

**JOURNALISM 521**  
**DOCUMENTARY PRE-PRODUCTION**  
**SYLLABUS-COURSE READER**  
**Tuesday – 2 to 4:40 p.m.**

**PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own. In journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalogue: "Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments, will receive a failing grade in the course and be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to the school's policy."

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The DSP phone number is 213-740-0776.

**INTERNSHIPS**

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive instructor approval, a student must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and bring it to the instructor to sign by the end of the third week of classes. The student must submit the signed letter to the media organization, along with the evaluation form provided by the Career Development Office. The form should be filled out by the intern supervisor and returned to the instructor at the end of the semester. No credit will be given if an evaluation form is not turned in to the instructor by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism class.

## **INSTRUCTOR**

Joe Saltzman, Professor of Journalism

Director of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a project of the Norman Lear Center, USC Annenberg

Office: 213-740-3918

Home: 310-377-8883 Cell: 310-663-1390

E-Mail: saltzman@usc.edu (best way to reach me)

### **Office Hours:**

Monday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday: 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a pre-production class. It concerns the ethical problems, research, reporting, interviewing, writing, legal issues, economics, aesthetics and diversity of a non-fiction program.

### **Course Outcomes:**

Journalism 521 enables the student to select a topic and take that topic from an idea to a completed professional non-fiction program on paper. The final project consists of a complete treatment with audio and video instructions based on a full semester of research, reporting, editing, evaluation.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will be graded on **A NON-FICTION TREATMENT** complete with audio and video instructions -- for a video or audio project. It will be based on a full semester of research, reporting, editing, evaluation. The audio will include transcripts from audiotapes you produce in the field, written interviews and other material. The video will closely approximate the instructions to the cameraperson and eventually the editor. Go on the assumption that if you see it clearly, it can be photographed under your direction; if you hear it clearly, you can use it as audio.

There will be assignments throughout the semester. Most generally will relate to your treatment assignment. This will include finding the subject for your non-fiction piece and getting your subject approved, producing a rough draft of your shooting treatment and producing the final composite treatment.

## GRADING

Percentage of grade:

Non-Fiction Treatment.....	100 percent
(Lists.....	20 percent)
(Shooting Schedule....	20 percent)
(General Summary.....	20 percent)
(Final Treatment.....	40 percent)

## LETTER TO ALL STUDENTS PLANNING TO TAKE J-521

Journalism 521 is a **pre-production** course. The purpose is to teach an organizational approach to creating interesting and relevant non-fiction television. While it is not a production course, you may wish to use the product of this class to produce a non-fiction program during your time at USC Annenberg. Whether you choose to produce a program or a newsmagazine segment or just wish to learn the basics of long-form non-fiction television, the assignments in this course are practical and will prepare you for an easy transition into producing.

Your non-fiction program should revolve around an in-depth profile of an individual whose life and times you will explore in great and compelling detail. It is important that you select this individual BEFORE you attend the first class session.

Keep in mind that a profile of an individual is defined in literary terms as a biographical essay presenting the subject's most noteworthy characteristics and achievements, an account of the series of events making up a person's life. In art, the painter creates a picture that is an image or likeness of the subject. In a non-fiction program, a profile explores a person's life and times in all of its complexity. Anyone who sees the final program should experience that person's life as if he or she had lived it. It is a complete visual and audio exploration of a person's life in great detail showing the viewer who that person is, why that person is important, how that person came to be who he or she is. It is the story of a person's life and times told through the eyes of that person and the people around him or her.

It is important to consider people from all cultures, religions and points of view. Profiles should cut across six societal fault lines – race, class, gender, generation, geography and religion. The most interesting profiles involve people seldom seen in the media and often ignored by many in this society.

Some guidelines:

\*Your idea should be manageable. Make sure you have easy access (and continual access) to the people and places in your idea.

\*Be sure you can finish the Non-Fiction Program Treatment in one semester.

\*Pick an idea that is easily researched -- preferably one you have researched in the past, or know a good deal about. There isn't a great deal of time to spend on researching an unknown subject.

\*Pick a simple idea. Pick an idea that focuses on one small part of the world in which you live.

\* If you are planning to produce your non-fiction program, you will need to find someone who you would want to see on television – someone whose story has depth and broad appeal to a larger audience.

Here are some ideas: Profile of a member of your family (anyone who has an interesting career, an interesting life, or interesting stories to tell). Profile of a Quadriplegic, a Welfare Mother, a Juror, an ER Doctor, a Stand-Up Comic, a Night Court Judge, a Baseball Umpire, a Train Conductor, a Truck Driver, a Zoo Keeper, a Sushi Chef, a Tuna Fisherman, a Public Defender or a Criminal Attorney, a Mail Carrier, a Brick Layer, a Bus Driver, an Airline Pilot, a High School Teacher, a Waitress, a Symphony Conductor, a Philanthropist.

\*Come to the first class with at least one idea you can live with for an entire semester, one idea you really want to turn into a non-fiction program treatment you can publish when the class is finished.

### VERY IMPORTANT DEADLINES

You are in a journalism class and consequently are expected to make all deadlines without any delay or excuses. I also expect no absences and no tardies. Make a decision during this first class -- if you can't handle deadlines and the rest, get out now and save us both a lot of grief.

Here are your assignments and deadlines:

#### WEEK ONE (January 10)

Orientation

Ideas

**ASSIGNMENT:** Idea Summary

#### WEEK TWO (January 17)

Begin Secondary Research, Research Techniques, Lists

**DEADLINE:** Selection of Idea

#### WEEK THREE (January 24)

Pre-Video Interview

**DEADLINE:** List of Objectives

#### \*WEEK FOUR (January 31)

Video Interview

**DEADLINE:** Last chance to have idea for Non-Fiction Program approved. If no idea is approved by this date, you will receive a "W" or "F"

**DEADLINE:**

List of People

List of Locations and Actualities

List of Video and Audio

List of Topics and Questions

#### WEEK FIVE (February 7)

Organization of audio/video elements

**DEADLINE:** Title and Summary

#### \*WEEK SIX (February 14)

Organization of audio/video elements

**DEADLINE:** Shooting Schedule: All the audio/video you hope to get on film/tape including interviews, locations, actualities.

WEEK SEVEN (February 21)

Structure: Prologue-Beginning

WEEK EIGHT (February 28)

Middle

**DEADLINE:** General Summary

WEEK NINE (March 6)

The Middle and the End

WEEK TEN -- SPRING BREAK (March 13)

WEEK ELEVEN (March 20)

Structure

**DEADLINE:** The Beginning: Prologue

WEEK TWELVE (March 27)

Structure

WEEK THIRTEEN (April 3)

Review of Final Project

**FIRST DEADLINE:** TREATMENT

WEEK FOURTEEN (April 10)

Review of Final Project

**LAST DEADLINE:** Final Treatment

WEEK FIFTEEN (April 17)

Final Class.

WEEK SIXTEEN (April 24)

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

**INSTRUCTOR BIO****Joe Saltzman**

Joe Saltzman is professor of journalism and director, The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a project of the Norman Lear Center, in the USC Annenberg School for Communication. He has been a prolific print and electronic journalist for more than 50 years. He created the broadcasting sequence for the USC School of Journalism in 1974 and served as chair of broadcasting for 17 years as well as associate and acting director of the School of Journalism and associate dean of USC Annenberg for five years.

He has taught at USC for 44 years, is a tenured professor at USC and the winner of four teaching awards including the 2010 Scripps-Howard-AEJMC National Journalism and Mass Communication Teacher of the Year awarded in 2011.

Saltzman is currently director of The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC), a Norman Lear Center project ([www.ijpc.org](http://www.ijpc.org)). He has been researching the image of the journalist in popular culture almost 20 years and is considered an expert in the field. The IJPC's first publication is a book written by Saltzman, *Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film*. The IJPC Web Site and the IJPC Database are considered the major world-wide sources in the field.

Before coming to USC, Saltzman was a senior writer-producer at CBS, Channel 2, in Los Angeles. His documentaries and news specials won more than 50 awards including the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award in Broadcast Journalism (broadcasting's equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize), an American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award, two Edward R. Murrow Awards for reporting, two National Association of Television Production Executives (NATPE) awards, an Ohio State University award, two San Francisco State University Broadcast Media awards, four Radio-Television News Association's Golden Mike awards, five National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Regional Emmy Awards, three Greater Los Angeles Press Club awards, five Associated Press Certificates of Excellence and Merit, a Scripps-Howard Foundation Distinguished Journalism citation, American Cancer Society's First Annual Media Award, American Women in Radio and Television's first certificate of commendation, a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Image Award, and others. Saltzman is listed in Who's Who in America, the International Who's Who in Literature, Who's Who in Education, Who's Who in California, Who's Who in the West, and International Biography.

Saltzman graduated from the University of Southern California with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism with minors in English, cinema and political science. He was Phi Beta Kappa and editor of the college newspaper, the Daily Trojan. He was a Seymour Berkson Fellow at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism where he received a Master of Science degree with high honors. He also won the Robert Sherwood Traveling Fellowship from Columbia.



After graduation, he was a general assignment reporter for the now defunct daily newspaper, the Minneapolis *Star Tribune's* San Fernando *Valley Times TODAY* and news editor of the *Palisadian Post*, a weekly newspaper in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

He worked for CBS from 1964 to 1974 producing everything from daily newscasts to major documentaries. He produced one of the first television magazines in the country, "Ralph Story's Los Angeles," and another weekly series with Rod Serling. He won numerous awards for his investigative news series.

But it is his documentary program legacy that most will remember. "I believe the documentary program films of Joe Saltzman rank among the finest in the world," said veteran broadcaster-critic Norman Corwin. "If I am wrong, I have wasted 15 years as chairman of the Documentary program Awards Committee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. In that span I have seen about 2,000 documentaries of all lengths, and based on that experience, I make the flat statement that there are no other filmmakers alive who more consistently, effectively -- and often daringly -- deal with basic aspects of social concern."

