

I. CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Department Information:

Division:	Humanities
Department:	Radio/Television/Film
Course ID:	RTVF 104
Course Title:	Basic Writing for Broadcast
Units:	3
Lecture:	3 Hours
Prerequisite:	None

- B. Catalog and Schedule Description: This course covers the fundamentals of gathering information and preparing copy for radio and television news and entertainment reporting. Topics include how to write for speaking, write objectively, journalism ethics, and legal issues such as libel and right to privacy. Students will write short scripts including voice-overs, sound bites, and news-style packages.

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: ONE

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

A. Write for speaking rather than reading:

1. Brevity
2. Clarity

B. Research a news story

C. Determine how and when to include the following in a story:

1. Attribution
2. Background information
3. Balance and fairness
4. Human interest

D. Maintain objectivity in news writing

E. Demonstrate improved vocabulary and spelling skills

F. Demonstrate a basic understanding of:

1. Libel
2. Rights of privacy
3. Ethics and good taste

G. Write a "reader" for television

H. Write "voice over" copy for television

I. Write an introduction to a sound bite (sot) for television

J. Write a short (one minute to one minute thirty seconds) package

K. Write 'actualities', reports, newscasts for radio

L. Understand the rules of "readability" of broadcast scripts

M. Know how to write leads and endings - different types, and reasons for using them

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

A. Introduction to Broadcast Style: writing for speaking, not reading

1. Short sentences
2. Informal tone
3. Active voice
4. Leads and endings
 - a) Hard
 - b) Soft

San Bernardino Valley College
Curriculum Approved: February 24, 2003
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- c) Umbrella
- d) Delayed
- e) Question
- f) Thowaway
- 5. Avoiding jargon
- B. Finding the news: researching a story
 - 1. Futures files
 - 2. Beats
 - 3. Sources
- C. Writing a story to include:
 - 1. Attribution (WHO said it?)
 - 2. Background information (WHAT do I need to know?)
 - 3. Balance and fairness (maintaining objectivity)
 - 4. Human interest (who CARES?)
- D. Libel, Attribution, Quotation, rights of privacy, ethics, and 'good taste': what is appropriate for television and radio news and why?
- E. Write a "reader" for television: copy read on-camera by a news anchor
- F. Write "voice over" copy for television: copy read by a news anchor while video is played
- G. Angles
 - 1. Sidebar
 - 2. Spin
- H. Write an introduction to a sound bite (SOT) for television: (sound bite: a recorded quote)
- I. Write a short (one minute to one minute thirty seconds) package: (a news story by a reporter in the field that is prerecorded and edited, with pictures and/or graphics depicting the story)
- J. Story Structure, Leads, Language: how to write the story
 - 1. Lead
 - 2. Who/What/When/Where
 - 3. Ending
- K. Radio News: how to find sources of Radio News
- L. Write news reports
- M. Write a newscast from wire copy
- N. Rules of "readability" of broadcast scripts

1. Proper ways to write numbers
2. How to edit copy
3. Pronunciation guides
- O. Grammar
 1. Punctuation for writing vs. speaking
 2. Use of adverbs/adjectives
 3. Parallel construction
 4. Agreement of subject/verb
- P. Precision and Clarity
 1. Word Choice
 2. Writing for emphasis
 3. Colloquial expressions
 4. Pronouns/proper nouns
 5. Comparisons
 6. Attribution
 7. First person vs. third person
- Q. Editorials (opinion) vs. Hard news (facts)
- R. Reducing bias in language
 1. Level of specificity
 2. Sensitivity to labels
 3. Gender
 4. Sexual orientation
 5. Racial and Ethnic Identity
 6. Disabilities
 7. Age

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Instructors will present the course content through lecture and analysis of current news stories from radio and television
- B. Material will be taught through active participation, where students research, write, and analyze scripts based on current news or local events
- C. Students may be asked to transcribe scripts from radio and/or television, for class analysis
- D. Guest speakers from local radio and television stations may be invited to discuss their work
- E. Multimedia, including video- and audiotapes, and field trips may be used to enhance the classroom experience.

For on-line classes, lectures will be delivered via computer with the same course content as classroom lectures; students will participate in on-line discussions that will also parallel traditional classroom discussions. Written assignments will be identical in content. Tests will be given in proctored exam situations, during on-campus scheduled class periods, or on-line as open book essay tests, at the discretion of the instructor.

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading and Research
 1. Students will read assigned chapters in texts, as well as sample scripts and critiques
 2. Students will record and analyze television, radio, and Internet video and audio presentations.
- B. Writing
 1. Students will write a series of short scripts including, but not limited to: a commentary, a commercial, an interview, a news story, and a voice over.

2. Students will write critiques of other student scripts.

VII. EVALUATION:

- A. Methods of Evaluation
 1. Examinations and quizzes (the instructor will select two of the following):
 - a) Written quizzes throughout the semester
 - b) Written midterm examination
 - c) Written final examination
 - d) A written critique of a professional broadcast
- B. Scripts (the instructor will include all of the following in evaluation):
 1. Brevity and clarity.
 - a) Matching content to the assignment.
 - b) Balance and fairness.
 - c) Attribution and human interest.
 - d) Grammar and spelling
- C. Frequency of Evaluations:
 1. Each student will be graded on writing assignments at least once every other week.
- D. Typical Examination Questions
 1. Evaluate the following script based on: brevity and clarity, attribution, content, grammar, and spelling.
 2. Explain three rules for 'writing for speaking'.
 3. Edit the following script.
- E. Frequency:
 1. Written examinations, tests, or quizzes will be given throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.
 2. At least two written tests/quizzes or critique assignments will be given during a semester.
 3. Students will be evaluated at least every two weeks on script/recording assignments.

VIII. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- News Writing and Reporting for Today's Media (McGraw-Hill Series in Mass Communication) by Bruce D. Itule, Douglas A. Anderson. 5th Edition, Published by McGraw Hill Text Publication. date: ISBN: 0073654981. June 1999.
- Workbook for Writing and Reporting News : A Coaching Method by Carole Rich, 3rd edition Wadsworth Pub Co; ISBN: 0534559824. (April 1999).
- Broadcast News Handbook: Writing, Reporting, and Producing by C. A. Tuggle, Suzanne Huffman, Forrest Carr. McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages; ISBN: 0072396822; (July 12, 2000).
- Getting the Whole Story: Reporting and Writing the News (The Guilford Communication Series) by Cheryl J. Gibbs, Tom Warhover. Guilford Press; ISBN: 1572307951; (September 2002).

- IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:** May need to provide their own video/audio tape or computer disk