight deadlines and to enable us to cover more timely stories. Same-day stories will be part of your newscast contribution grade but will not count toward the outside videos assignment.

## ◆ Story Considerations

Story Subjects: For objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, close friends or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't build stories around people you are related to or are particularly close to. Likewise, avoid doing stories about groups you belong to. Such stories will receive a grade reduction, unless: 1) it is a unique circumstance, 2) the story is *about* your connection to the story subject, *and* 3) the connection is revealed in the story.

- Also, you are expected to make a concerted effort to round out your stories with a diverse subject base, particularly ethnically and culturally.

Script Review on Packages: To help you improve your stories before they air, script review with Professor Hood is required on packages before editing. This can be done by email, in person, or by phone. Plan ahead to allow enough time to shoot additional elements, if necessary. **Failing to get script review will result in a deduction from your video points.**

- I encourage you to discuss story ideas with me before you even shoot, to help in developing well-balanced, well-sourced stories.
- You may also wish to have other video stories (vo's and vo/sot's) reviewed ahead of time, though these are easier to change or re-edit, if needed.

## ◆ Other assignments

Additional assignments will be focused on preparing you for generating news and producing newscasts. Also, expect quizzes on news, broadcast style and terms.

## ◆ Grading

Grades will be based on your contributions and performance on the weekly newscasts, a portfolio of your best work, along with reading reflections and other 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 newscast contributions (incl. videos)	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 videos or other 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 TV News 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. Any assignments missed due to unexcused absences may not be made up.

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 newscasts.

- 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 (for example, this class and Mosaic), it may be permissible to cover the same story for both courses if the stories are in different formats (such as broadcast and print) and both professors approve.*

*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](http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml).

### **Managing Life Crises and Finding Support**

Should you encounter an unexpected 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 meeting with me during office hours. Learn more about the center and its resources at: <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) (formerly known as SSWD). 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.

## ◆ Professional Staff

### **Professor Lee Hood**

This is my eleventh year at Loyola, and I was recognized in 2018 with the national Edward L. Bliss award for distinguished broadcast journalism education. I have 18 years of experience in television news, most of that 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.

### **Jim Collins, Studio Manager**

Jim is a valuable resource for all production-related aspects of the newscasts. He also serves as the advisor for Rambler Productions, our student-staffed production company. In addition to his experience in directing, videography and editing, Jim is an accomplished filmmaker who has produced several independent films. He holds a communication degree from Loyola, and has been on staff since 1988.

➤ *Contact info:* [Jcollin@luc.edu](mailto:Jcollin@luc.edu) Office: SOC 100 (studio) Phone: 312-915-6808

### **Jamason Chen, Technology Manager**

Jamason is in charge of our technology needs. He can help you explore the technological capabilities of the studio from basic programs to more advanced, so ask for his help as far as your curiosity will take you! Before coming to Loyola in Fall 2009, Jamason worked for digital media services at the University of Minnesota; and taught and served in engineering capacities in Singapore and Shanghai. He holds an MA in Mass Communication from the University of Minnesota and a BS in Computer Science from East China Normal University. He is an ardent, accomplished photographer.

➤ *Contact info:* [Jchen4@luc.edu](mailto:Jchen4@luc.edu) Office: SOC 100 (studio) Phone: 312-915-6936

### **Jillian Musielak, Technology Coordinator**

Jillian is the technology coordinator in charge of the Owl (equipment) Lab. She earned both a BFA and MFA from the department of Film, Video, New Media, and Animation at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. As a graduate student, she worked as the Collections and Media Assistant for the Video Data Bank at SAIC. Her interests lie in media theory, archival practices, and narrative video, with a specific interest in language and new ways of conveying emotions. Her videos have been screened recently at festivals in Portland and Mexico.

➤ *Contact info:* [jmusielak@luc.edu](mailto:jmusielak@luc.edu) Office: SOC 004 Phone: 312-915-8830

## **Newscasting & Producing Schedule**

**Tues Jan. 14** General intro: Class structure, TV terms and jobs, studio basics

**Thurs Jan. 16** Intro to News Producing; using the newsroom computer system

**Tues Jan. 21** Writing and scripting refresher: writing to video and graphics, following broadcast style (see Professor Hood's Broadcast Style Guide)

**Thurs Jan. 23** Packaging for TV and other story types, the A/B's of vo/sot's  
**Due:** Producing assignment

**Tues Jan. 28** Cameras, video and editing review; video story expectations  
**Due:** Writing assignment

**Thurs Jan. 30** TV Symbiosis: Combined on-air and technical training  
--On-air training: Anchoring and using the teleprompter  
--Technical operations: Using the control room/switcher, running studio cameras

**Tues Feb. 4** News philosophy, developing ideas for our newscasts  
➤ **Community Quiz Redo**

**Thurs Feb. 6** Deadline reporting practice  
➤ *Bring in video cards and come prepared for field assignments.*  
**Due:** First video stories (written and edited)

**Tues Feb. 11** News meeting and preparations for first newscast  
**Due:** Newscast log & critique, program ideas  
(Upload first video stories to server)

**Thurs Feb. 13** **First Newscast Day**

**Tues Feb. 18** Teases and Promoting Your Work  
*Reading assignment:* "Putting on Your Marketing Cap" (reading provided on Sakai)

**Thurs Feb. 20** Newscast Day

**Tues Feb. 25** TV news careers; the job hunt  
**Due:** Tease assignment I

**Thurs Feb. 27** Newscast Day

**Week of Mar. 2** **SPRING BREAK**

**Tues Mar. 10** Incorporating Online & Social Media

**Thurs Mar. 12** Newscast Day

**Tues Mar. 17** Extra field reporting day: Illinois primary election  
**Due:** Tease assignment II

**Thurs Mar. 19** Newscast Day

**Tues Mar. 24** The Producer as Manager

**Thurs Mar. 26** Newscast Day

**Tues Mar. 31** The Business of TV

**Thurs Apr. 2** Newscast Day

**Tues Apr. 7** Career development advice, with guest speaker Jill Geisler

**Thurs Apr. 9** Newscast Day (Easter break begins after newscast)

**Tues Apr. 14** Looking Ahead

**Thurs Apr. 16** Newscast Day

**Tues Apr. 21** TBA

**Thurs Apr. 23** Last Newscast Day

**Fri May 1** Final Portfolios due and end-of-semester celebration, 1 p.m.

*\* We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise. Additional assignments and due dates may be added as the semester progresses.*

## Guiding Principles for Newscasting and Producing

- 1) TV is a team sport
- 2) Timing is everything
- 3) Whatever it takes...
- 4) When in Rome...
- 5) Remember the Journalism