The six award-winning programs are:

*Black on Black*, a 90-minute landmark documentary program told without a narrator depicting how it feels to be black and live in South-Central Los Angeles and first broadcast in 1968. One critic wrote: "The best documentary program ever made on what it feels like to be black and live in the urban ghetto." Winner of many awards including the Emmy and the first NAACP Image award for documentary program.

*The Unhappy Hunting Ground*, a 90-minute documentary program on the Native American in Los Angeles. Without a narrator, the program is told by the voices and faces of Indians. First broadcast in 1970. One critic wrote: "An agonizing study of the plight of the contemporary American Indian is searching, sad and maddening -- maddening because of what this program shows man can do to man. It is a stunning achievement."

*The Junior High School*, a two-hour documentary program on the junior high school experience. A full year in production, first broadcast in 1972. Part One: "Heaven, Hell or Purgatory." Part Two: "From A to Zoo." One critic wrote: "The finest documentary program ever produced on American education. No one should miss it." To which a teacher added, "It fully documents in ways I never thought possible, the world of the junior high school student and teacher. It is an amazing document and for the life of me, I can't figure out how they did it."

*The Very Personal Death of Elizabeth Schell Holt-Hartford*, a 30-minute documentary program on an 82-year-old woman trying to live out her life in dignity. First broadcast in 1972. The Los Angeles Times: "A moving, poignant film essay."

*Rape*, a 30-minute documentary program on the crime of rape. First broadcast in 1974, it achieved the highest rating of any documentary program in the history of Los Angeles television at the time. The Los Angeles Times: "The first and best report on the crime of rape ever presented on television."

*Why Me?* a 60-minute documentary program on breast cancer first broadcast in 1974. The first major television documentary to deal with breast cancer. "A landmark documentary program," said one critic. The program is credited with saving thousands of lives.

After joining the USC faculty, Saltzman has continued to be a prolific electronic and print journalist, writing a media column for *USA Today*, the magazine for the Society for the Advancement of Education (where he also serves as associate mass media editor). He has produced many medical documentaries and newsmagazines, functioned as a senior investigative producer for *Entertainment Tonight* (under famed editor Jim Bellows), and has written articles, reviews, columns, and opinion pieces for numerous magazines and newspapers.

He has been researching the image of the journalist in popular culture for fifteen years and is considered an expert in the field. His IJPC database and this web site are considered the world-wide resources on the subject. Saltzman was awarded the 2005 Journalism Alumni Award from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, the Alumni Association's highest alumni honor.

## LIST OF OBJECTIVES

A program begins with an **idea**. The idea leads to a **working title** and then a list of objectives that clearly articulate why you want to develop a non-fiction project and what you hope to achieve with it. If you cannot answer two basic questions – “So what?” and “Who cares?” – then you don’t have much of an idea and it won’t make a good program. For that matter, if it isn’t a good idea, you won’t be able to persuade anyone that it needs to be produced.

Choose an idea that sparks your interest and is something you want to watch on television. The idea needs to not only have strong visual elements and good characters, but also must be done within the confines of this class. Regardless of whom you work for, pitching an idea is an essential part of the television process. It is something that is done every day whether in news or in long-form non-fiction programs.

Once you select an idea, you will need to consider the **program objectives**. What do you want viewers to learn or understand after they watch your finished program? Before you can produce any non-fiction program, make sure you understand why you are doing it and what you hope to achieve with it. Start by making a list of what you want your viewers to learn or understand after they watch the finished program.

SAMPLES:

PERSONAL PROFILE EXAMPLE: A RAPE VICTIM

### ***STOLEN INNOCENCE*** (Working title)

**NOTICE** that the title is a *working title*. Titles are extremely subjective. Networks change them all the time because they have their own views on what catches a viewer’s attention and what sells. Two and three word titles work much better than longer, more cumbersome titles. The reason concerns attracting an audience and TV listing space.

#### FIRST EMPHASIZE THE OBJECTIVES INVOLVING THE PROFILE:

To give viewers a sense of what it is like to be a victim of the crime of rape; to show what it is like to be Jane Doe, a 25-year-old woman raped at knife-point, to show what happened before, during and after the rape; to follow her experiences with the police, with the medical staff and with the legal system; to show how the crime affects her family, her friends, her relatives....AND SO ON.

#### THEN EMPHASIZE THE OBJECTIVES INVOLVING THE PEOPLE AROUND THE PROFILE:

To give viewers a sense of what it is like to know someone who has been raped, to see the effects of the crime on people who are close to the rape victim....AND SO ON.

#### THEN EMPHASIZE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GENERAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM:

To give viewers an understanding of the crime of rape, how frequent it is, the statistics, the variations on the crime, the effect the legal system has on the rape victim.... AND SO ON.

## THE LISTS

Once the idea has been selected, producers embark on a research mission. The purpose is to find what experts and others say about the topic. In research you'll do interviews with people familiar with your topic as well as articles in professional, trade and popular journals, magazines and newspapers. All are necessary because from these materials, producers find the elements that can best be used to build a cohesive story. The aim is to synthesize the material and to develop a new and comprehensive direction. Managing the information during research becomes an interesting challenge. A way to do it is to build lists concerning the major elements that make up a program.

Research generally yields a variety of sources that range from not terribly useful to essential. The research you find can be used in very specific ways, by pulling out bits of information you need to do your non-fiction program. Begin by highlighting important information throughout your research articles and make notes in margins that pertain to interesting people, places, ideas, and so on. These margin notes form the basis for *lists* that will play a key role in organizing your project. (Conversely, a *lack* of such organization can make a non-fiction project a nightmare!)

Instead of reading or browsing through all of the secondary research, you can use it in very specific ways, pulling out of all your research (secondary and direct) the exact bits of information you need to do your non-fiction program.

These LISTS should be reevaluated every day, updated, changed, added to, edited. They change up to and even during your production-shooting schedule. They begin in secondary research and become increasingly sophisticated as the days/weeks go by, especially during direct research. Update and change them at least once a week, preferably every day.

The five lists (done simultaneously) are:

### THE PEOPLE LIST

This list includes any person who has something to say about your subject. It includes "experts" such as authorities, published authors, victims, friends and family of victims and the like. As you compile your list of people (to be consulted during direct research), add an asterisk to any name mentioned more than once. Those names with the most asterisks will be valuable sources for you in the weeks ahead.

At first, this list, as all the others, may well be a wish list compiled from statistical studies and personal evaluation. For example, if you are doing a program on rape, you might at first list Victim #1, Victim #2 and Victim #3. As your secondary research continues, Victim #1 will become more specific: perhaps a White, 35-year-old single woman. As you do your direct research, Victim #1 will include a name, an address, and a phone number. The constant evaluation, re-evaluation and updating of your names is very important. Each day, the lists should become more specific.

The People List should include every person (name or description) that you will want to consider for use in your program. Name the person or possibility, and then add a sentence or two describing who this person is and their possible role in the program.

**EXAMPLE:**

Joe Saltzman, Professor of Journalism in the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California. He is the profile of the program. (COULD ADD MORE DETAILS ABOUT WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DOES).

Barbara Saltzman. Joe Saltzman's wife, a former editor at the Los Angeles Times and now executive director of the Jester & Pharley Phund, a charity. (COULD ADD MORE DETAILS ABOUT WHO SHE IS AND WHAT SHE DOES)

**THE LOCATIONS AND ACTUALITIES LIST**

Definition: For the purpose of the class, an actuality is anything that happens or can happen in front of the camera.

This list contains every possible location you will have to go to get your visual and audio information for the non-fiction program. Every person on your list will have at least one location and probably more: residence, work, any location where something happens involving that person. Every actuality has its own location. Document the person's professional and personal life.

The Location-Actualities list should include every location you will want to consider for use in your non-fiction program. Under each location, you should list every conceivable, every possible actuality that may occur. Be as specific as possible. After listing a location, describe why that location is in the program.

**EXAMPLE:**

Location: Joe Saltzman's home in Palos Verdes Estates. (COULD ADD OTHER DETAILS, ADDRESSES, SPECIFIC LOCATIONS WITHIN THE HOME)

Complete Coverage of Joe Saltzman in his home including (ADD AS MANY SPECIFIC DETAILS AS YOU HAVE)

Then go on to the next location and the other actualities under that specific location.

NOTE: Don't forget locations documenting your profile's daily life -- going to the movies, restaurants, the mall, church, doctor's office, beauty parlor or barber shop, hobbies (golf, tennis, ballroom dancing), and so on.

## **VISUALS LIST**

This list should include every possible visual that is not an actuality that you will want to consider for use in the non-fiction program. These visuals are historic in nature. They include photographs, home or video movies, TV or film clips, graphics, animation, any possible visual idea that may be of use in your non-fiction program. Make sure you describe what each visual consists of and why it is on the list.

EXAMPLE.

Complete photographic coverage of (NAME) from before birth to the present.

## **AUDIO LIST**

This list should include every possible piece of audio that you will want to consider for use in the non-fiction program. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE ACTUALITY, VISUAL OR INTERVIEW AUDIO MATERIAL. The audio on this list is historic in nature and may include radio broadcasts, sound effects, music, any possible audio idea that may be of use in your non-fiction program.

## **TOPIC-QUESTION-STATEMENT LIST**

This is the most difficult list to compile. It is a single list of topics-questions for everyone, not separate lists of questions for each person on your list. By rewording each question, it can work for every pre-video interview.

All of your questions must encourage dialogue and conversation. Do not include any yes/no questions (Do you like living in California?) or any questions that will end up in short answers (How old are you?).

The first thing to do is to create a list of topics that covers the entire range of your non-fiction program. This list can first be compiled by sitting in front of a computer screen or blank piece of paper and listing all of the possible questions and ideas you have about the non-fiction program. Then this list can be fleshed out through your secondary research. Chapter endings in a good book on your subject can be helpful. A Time or Newsweek cover story on your subject can be helpful. The topics should completely cover the subject area. For example, in a program about RAPE, the topics would include:

- Definition of Rape -- What is Rape?
- Myths about Rape
- What happened before the Rape?
- What happened during the Rape?
- What happened after the Rape?
- The Police
- The Doctors
- The Courtroom
- Reaction of Parents/Friends
- What to do when confronted by a Rapist

And so on. Under each topic heading, list the questions that occur to you, and add to these topics and questions as you complete your secondary research. The more research you do, the clearer the topics and questions will be. You should have only a few questions under each topic. If you have more than a dozen questions, your topic is probably too large. Keep the topics short and specific. Childhood. Parents. Siblings. Junior High School. High School. College. First Job. And so on.

REMEMBER: Your goal in the pre-video interview is not to get quick answers to complicated questions, but to eventually get on camera self-contained statements rather than answers to questions.

Here is one way to begin. Don't forget to add any specific questions for your particular topics and to rewrite basic questions suggested in syllabus to fit each particular topic.

## CHILDHOOD

Describe your childhood.

### ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences growing up? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

Describe your hopes, your dreams when you were a child. Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What was the best part of growing up, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about being a kid, like the most about being a kid?

What did you think about before you fell asleep?

## PARENTS

Describe your parents.

### ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences with your parents? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

What was the best part of being with your parents, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about your parents, like the most about your parents?

## SIBLINGS (REPLACE WITH PROPER NAME FOR EACH BROTHER AND SISTER.

### MAKE A SEPARATE TOPIC FOR EACH BROTHER AND SISTER)

Describe your brothers, sisters.

### ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences with your siblings? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

What was the best part of being with your siblings, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about your siblings, like the most about your siblings?

## GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Describe your grammar school

ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences at school? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

Describe your hopes, your dreams when you were in school. Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What was the best part of being in school, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about school, like the most about school?

Describe you favorite teacher, least favorite teacher

## JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Describe your junior high school

ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences at school? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

Describe your hopes, your dreams when you were in school. Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What was the best part of being in school, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about school, like the most about school?

Describe you favorite teacher, least favorite teacher

## HIGH SCHOOL AND TEENAGE YEARS

Describe your teenage years, describe high school.

ADD QUESTIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT

What were your best experiences as teenager? In high school? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

Describe your hopes, your dreams when you were a teenager. Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What was the best part of being a teenager, being in school, the worst part, the most memorable part?

What did you dislike most about being a teenager, being in high school, like the most about being a teenager, being in high school?

What did you think about before you fell asleep?

Describe your favorite teacher, least favorite teacher

## COLLEGE YEARS

Same format.

## FIRST JOB

Same format



WORK (SUBSTITUTE SPECIFIC WORK FOR YOUR PROFILE)

Describe a typical day from the time you wake up to the time you go to bed

Describe your work, what you do at work.

Describe your boss, your co-workers

What were your best experiences at work, your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences at work?

What's the hardest part, the easiest part of your job?

Describe your hopes, your dreams at work

Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What do you hate the most about being at work, like the most about being at work.

OTHER TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED:

THE FUTURE

DATING/SEX

COURTSHIP/MARRIAGE

RELIGION

HOBBIES

CHILDREN/FAMILY

DAILY LIFE

NOW ADD THOSE TOPICS THAT ARE APPLICABLE TO YOUR SUBJECT AND DON'T FORGET TO USE THE EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS WHEN THEY ARE APPROPRIATE.

## ASKING QUESTIONS

Never ask questions that result in "yes" or "no" answers, or very short answers. Always start with phrases that encourage longer, more descriptive answers: "Tell me about..." or "Describe...." Always include a "Why" element in the question.

## EXAMPLES:

WRONG: Did you see the burglar when you opened the door?

RIGHT: Tell me what happened when you opened the door.

WRONG: How old were you when your mother died?

RIGHT: Tell me how old you were and what happened when your mother died. Or better yet, describe your childhood.

WRONG: When were you raped?

RIGHT: Tell me what happened before, during and after the rape?

WRONG: I imagine you felt as if your world had collapsed when you heard about your husband's death, that you felt as if your insides had been ripped out and that nothing mattered anymore and that everything became incomprehensible and wrong, and that everything came at you in a flood of memory and... on and on and on. SHUT UP AND LET THEM DO THE TALKING.

Here are some topics and questions that usually result in interesting statements:

Describe your childhood. Describe your parents, sisters, brothers, family.

Describe your teenage years and high school. Describe your college years. Describe your first job.

What do you think about just before you fall asleep at night?

Then add the following questions to any topic or category:

What were your best experiences? Your worst experiences? The funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences?

Describe your hopes, your dreams. Describe your fears, your nightmares.

What was the best part, the worst part, the most memorable part of.....

What did you dislike most about....like most about.....

## INTERVIEWING

### General Print Interview Techniques (Pre-Production Interviewing)

Your first task is to make sure the person trusts and likes you. You must win the interviewer's confidence or the interview won't work. Be agreeable. Be interested. If you look bored, the interview will be dull. Show the person you are interviewing that you are more interested in what he/she is saying than anything in the world. Win that person's confidence so that he/she will feel comfortable talking to you. Be sympathetic, honest. Talk yourself into being interested.

**LISTEN.** When the person answers your question or talks to you in any manner, listen intently to what he/she is saying. Take as many notes as you can. If the person speaks too fast, ask him/her the question again, or say, "You're telling me so many good things, I want to make sure I get what you are saying down perfectly. Could you please go over that again?" Or restate what he/she has told you and let him/her tell you it again; the person will tell you the same information in different language and it will help you make sure you have it right. **BUT REMEMBER TO LISTEN AND DO AS LITTLE TALKING AS POSSIBLE:** simple questions, words of approval and encouragement. Learn to keep your mouth shut and let the other person do the talking.

Ask lazy questions when your hand is getting so tired it seems as if it will fall off; a question that you really don't have to have a good answer for, but a question that will give you time to rest and get ready for the next important question. But a word of warning: Don't look bored or disinterested while he/she is answering that question; often a "lazy" question can turn into a dynamite answer. Also, you must always pay attention to the interviewee; never let him/her feel he/she is boring you.

Ask innocent, general questions at first, then lead up to your more important questions. Don't ask him, "Why did you kill your wife?" the minute you meet the person you are interviewing. Ask general questions -- tell me about your book; how do you feel about that problem; why did you decide to come to Los Angeles, and so on. Win confidence and establish a relaxing atmosphere.

A good technique in getting some final questions answered is to thank the subject for the interview, put away your notes and start to leave. This will thoroughly relax the interviewee -- he/she will think, "Thank God, this is over," smile, and begin to walk you to the door thanking you for the interview. As you get ready to leave, say, "Oh, yes...there was one other question...." Ask it and as he/she answers it, take out your note pad and begin once again taking notes. You can use this technique as often as you like during the same interview. Those last answers usually turn out to be the best. The person is more relaxed, less on guard.

Never lose eye contact with your subject. If your eyes are locked into the interviewee's eyes, he/she will be less likely to lie to you and to feel you are uninterested in what he/she is saying. Let the person always feel you are more interested in what he/she is saying than anything else in the world.

Telephone interviews are rougher. You must still win the person's confidence – but this time over an anonymous phone. Be polite, be humble, identify yourself immediately and be very apologetic about bothering him/her. Try to get the interviewee to talk about anything. No matter what the interview situation is – on the telephone or in person – the more he/she talks to you, and the more you listen, the friendlier the situation will become and the better the interview will be.

In hard news situations, an interview is generally used for one purpose -- to get hard and fast information. In that case, just ask the questions fast and try to get an answer -- almost any answer will do. Keep pressing until he/she gives you the information or hangs up on you. Then call again. Never give up. But always be polite. And be sure to LISTEN to the answers -- the person may be evading your questions so neatly that only a careful listening to the answer will reveal this.

There are some ways you can use a bit of information in order to get more information. That bit of information should either be the truth or information based on a kernel of truth -- anything to get the real facts of the story. For example, you can give out information that may be inaccurate so that the speaker will correct you with the accurate information. (Tell a bank manager, for example, that you have learned that the bandits took \$5,073.79 -- always be very specific in the amount. He will correct you by saying you are wrong in that amount. You will be insistent. Say your sources are impeccable. It doesn't hurt if he saw you talking to the tellers earlier. He will probably end up telling you, "No, you are definitely wrong. I know. They only took \$2,078.57. I'm the bank manager and I know more about it than you do.")

If you have two sources, call up one with all the information you have and add a bit of false information. Let Source No. 1 correct you. Then call up Source No. 2. Tell him/her all the information you now have and add a bit of false information. Let Source No. 2 correct you. Go back to Source No. 1. Slowly you will build an accurate account of what happened, how it happened, why it happened.

Be humble, even naive. Don't let the interviewee lose respect for you. It's a fine line. Do not act arrogant or be a smart-alec. Never argue with the person you are interviewing even if he/she is telling you things you know are not true or are bigoted or just plain stupid. Agree, take notes. Then, after you win confidence, you might say, "Some people might disagree with you. I've heard that...and so on." Let him/her say those people are wrong and the answer correcting the criticism will usually be good, strong copy. But don't fight with the person you are interviewing. Your job is to get statements -- the way the person feels -- down as clearly as possible. Then, let the reader judge as to whether the opinions are stupid or intelligent, true or false. Be complete. Let the interviewee say, after reading your interview, that it really sums up what he/she believes on a variety of subjects. Let the lying interviewees hang themselves. Don't help. Just quote them as accurately as possible and if they are deceitful, they will destroy themselves all by themselves.

A final quote from a TIME reporter:

"Finding people who will damn themselves out of their own mouths is not as hard as it seems: Given half a chance, most people will talk interminably about whatever possesses them, and the reporter who nods long enough in a sympathetic way cannot help but stumble over the most amazing self-incriminations -- most people are just not used to having others listen to them."

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE LISTS:**

**Q:** *How should the top of the page look and what needs to be placed at the bottom (more, continued, etc.)? Also, do I number my pages from the very first page to the last one, or do I start the page numbers over with each list?*

**A:** Put your name and page number in the left hand corner. Nothing on the bottom. You can single space this assignment. But leave some spaces between each name or location or topic. Do not split sentences from one page to another.

Number each page of each list. When you finish one list (i.e. People List), that part of the assignment is done. Print it out and staple it together. Then start your next list (i.e. Locations and Actualities). Number that list separately.

Leave five spaces between each location. Do not start a location low on the page. Start a new location on the next page if there is not enough room on the page you are working on.

**Q:** *Can you give me some tips for writing my lists?*

**A:** Make sure that you include this the following:

PEOPLE -- a varied array of speakers.

ACTUALITIES -- the visuals. What will we hear and see in addition to your interviews? What will you be showing us? What actuality sequences are available? What is your umbrella tying the whole non-fiction program together?

LOCATIONS -- Make sure you know exactly where you are going and what the most important locations are.

TOPIC-QUESTIONS -- Make sure your topics and questions cover your subject matter in-depth.

**Q:** *The profiles are identical twins. The twins basically do everything together: same friends, same classes, and same job. So if I create separate profiles for each, mostly all the information will be repetitive. Also, when I do two separate profiles, would the rest of the categories, (location, video/audio, and topic/question/statement) be separated for both profiles?*

**A:** Forget the number of profiles. You are doing lists for EVERYONE in your non-fiction program. The People List lists everyone involved in the non-fiction program, whether they fit profile #1 or profile #2. If the twins have the same friends, relatives, parents, those names appear ONLY ONCE on the People List. If one twin has a separate friend, that name appears on the People List.

When it comes to Topics-Questions-Statements -- ALL TOPICS QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS relate to everyone, not to your profiles. You are asking the same questions of everyone. Each topic should reflect both profiles – for example:

Twin #1 Childhood

Twin #2 Childhood

Parents

Siblings

Twin #1 Grammar School

Twin #2 Grammar School

Twin #1 Junior High School

Twin #2 Junior High School

(IF THE SCHOOLS ARE THE SAME YOU CAN KEEP IT TO ONE TOPIC:

Twins' Grammar School, Twins' High School, etc.

Twin #1 First Job

Twin #2 First Job

Twin #1 Work

Twin #1 Work

Twins' College (if same college), etc.

**PEOPLE LIST**

**Q:** *Is there any order in which I should list people?*

**A:** The first person listed should be your profile subject. Describe your profile and specify that he/she is the subject of the non-fiction program. For the other people in your list, describe their relationship to profile. Group people together for organization and clarity.

**Q:** *How do I list people, when there is more than one? Sibling One, Sibling Two? I don't yet know the names of my profile's siblings.*

**A:** Use numerals. Sibling #1 or John Smith's Sibling #1 instead of writing out John Smith's Sibling Number One. If you were, for example, listing two firemen, the other fireman should be Fireman #2. Another would be Fireman #3.

**Q:** *For my People List: how detailed do I have to be? I have people listed from my profile's childhood until now, and so far, I have put 9 pages together. Still have more to go. Is it OK to be extremely detailed?*

**A:** The People List can be as long as you want to make it. It should include all the possibilities. Don't worry about giving us too much to read. Just be as complete as possible. Emphasize those people in your profile's life who can shed light on who and what this person is all about.

## **LOCATIONS AND ACTUALITY LIST**

**Q:** *If we have several subjects going to the same location, should we list the location separately for each person?*

**A:** List each location only once no matter how many people are at that location. If you have several people at a location, then only mention that location once. DO NOT MENTION A LOCATION MORE THAN ONCE.

**Q:** *How many locations should I have per person?*

**A:** There will probably be many locations for your profile. Each of the other people on the list must be at least one location.



**Q:** *For the LOCATION/ACTUALITY list, is it necessary to have a separate actuality for my profile's mother, father, brother, etc? Or can I just include them in my location/actuality for my profile? So, for example:*

**Location:** *Jane Doe's home that she shares with parents and brother. Complete Coverage of Jane Doe in her home doing the dishes, talking to her mother, fighting with her brother, asking her father to extend her curfew... etc.*

*Is that sufficient for all the family members or do I have to separate the actualities for each individual person?*

**A:** You would list each person in the family separately:

Location: Jane Doe home in downtown Los Angeles that she shares with parents and brother.

Complete Coverage of Jane Doe at home including (list the specific details you have)

Complete Coverage of Ann Doe, Jane's mom, at home including (list specifics)

Complete Coverage of Arthur Doe, Jane's dad, at home including (list specifics)

And so on with each member of the family. By giving your subjects separate consideration, you will begin to see what each might add specifically to the mix.

**Q:** *How do I identify good locations for my profile?*

**A:** Think about the story you are telling. What locations will help us understand your profile? Where do you need to go to experience your profile's world, explore his/her character? Go as deeply into your profile's life as you can.

**Q:** *How many locations should I have for people other than my profile?*

**A:** You need at least one. It depends on the person's relationship to the profile. A parent, a best friend, a spouse may have more locations than a co-worker or an elementary school teacher. Generally you want to avoid having too many locations for minor characters, especially if they feel redundant or tangential. The location should make sense for the specific person.

**Q:** *Can I put more than one location on a page to cut down on the amount of paper I use?*

**A:** Yes, you can put more than one location on a page -- just don't split locations if possible (some locations may take several pages). Put about five spaces between each location.

## **VISUALS LIST**

**Q:** *Would scenics like a sunset or autumn foliage be considered visuals?*

**A:** Anything that you would shoot for the non-fiction program goes on the Location and Actuality List. This includes scenics. A word of caution about using the kind of scenics you describe: Sticking in a sunset, or any other general footage, is something to be avoided. You don't want to go to a sunset because your profile happens to mention something about a sunset, or to autumn foliage just because he says he likes that time of year. This is the kind of show-and-tell video that will make your presentation choppy and bland. Your video needs to connect directly to the story you are telling. If your subject is walking along the beach and there is a sunset, then use that sunset as a natural part of a visual sequence that features your profile. Don't use disassociated images that pop in and contribute nothing to the content and visual continuity of your non-fiction program.

As for the Visuals List, it's for outside materials – not actualities, which are everything you would shoot – photographs, film clips, home videos, historic footage, news stories, etc.

**Q:** *Does every non-fiction program in J-521 have a Visuals List?*

**A:** All profile documentaries will have a Visual List because you must include photographs of the profile. Remember to list this as, Complete photographic coverage of (your subject's name) from before birth to the present.

**Q:** *Do I need to put complete photographic coverage of everyone in the non-fiction program?*

**A:** You must have photographic coverage of your profile. It's a good idea to include it for the main speakers (close family members, friends, significant others), especially if you are telling their stories as part of your profile's story, or in cases where pictures of speakers would enhance and flesh out the story of your profile. Any time you want to include a photographic sequence of someone you would say, Complete photographic coverage of (name) from birth to present to be as complete as possible.

**Q:** *How should I list the visuals in terms of order?*

**A:** Group visuals so that photos are together, home videos are together, stock video is together, etc.

### **AUDIO LIST**

**Q:** *Any music that happens to be playing at locations on the actualities list is included in that list and does not need to appear on the audio list, correct*

**A:** The only audio that goes on the audio list is historical audio, radio broadcasts, recorded music or sounds. Any sound at a location is part of the actuality. An actuality includes both the audio and the video of whatever happens in front of the camera.

### **TOPIC-QUESTION-STATEMENT LIST**

**Q:** *So, let me get this straight: I don't list the topics by person, right?*

**A:** Right. You are creating a topic-statement-question list that you will ask all of your speakers. DO NOT MAKE SEPARATE TOPICS FOR VARIOUS SPEAKERS.

**Q:** *Many of the questions are directed specifically to my profile. How do I ask other people these same questions?*

**A:** You can easily re-phrase the questions in a way that will make sense for the people you interview. For your profile you would ask, "What was it like growing up in a large family?" For the profile's mother, you would ask, "What was it like for Johnny growing up in a large family?" "What was it like having six children?" And so on. When you are interviewing, you'll make the necessary adjustments, but for purposes of this list, keep the point-of-view the same for all of the questions (your profile subject's pov). Ask the same QUESTIONS of everyone, modifying them as necessary so they fit that person.

**Q:** *What should I keep in mind as I put together the topic-question-statement list?*

**A:** Keep all related topics together. No Yes/No questions. Include all of the topics as outlined in syllabus. Don't split topics from page to page. Use as many topics as you can think of to explore your profile's life and everything fascinating about it.

**Q:** *Why so many topics about childhood, grammar school, middle school, high school, and so on? I feel like I'm getting too far away from the real crux of the non-fiction program.*

**A:** The biographical material is important because it will help you to tell a complete story. Completeness is a big part of what you will be graded on in this class – and putting yourself through the process of telling a complete story from A to Z will help move you into the mindset of long-form production, which is multi-faceted, multi-textured.

**Q:** *I'm confused. I don't understand how one set of questions will work for EVERYONE in the non-fiction program. Some people might not know anything about my profile's childhood. Other people might only know about one specific aspect of my profile's life that no one else can speak about. How can one set of questions work for everyone?*

**A:** The reason that you use the same list of questions for everyone in the non-fiction program is so that you will be able to develop an audio continuity track that includes multiple voices on each topic. You want to use the speakers in the non-fiction program throughout and not just in an isolated section.

If some of the people on your list know nothing about your profile's childhood, you will find that out when you ask the question and then you can move on. But it's not always so cut and dry. Although some of your speakers may not have known your profile at the time, they might have heard the childhood stories, they may have some perspective of how these childhood experiences affect the person today, they might have opinions to offer, speculations, reactions to things that happened.

Be expansive in your use of speakers, and do not limit the possibilities of what they may contribute. Your job is to think of as many ways as you can to weave your speakers into a coherent whole.

**Q:** *I feel like I don't have enough topics for my non-fiction program.*

**A:** Your instinct is probably right. You should explore the subject of your non-fiction program with great detail. Help us understand what it's like to be that person. The first thing to do is to make sure that the topics pertaining directly to your profile aren't too broad. Broad, undefined topics mean that your non-fiction program will be general and unorganized. Develop as many topics as you can think of that help us to fully understand your profile's life and times. Specific details on everything your profile has been through. Include topics that chart the process and take us through your profile's experience step-by-step.

**Q:** *In the biographical sections, the syllabus says we are supposed to add questions applicable to our subject. Can you elaborate on this?*

**A:** You should integrate questions about your subject throughout the various phrases of your profile's life. So if you're doing a non-fiction program on a basketball player, you need statements about his experiences with basketball in grammar school, middle school, high school, college, what his parents thought about him playing basketball, and so on. By keeping the main focus of your subject building throughout the non-fiction program, you will give yourself ample opportunities to create the kind of continuity that makes a cohesive and complete program.

Other specific questions you would add to the biographical sections are things that help us understand your profile as an individual – the things that are unique, noteworthy, and defining about his or her life.

## TITLE AND PARAGRAPH SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING TITLE AND PARAGRAPH SUMMARY**

**Q:** *I am confused about how to do the assignment.*

**A:** This is one of the easiest assignments yet. Come up with a title for your program. Then write a three or four-paragraph summary of the FINISHED program as if it would appear in TV Guide or the Los Angeles Times. Write up the summary so people will want to watch it, but no hyperbole.

It will, of course, include the material you used in your idea pitch (although one hopes it will be more sophisticated) and the objectives. But it is for public consumption. It should make us want to see your program -- again no hyperbole, just good writing and good facts.

**Q:** *Are we supposed to go into detail about the profile and what the viewers can expect to see, OR do we just write about the film's objectives, and how it ties in with the profile?*

**A:** The three or four paragraphs should make us want to watch your show. Put the best elements forward whatever they are. The writing style should draw us in. GET US EXCITED about your non-fiction program. But no hype.

## **NON-FICTION PROGRAM SHOOTING SCHEDULE FORMAT**

The shooting schedule assignment in Journalism 521 is not the practical shooting schedule used in the industry. That shooting schedule includes a day-by-day schedule of what will be shot listing instructions to locations, contacts, time of shoot and so on.

The assigned shooting schedule in Journalism 521 is different. It is a summary of all the video and audio you will need for your program organized by LOCATION. It is an overview of the video and audio available and where to get it. It includes information from all of the previously compiled lists: The People List, the Location-Actuality List, The Video List, the Audio List, and the Topic-Question List.

Here's how to do the assigned shooting schedule. Do not read ahead. The format will be fully explained in class. Then the following material can be used for reference.

### **FIRST ASSIGNMENT:**

The first thing to do is to write a **SUMMARY OF FORMAL INTERVIEW**. These are the topics and questions you will ask every person you interview. Summarize every topic and question on your topic-question list in paragraph form. This is your formal interview summary.

#### **START WITH THIS SENTENCE:**

The participants in the program will discuss:

Then add your summary of topics-questions. Do each topic in a separate paragraph. Do not repeat the opening line.

It helps to use the third person. Here is an example of how to sum up each topic:

JOE SALTZMAN'S CHILDHOOD. They will describe Joe Saltzman's childhood. What were the best/worst parts of growing up. The best experiences, worst experiences, funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences. The best part of growing up, the worst part, the most memorable part? What Saltzman disliked most about being a kid, liked the most about being a kid, what he thought about before he fell asleep at night. What were his earliest memories of newspapers, television, television news, reading, watching TV. AND SO ON.

JOE SALTZMAN'S PARENTS. They will describe Joe Saltzman's parents, his relationship with his mother, his father, his parents' method of discipline. The best experiences, worst experiences with his parents, his funniest, happiest, saddest, scariest, weirdest, most memorable experiences. The best part of being with his parents, the worst part, the most memorable part. What he disliked, liked most about his parents. AND SO ON.

ADD EACH TOPIC AS A PARAGRAPH AND CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE TOPICS ARE LISTED.

**SECOND ASSIGNMENT:**

On a separate piece of paper, list one of the most important locations from your LOCATION-ACTUALITY LIST. Describe that location as fully as possible. Use a separate page (or pages) for each location.

EXAMPLE:

**LOCATION:** Joe Saltzman's House.

Under each location do the following:

**FORMAL INTERVIEWS:**

List all the complete formal interviews, all of the persons to be interviewed at this specific location. Describe who the person to be interviewed is in as much detail as possible.

Then write: SEE FORMAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY. This refers to the summary of your complete formal interview. That way you do not have to repeat that information for each formal interview. Then you can add any information gathered in the pre-video interview that is unique to that person.

EXAMPLE:

Formal Interview: Joe Saltzman, USC Professor of Journalism. Saltzman created the broadcast sequence in the School of Journalism in 1974. (YOU CAN ADD MORE DETAILS OF HIS BACKGROUND). See Formal Interview Summary.

Formal Interview: Barbara Saltzman, Joe Saltzman's wife and former editor of the Los Angeles Times Daily Calendar section, now executive director of The Jester & Pharley Phund charity. (YOU CAN ADD MORE BACKGROUND DETAILS). See Formal Interview Summary.

(Continue to list each person to be interviewed at this specific location. There may be one person or many persons involved depending on the location and your people list. List only the formal interviews first.)

By the time you finish each location, all of the persons on your people list should be included at one location or another, or at several locations if there are actuality interviews.

**ACTUALITY INTERVIEWS:**

Then list any Actuality Interviews to be held at this location.

Do not forget to distinguish between the Formal Interview and the Actuality Interview. An Actuality Interview includes Topics of the Complete Formal Interview redone at a specific location for use only as on-camera sound statements. In an actuality interview, only list the specific topics-questions involved.



**EXAMPLE:**

**ACTUALITY INTERVIEW:** Joe Saltzman watching television and commenting on what he sees. TOPIC: Watching Television.

LIST ALL ACTUALITY INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE WITH THE PERSON'S NAME AND IDENTIFICATION AND THE SPECIFIC TOPICS TO BE ANSWERED.

NOTE: All topics for actuality interviews MUST BE INCLUDED in the FORMAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY.

NOTE: An Actuality Interview is separate from ACTUALITIES.

**ACTUALITIES:**

Then list every possible actuality to be shot at this location. Be creative. You already have a camera crew at the location and you might as well get as much actuality material (commonly referred to as "B" Reel) as possible since you can never have enough video.

ALL LOCATIONS MUST HAVE ACTUALITIES. Actualities are defined as anything happening in front of the camera. They are not the same as Actuality Interviews.

**EXAMPLE:**

Actuality: Complete Coverage of Joe Saltzman at home including (DESCRIBE ALL OF THE POSSIBILITIES INVOLVED: watching television in the family room, cooking in the kitchen, feeding the Koi in the backyard pond, whatever he naturally does at home).

Continue to list specific and probable Actualities for each person at this specific location.

Then add any other Actualities that take place at this location.

**VIUALS**

Then list any visuals or audio material to be picked up at this location. Only list video or audio specifics from your video and audio lists that are applicable.

**EXAMPLE:**

Video: At Joe Saltzman's home are photographs and home videos. Pick up (LIST SPECIFIC photographs for complete photographic coverage of Saltzman from before birth to present as well as home videos documenting his life and times).

**AUDIO**

List any audio to be picked up at this location.

**EXAMPLE:**

**AUDIO:** In Joe Saltzman's home are audiotapes of a media seminar speech he gave in 2009. Pick up (LIST SPECIFIC AUDIO TAPES AND REASONS FOR INCLUDING THEM IN THE PROGRAM).

After including all of the FORMAL INTERVIEWS, ACTUALITY INTERVIEWS, ACTUALITIES, VISUALS AND AUDIO that is available in this one location, then get a new piece of paper and list the next most important location and continue until every location on your LOCATION-ACTUALITY LIST is included and every person on your PEOPLE LIST, every actuality on your LOCATION-ACTUALITY LIST, and every visual and audio on your VISUAL-AUDIO LIST are included under a specific location.

**NOTE: Include a MISCELLANEOUS Location.**

Here you can put any visual (such as film clips, TV program clips) or audio (such as NPR broadcasts or music) that you would have to pick up at a studio or a music store or a website.

Anything left out of your SHOOTING SCHEDULE cannot be used in your program at this time, although your Shooting Schedule can be drastically revised throughout the rest of the semester.

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING FORMAL INTERVIEW & ACTUALITIES:**

***Q: Just want to double check: Does everyone on the People List need a formal interview?***

**A:** Anyone who is in your program -- major characters, minor characters, walk-ons -- MUST HAVE A FORMAL INTERVIEW at a location. You can have as many or no actuality interviews as you want. ALL LOCATIONS MUST HAVE ACTUALITIES. Those are basically the only rules.

***Q: Can a person have more than one formal interview?***

**A:** No. Only ONE formal interview per person.

NOTE: What we call the formal interview is made up of the many interviews you conduct with your profile.

***Q: I have Las Vegas (including the strip and hotels etc) as a location for establishing shots. Do I need to have a formal interview attached to this location or is it okay if I just have an actuality interview there?***

**A:** You need one formal interview per person, not per location. So you may have many locations without any formal interviews or actuality interviews. The only requirement is ACTUALITIES for each LOCATION.

Incidentally, Las Vegas cannot be one location. Each hotel, each area in Las Vegas is a separate location.

***Q: Does every location need a formal interview?***

**A:** Every location needs ACTUALITIES. Locations need not have formal or actuality interviews.

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE FORMAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY:***SUMMARY OF FORMAL INTERVIEW*

**Q:** *Am I supposed to summarize only applicable Topic-Questions for each person on my People List?*

**A:** You forgot a key point: the FORMAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY is every topic and every question and you are expected, at least in this assignment, to ask them of everyone on your people list. So don't ever create separate questions for each person. This violates a key concept of the class -- one list of topic-questions for everyone on your list.

**Q:** *Should I say who the speakers are going to be for each topic?*

**A:** No. Never list individual speakers. The first topic you begin:  
The participants in the program will discuss:  
And on the following topics you begin with: They will describe (or discuss or talk about)  
Remember you are asking the same questions of all of your speakers.

**Q:** *How do we organize the topics in formal interview summary?*

**A:** List related topics together. Or you can put the topics into an order you think works for the non-fiction program.

**Q:** *Can I break-up a topic so that I come back to it at different points of the non-fiction program?*

**A:** No. Once you are done with topic don't go back to it. Finish it up. You can't subdivide a topic, i.e., autism #1 and autism #2, but you can create more topics out of the one.

**Q:** *How do I know if my topics are too large?*

**A:** Don't make the mistake of trying to cover several key areas with one topic. One topic can often be easily divided into seven or eight topics. The main focus of your non-fiction program could have a dozen or more topics. Each topic should revolve around a defined area -- a central idea, a stage in a person's life, a key relationship or relationships, a specific process or even a part of the process if that's the main thrust of the non-fiction program. Your questions should address the topic in detail – defining, describing, and eliciting responses filled with content.

**Q:** *How do I know if I'm missing topics?*

**A:** Your goal is to be complete – tell a complete story, so you want to take a good, hard look at your topics in terms of that. Here are a couple of tips:

Whatever the crux or theme of the non-fiction program, explore it in detail. If you're doing a non-fiction program about a firefighter, for example, you don't want to have just one topic on being a firefighter. Really think about it from all angles – what made the person want to be a firefighter? How did he train to become a firefighter? Take us through the steps of putting out a fire. What is life like at the station? What is the bond with other firefighters like? How do his family and friends handle him being a firefighter? – AND SO ON. Just let your mind go and you will see how many topics you come up with to tell the story.

Once you have broken this huge firefighter topic into many smaller topics you will be able to develop the material throughout the non-fiction program. You want his life as a firefighter to span the entire non-fiction program.

Also, you should have topics that pertain to your locations and actualities.

**Q:** *Do we need to do a formal interview of someone like an employee at a movie theater (where our profile goes in the non-fiction program)?*

**A:** Go on the assumption that every person included in any part of the non-fiction program should be listed as a formal interview. The chances are that you will not interview everyone in this manner, but FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT make sure that every person who appears in the non-fiction program at any location is also given a formal interview. One formal interview for everyone. Only one. Actuality interviews are up to you.

**Q:** *In the summary, can we say that someone will explain something or talk about something?*

**A:** Just sum up CONTENT -- what the viewer will see and hear. Who offers that information is not really important. Just sum up content in an interesting way.

### **SHOOTING SCHEDULE**

**Q:** *For each Location/Actuality place, are they supposed to be on separate sheets of paper? Or am I supposed to include, right after it, the other lists: formal interview, actuality?*

**A:** First do the FORMAL INTERVIEW SUMMARY -- all your topics and questions in paragraph form.

Then put that assignment aside and start with a new piece of paper.

Start with your most important LOCATION

LOCATION (Details).

LIST ALL FORMAL INTERVIEWS (If any, and remember only one formal interview per person, but one formal interview for all persons).

LIST ALL ACTUALITY INTERVIEWS (If any).

LIST ALL ACTUALITIES (you MUST have actualities at each location)

Then if available at that location:

LIST ANY VISUALS TO PICK UP

LIST ANY AUDIO TO PICK UP

THEN GO ON TO YOUR NEXT LOCATION and continue until all locations are listed with appropriate formal interviews, actuality interviews, actualities, etc. under each location.

All locations will have actualities. Most locations will have formal interviews. You can have as many or as few actuality interviews as you want. And don't forget the MISCELLANEOUS LOCATION where you can list all visuals and audio that you didn't pick up at any other logical location.

You can put more than more than one location on a page, but do not split locations from page to page unless one location is too large to fit solely on one page.

**Q:** *Under the Locations section, can Complete Coverage include things like "explaining" a particular hobby?*

**A:** Explaining a particular hobby seems to be more under topics-questions-statements, doesn't it? Complete Coverage includes anything that happens in front of the camera, no audio statements. What you describe would be considered an interview.

**Q:** *Is this listed correctly:*

*Actuality: Complete Coverage of Profile #1 in her apartment including talking to her mother and sister, watching TV, typing on the computer, talking to her neighbors.*

*Complete Coverage of Profile #2 in her apartment including talking with her sister, eating, studying on desk, and watching TV. Complete Coverage of mother including talking with her daughters, cooking, cleaning house, meeting with the neighbors, whatever she naturally does in a day's work.*

**A:** Separate Complete Coverage of various individuals with a space. Add as many specifics for actuality coverage as you can think of:

Complete Coverage of Profile #1 in her apartment including talking to her mother and sister, watching TV, typing on the computer, talking to her neighbors.

Complete Coverage of Profile #2 in her apartment including talking with her sister, eating, studying on desk, and watching TV.

Complete Coverage of mother including talking with her daughters, cooking, cleaning house, meeting with the neighbors, whatever she naturally does in a day's work.

**Q:** *Do we need to describe who a person is for the actuality interviews, since we already do that for the formal interview? Can we just use their name?*

**A:** Once you've described a person for the formal interview summary, all you have to do is mention them for the actuality interview, although it wouldn't be a bad idea to add a short descriptive phrase just to remind us who the person is. But the main description is reserved for the formal interview.

**Q:** *How do I decide when to use an actuality interview?*

**A:** Ask yourself, what is the purpose of doing an interview at a particular location? Does it add anything to the story? Does it make sense to do an interview about this topic at this location? Will it feel organic – does it belong there? Make sure the location has something to do with the topic (why are you doing the actuality interview on that topic in that particular location)?

Actuality interviews can be great because there is an in the moment, active quality, which can add vitality to a non-fiction program. Often there is action connected to the interview. But again, the interview must make sense at that location, and be practical – could the person be interviewed in whatever circumstances may be going on?

Be sure the interview isn't redundant to other actuality interviews you include.

NOTE: Remember, actuality interviews are pieces of the formal interview that you are re-doing at a particular location. Actuality interviews should not cover material that is not in the formal interview.



## THE NON-FICTION PROGRAM TREATMENT FOR JOURNALISM 521 NOTES FOR PUTTING TOGETHER THE NON-FICTION PROGRAM

Audio and video elements you have at your disposal include:

<u>ELEMENT</u>	<u>AUDIO</u>	<u>VIDEO</u>
Written Narration ALWAYS SOUND FULL	On Camera Voice Over	On Camera Actualities Visuals
Interview Material ALWAYS SOUND FULL	On Camera Voice Over	On Camera Actualities Visuals
Actualities	Sound Full Sound Under No Sound	On Screen On Screen On Screen
Audio Elements (Music, Effects, Sound Clips, etc.)	Sound Full or Sound Under	
Video Elements (Photographs, Stills, Paintings, Graphics, Clips)	On Screen	

Assembling the non-fiction program is a difficult process. Putting together all of these elements into a cohesive whole takes experience and time. Here are three possible ways to put together the non-fiction program. You integrate all three methods into the final product, but each method gives you a place to start. Most TV documentaries include interview material, actualities (sound full and sound under), and written narration. Here are three ways to start:

### AUDIO CONTINUITY TRACK

The audio continuity track is a way to organize your non-fiction program primarily around your interview material. It is essential that you have good, comprehensive interviews. The more people interviewed, the more effective this method. Think of the audio continuity track as the foundation of your program, an empty Christmas tree on which to hang ornaments. It is the best way for a young TV producer-writer to create an organized, coherent program. The process is cumbersome, but effective. There are short cuts but save those for future programs.

The first step is set up a TRANSCRIBE FILE and transcribe all of your interviews. Leave plenty of white space between each statement, and around each statement. Number each page as it is transcribed along with the name of the person being interviewed.

The transcribed pages should look something like this:

Page 1 -- Media Expert's Name

If your view of the world is dependent on American newspapers and radio and TV newscasts, it is a strange view indeed. It is a world in which no one uses language worse than "damn," "hell," and an occasional "bastard"; the repulsive, obnoxious and unacceptable are framed in enough polite words and phrases ("explicit," "provocative," "outrageous") to cover up a multitude of human sin and ugliness and the way Americans talk and act and live and die is so prettified that the reality of the event is compromised.

All this is done in the name of good taste. You can't show broken, tortured bodies or angry faces screaming out profanity on the evening news because people are eating dinner, the media proclaim. You can't explain torture in Latin America or the true horrors of a drug war or 2 Live Crew lyrics in the morning newspaper because people just woke up. It's not nice to disturb the tranquility and sanctity of the American household.

News media editors always use the excuse that "we are guests in somebody's home" when challenged as to why they aren't showing their viewers or readers the raw, accurate reality of the world in which we live. But is that good enough when the consequences of not presenting the events of the day with all of their crudeness and harshness leave Americans ignorant about what really is going on in their local, regional, national, and global neighborhoods?

## Page 2 -- Media Expert's Name (AND KEEP NUMBERING PAGE AFTER PAGE)

Now, copy the TRANSCRIBE FILE. In the copy (Transcribe 2), do the following:

You use your margins to organize the material.

1. Take your list of topics (the subject areas that included all of your questions) and in the LEFT margin mark the appropriate topic that best sums up the statement. Since the topics reflect the questions asked, the statements should fit neatly into one or more topics. Remember that you should have at least 20 topics. A topic should be short enough so that it only includes a limited amount of information. In a program about Rape, for example, topics would include: Definition of Rape, Myths about Rape, Before the Rape, During the Rape, After the Rape, Police, Medical Problems, Judges, Courtroom, What to Do after the Rape, and so on.

2. Then, also in the LEFT margin, write the page number of the transcript page.

3. Then, also in the LEFT margin, write the name of the person being interviewed.

This is all that needs to be done. There is no reason to even view the video unless there is time or more specific information is needed (voice inflection, quality of video, focal length, etc.).

If you do view the video, then you can do the following:

1. Write the video timecode in the RIGHT margin. Video timecode is standard throughout the industry: 00:00:00:00. It stands for hours:minutes:seconds:frames. There is no reason to refer to specific frames until you actually construct a specific edit script, and even then frames are mostly unnecessary.

2. In the right margin, you can also write down the quality of the video, the focal length (close-up, medium shot) and any other information that seems relevant (poor video, bad shot, etc.).

Then the transcript looks something like this:

## Page 1 -- Media Expert's Name

TOPIC	If your view of the world is dependent on American newspapers and radio and TV newscasts, it is a strange	TIMECODE
PAGE	view indeed. It is a world in which no one uses language	QUALITY
NO.	worse than "damn," "hell," and an occasional "bastard";	FOCAL
PERSON'S	the repulsive, obnoxious and unacceptable are framed	LENGTH
NAME	in enough polite words and phrases ("explicit,"	
	"provocative," "outrageous") to cover up a multitude of	
	human sin and ugliness; and the way Americans talk	
	and act and live and die is so prettified that the reality	
	of the event is compromised.	

TOPIC	All this is done in the name of good taste. You can't show	TIMECODE
PAGE	broken, tortured bodies or angry faces screaming out	QUALITY
NO.	profanity on the evening news because people are eating	FOCAL
PERSON'S	dinner, the media proclaim. You can't explain torture in	LENGTH
NAME	Latin America or the true horrors of a drug war or	
	2 Live Crew lyrics in the morning newspaper because	
	people just woke up. It's not nice to disturb the	
	tranquility and sanctity of the American household.	

TOPIC	News media editors always use the excuse that "we	TIMECODE
PAGE	are guests in somebody's home" when challenged as	QUALITY
NO.	to why they aren't showing their viewers or readers	FOCAL
PERSON'S	the raw, accurate reality of the world in which we	LENGTH
NAME	live. But is that good enough when the consequences	
	of not presenting the events of the day with all of their	
	crudeness and harshness leave Americans ignorant	
	about what really is going on in their local, regional,	
	national, and global neighborhoods?	

When finished make a copy of this file.

Now get your list of TOPICS and create a folder for EACH TOPIC. For example, if you have 20 topics, you will have 20 separate files. Put the TOPIC FOLDERS into a rough order of how they will probably appear in the program.

Go to your TRANSCRIBE 2 folder. Copy each paragraph with its own TOPIC and paste it into the appropriate TOPIC FILE. For example, if the first statement on page one of the transcript is CHILDHOOD, paste that statement into the CHILDHOOD TOPIC FILE. If the second statement of page one of the transcript is PARENTS, paste that statement into the PARENTS TOPIC FILE. Keep going until every transcribed statement is either in the appropriate TOPIC FILE, or discarded.

Now you are ready to build your Audio Continuity Track. Take the topic that seems appropriate to begin the non-fiction program. Read over all of the statements in that topic category. Mark each statement or kick it out. Number each statement in order of preference and use. By the time you finish marking the statements in each topic, each statement should be numbered or crossed out.

Then create an AUDIO CONTINUITY TRACK FILE and paste the FIRST TOPIC STATEMENTS in numerical order leaving a good deal of white space between each statement so you can later add notes on actualities, visuals, and other information.

When the Audio Continuity Track is completed and all statements are either assembled in numerical order or thrown away, then make a copy of your finished Audio Continuity Track File.

You will integrate all actualities, visuals, and any written narration into the Audio Continuity Track later.

NOTE: Often, you will find statements that should have been integrated into the Audio Continuity Track earlier or later, or statements that seem out of place (put them in a separate file as you plow through the topic statements), or simply errors of judgment. Most Audio Continuity Tracks have many ongoing changes. The final object is to put the statements in the best order you can create for continuity and content.

The Audio Continuity Track gives the non-fiction program substance and form. You do not have to start the program with the Audio Continuity Track. The program may start after a series of actualities sound full. Often actualities sound full will enhance the Audio Continuity Track. You also may need written narration for smoother continuity. But by starting with this bare outline of interview material, you have focused in on content, and visuals always are enhanced when they are used to make a specific story point or when they are used to amplify specific content.

## VISUAL CONTINUITY

It is important to have a complete list of all of your visual elements, especially visual and audio material contained in your actualities. This list can be used to help you integrate actualities and other visuals into your Audio Continuity Track, or to integrate actualities and other visuals into a non-fiction program consisting of mostly written narration, or to create a non-fiction program using only these actualities and other visual materials.

Make a list of all your actualities (for class, an actuality is anything you have seen or heard about; in the real world, you would take notes on all the actualities you shot in the field).

Transcribe any usable audio.

Make a list of all of the other visual possibilities (photographs, home movies, film or TV clips, and other visuals).

If you are doing a non-fiction program that is primarily actualities, begin to build the program by assembling your actualities sound full in a logical order. Then make a decision as to whether you need written narration or interview narrative to augment the video continuity.

There will be much material in class discussing the importance of video continuity including general video continuity and specific video continuity. Effective broadcast writing is using all video and audio elements at your command. The perfect marriage between audio and video is what you should try to achieve. This is very difficult. Unlike audio editing, video editing involves a thousand different decisions, many done purely on instinct and feel. Learning to do that is beyond the possibilities of this class. Improve your visual knowledge by using a 35mm camera, watching TV without the sound, immersing yourself in film and TV programming.

## WRITTEN NARRATION CONTINUITY

If your interviews are weak or nonexistent and if your actualities are poor, then you can always fall back on a program mostly using written narration. Written narration used sparingly and effectively is a good device for any non-fiction program. Unfortunately it usually is a last-ditch attempt to save a poorly produced non-fiction program.

Sit down at your computer and write the complete non-fiction program treatment from beginning to end in written narration leaving out nothing and including everything. Fill up the right side of one page after another with written narration.

Then go back to whatever interview material or actualities you have compiled and substitute any interview material or actualities that seem appropriate, kicking out the redundant narration.

## FINISHING THE TREATMENT

If you have assembled an Audio Continuity Track, begin to integrate all actualities (sound full and sound under) into the Audio Continuity Track. You may elect to begin the program with an actuality sound full, or several actualities sound full, finally starting your Audio Continuity Track several minutes into the non-fiction program. You might then use several statements and then go to another actuality sound full. The idea is to work your way through the Audio Continuity Track determining where actualities will enhance your presentation, adding to the viewer's understanding and knowledge of the subject.

Actualities can be used to aid continuity by summing up in action what several speakers have discussed, or it can be used to introduce another subject entirely. Any non-fiction program benefits by letting the audience eavesdrop on the people involved in that non-fiction program. Actualities are the heart and muscle of any non-fiction program; the Audio Continuity Track is the brain. Use both to make an effective non-fiction program.

Written narration can be used effectively when it comes to giving the audience information. There is nothing clearer or more powerful than a narrator on camera looking into the camera speaking directly to the viewer. Written narration is effective in transitions, in conveying difficult information quickly to the viewer, in summing up ideas and content. Just because it has been used badly in the past doesn't mean it isn't an effective tool for the non-fiction TV producer-writer. Use it whenever necessary. If you decide to use written narration, however, establish the written narration either in the prologue or at the beginning of the middle. You cannot throw in written narration in the middle of a non-fiction program if you have never established a narrator before. The mysterious voice comes out of nowhere and destroys your production.

Use every audio and video tool you have available to produce an informative, entertaining and interesting non-fiction program. In the end it really doesn't matter what approach you use, or what combination of approaches you use as long as the non-fiction program is complete, well organized, and pertinent. But for young producer-writers, the Audio Continuity Track method guarantees that at the very least a non-fiction program with a good beginning, middle and end will be finished in time for broadcast.

## **THE GENERAL SUMMARY**

The general summary is a description of every video and audio element in your non-fiction program from the beginning (prologue), through the middle (the complete program), through the epilogue.

Divide the paper into three sections: Prologue, Middle and Epilogue. You can use the completed general summary when it is returned to you as your guide for putting your program together.

Every full-length non-fiction program Treatment done in class should have:

**THE PROLOGUE** or The Beginning. The prologue should define in some way (specific or subtle) what the program is about. It should appeal to the viewer, creating an interest in the program, and it should somehow lead into the title. Then go into your first commercial break.

-- COMMERCIAL BREAK --

**THE MIDDLE.** The middle is really the program itself with its own beginning, middle and end. It should be complete in itself without relying on the prologue or epilogue. Then go to your second commercial break.

-- COMMERCIAL BREAK --

**THE EPILOGUE.** The epilogue can be used to summarize the program, or it can be used as an emotional afterthought that leaves the viewer with a symbolic or dramatic idea, or it can be an editorial commentary. Credits follow the epilogue.

**NOTE:** It is not necessary to have a prologue or an epilogue, but this kind of structure works best in commercial television.

Here's how to do the assignment:

### **THE PROLOGUE:**

The Prologue should be described as completely as possible with all of the video and audio ideas summarized. It is not a good idea to clutter this summary with technical jargon: zooms, pans, focal lengths, cuts, dissolves or effects. Stick to content. What are we seeing and hearing.

What you want to do is to describe the CONTENT of your program in as much visual and audio detail as possible. Describe what we are seeing and hearing, not how we are seeing and hearing it.

### **THE MIDDLE:**

The Middle should be described in the following way:

**UMBRELLA:** Sum up the Natural Sound Full opening segment that will begin your non-fiction program proper. Explain what we are seeing and hearing.

**AUDIO:** LIST THE TOPIC OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

**VIDEO:** Describe what we are seeing.

**AUDIO:** LIST THE TOPIC OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

**VIDEO:** Describe what we are seeing.

Continue like this until you have covered ALL YOUR TOPICS and then go to your second commercial break. Integrate your Umbrella segments at regular intervals:

**AUDIO:** LIST THE TOPIC OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

**VIDEO:** Describe what we are seeing.

**UMBRELLA:** Sum up the Natural Sound Full opening segment. Explain what we are seeing and hearing.

**AUDIO:** LIST THE TOPIC OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

**VIDEO:** Describe what we are seeing.

**AUDIO:** LIST THE TOPIC OR TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS

**VIDEO:** Describe what we are seeing.

**AND SO ON.**



**THE EPILOGUE:**

The Epilogue should be described as completely as possible with all of the video and audio ideas summarized. It is not a good idea to clutter this summary with technical jargon: zooms, pans, focal lengths, cuts, dissolves or effects. Stick to content. What are we seeing and hearing.

What you want to do is to describe the CONTENT of your program in as much visual and audio detail as possible. Describe what we are seeing and hearing, not how we are seeing and hearing it.

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE GENERAL SUMMARY:**

**Q:** *I am confused about the general summary.*

**A:** On the General Summary, you must put in your topics in the best guess order in which they will appear in the non-fiction program. So, take a close look at the topics in your formal interview summary and our suggestions for revising the order of those topics and use that order in the General Summary.

Remember: There are no longer interviews, locations, actualities, formal interview summaries or shooting schedules. There is now just the General summary -- a paragraph summary of what we will see and hear in your finished non-fiction program.

Also remember that people are listed as participants and not as individuals in the general summary. The danger in referring to specific people is that you will fall into the trap of only using a few voices per topic.

First you do the PROLOGUE -- in great detail. From the first thing we hear and see to the last thing we see and hear leading into your title and first commercial break. This Prologue is in paragraph form and must be as detailed as possible.

Then you go to the MIDDLE (with its own beginning, middle and end -- it should include everything of importance; it is the non-fiction program proper). You can either continue describing all the audio and video in the non-fiction program or go to an abbreviated format to save time:

UMBRELLA: Describe what we see and hear

AUDIO: FIRST TOPIC (Remember to place each topic in proper order)

VIDEO: Describe what we will see when the TOPIC is being discussed.

AUDIO: SECOND TOPIC

VIDEO: Describe what we will see when that TOPIC is being discussed.

AND SO ON until you finish the Middle of the non-fiction program.

Then go to your second commercial break.

Then do the EPILOGUE -- Describe what we are seeing and hearing in as much detail as you can. The Epilogue should be an emotional afterthought, or an editorial commentary, or informational summary. It should not use material that should be included at the end of the Middle.

**Q:** *I don't mean to belabor the General Summary assignment anymore, especially since you spent a lot of class time discussing it, but I still feel confused with THE MIDDLE portion of the summary.*

**A:** I've tried to make the assignment easier by just having you list the topics rather than all the statements-questions that come under that topic. So when you write:

Joe Saltzman's Childhood. (That topic includes all of the questions-statements-comments under that topic). It's shorthand rather than including the entire paragraph of questions-statements you included in your Formal Interview Summary. Those statements-questions are inherent inside the topic. It's just an easier way of doing it. You could take the entire paragraph and include it if that makes it clearer for you. Just take each topic with all of its questions-statements that you turned in during the formal interview summary assignment and use that.

Then after listing the topic (either the topic alone or the entire paragraph of topic-questions-statements), write a paragraph summing up all of the things we are seeing while the topic is unfolding (the Video).

KEEP THE TOPICS SHORT AND SPECIFIC, and use the VIDEO to describe the visuals we are seeing while participants in the program are discussing the topic.

**Q:** *I know that I want certain speakers to talk about a topic because they have great statements about it – shouldn't I indicate that?*

**A:** No. For this assignment you use “participants” rather than specific people. It is a major error to define a topic by who is speaking. The whole point of an audio continuity track is to let as many speakers as possible comment on each topic. Do not use speakers who disappear after one or two topics. Do not have one speaker do one topic, and then another do the next topic. Use as many voices as possible on each topic. You cannot allow one or two or even three speakers to carry a topic. The topics should not reflect who is speaking, just what the questions are.

**Q:** *How detailed should I be with the statements?*

**A:** No need for detailed statements. A summary will suffice for this assignment.

**Q:** *Is it OK to jump around the timeline when talking about my profile's past? Can I start with his college years and work backwards?*

**A:** TELL THE BIOGRAPHY IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER to help the audience clarify who he is.

**Q:** *How do I know if I have enough topics?*

**A:** First, think about your story from beginning to end and then include the topics that cover that story and make it complete.

Then, make sure you have topics that put us into the shoes of your profile. We want to fully experience that person's world. Take us through the process. Make us care about the story you are telling.

Remember, this is long-form. It isn't a news magazine piece. Give us substance and meaning, facts and information. We want to see research and reporting. We want to know that you found the juice, the heart. Include the topics that will deliver all that.

Then look at all your topics. Each topic should revolve around a specific core of subject matter. You don't say, "Tell me about your whole life from when you were born to now." You take it step-by-step. Apply that logic to all your topics. Break large holding bins of material into smaller, more manageable pieces that allow you get into greater detail.

And don't forget to include all the topics in the syllabus!

**Q:** *Can you give me some organization tips?*

**A:** Think about the story you are telling and how to best tell it in a compelling and logical manner where each topic flows into the next. You have to organize ALL OF YOUR TOPICS into a coherent whole. You can't just throw things on the paper, have one speaker talk, go onto another series of audio questions and have another speaker talk about that. This is not organizing the non-fiction program. You have to build a careful audio continuity track with appropriate video continuity. Both should work together to form a coherent whole.

Your Middle (the non-fiction program proper) needs to have a beginning, middle and end – build your story carefully by focusing on how one thing leads to another. Think about transitions. Your audio statements should feel like they belong together. Your video should have meaningful sequences – and each sequence should flow into the next.

Use an umbrella to give your non-fiction program an overall continuity, and build mini-umbrellas to give sections better flow.

**Q:** *I'm finding it difficult to come up with visuals for all my topics. How should I best approach this?*

**A:** A common mistake is to spend all of your time defining the audio without considering the video component. Each audio topic should be illustrated with good video continuity. What will we be seeing? YOU MUST COME UP WITH A VISUAL COUNTERPOINT TO THE AUDIO.

Here's a start: Think of interesting video and actualities that can spice up your topics. Video of your non-fiction program subject is essential. BE CREATIVE. Avoid using general footage. Integrate your profile into the video as much as possible. Come up with video ideas that feature your profile. Do not throw in all kinds of video that have nothing to do with the topic being discussed.

Work on developing interesting umbrella segments that show us your profile in action. Build mini-umbrellas, where you have video sequences, rather than a series of shots. It is poor production to go to a visual just to cover what someone is saying. Instead build video sequences by using related material that belongs together and has a natural sense of progression.

**Q:** *If my profile is talking about something, I should have visuals that reflect that, right?*

**A:** Yes. The video should compliment the audio. But it also needs to hang together. That's why video continuity is such an important part of this class and of making documentaries. Don't cram too many video set-ups into one topic. This will make your program feel choppy. Don't fall into the trap of show-and-tell cutting – going to whatever someone says, even when it makes no sense with the proceeding video. Create video sequences that last for more than one statement.

**Q:** *Can I just have the visuals represent what people are talking about? For example, for a topic about growing up in the South, I want show video of young children playing at a park. Won't this get the idea across?*

**A:** It's a poor way to get the idea across. General footage adds very little to the content of your non-fiction program. It's impersonal and vague – and although you think the subject matter is matching, it's a weak connection. If you're seeing anonymous children playing in a park while hearing personal stories about someone's experience growing up, there's a disconnect that's frustrating for a viewer. Your audio will fight your video. It's always best to incorporate your profile into the visuals as much as possible.

**Q:** *Should I indicate in the video when I'm planning to bring someone On Camera?*

**A:** Include video ideas without worrying about when someone will appear On Camera. That is always a possibility. Your job in the General Summary is to come up with interesting video ideas.

**Q:** *How should I play the topics of my profile's childhood – all together or spread out?*

**A:** Usually in J-521, childhood topics work best when played in large blocks.

**Q:** *Should I start with childhood and then proceed in a chronological order?*

**A:** Don't start with childhood. The information is pointless because we don't yet know the person whose life you're chronicling. Hook us into the profile. Make us care about her so we want to know more about her roots. You want to start with topics that relate to the focus of your non-fiction program and not a chronological listing of topics from childhood to early 20's. What is the non-fiction program about?

**Q:** *Can I have more than one umbrella?*

**A:** It's possible but it can get confusing. The concept behind an umbrella is to provide a structure that spans the entire non-fiction program.

**Q:** *How many times should I use my umbrella in the non-fiction program?*

**A:** In a 60-page treatment you probably should return the umbrella six or so times. The idea is to have your umbrella weave throughout the Middle from beginning to end. Break your umbrella into different segments and work them into the Middle at various intervals to establish a rhythm and visual continuity. It'll go something like: Umbrella, Audio/Video, Audio/Video, Audio/Video, Umbrella, Audio/Video, Audio/Video, Audio/Video, Audio/Video, Umbrella, Audio/Video, etc. You can vary somewhat when you bring in the umbrella so it's placement makes sense, but you can't go too long before you bring in an other installment. Make sure every time you go back to the umbrella segments, they are unique, interesting, filled with actuality sound full (Natural Sound Full) rather than voice-over statements.

**(For more about umbrellas, see below under Prologue section and final treatment)**

## THE PROLOGUE

**COMMON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PROLOGUE:**

**Q:** *I'm having trouble thinking of a Prologue that is separate element but that still sets up the show. Won't it end up feeling like there are two openings to the non-fiction program?*

**A:** Think of it this way: In novels you often have a prologue and a chapter one. It's the same basic idea here. The Prologue isn't essential to the overall story but it gives you a way to get the ball rolling. Your Prologue must indicate what your entire non-fiction program is all about. It must set the table for the feast that is to come.

Remember, there are three things the Prologue must do: Defines the show, appeal to your viewers and leads us into the title. Be creative. Get excited. Show us the passion.

**Q:** *What mistakes can I avoid in putting together my Prologue?*

**A:** Don't try to cram too much into the Prologue. The Prologue is no place to throw everything at the viewer. It makes your Prologue too difficult to get through and we're not ready for that much detail. Don't fill your Prologue up with information that belongs in the Middle of the non-fiction program (the non-fiction program proper).

You must be consistent, clear and to the point. Avoid vagueness. Avoid too many unexplored elements that the audience doesn't yet understand. The viewer should know from your Prologue what the non-fiction program is about.

YOUR PROLOGUE SHOULD END NOT STOP. Make sure you have an ending for your Prologue.

SET UP YOUR TITLE. The title should flow out of what we're seeing and hearing.

And remember, your Prologue should be the example for what your entire non-fiction program will look and sound like.

**Q:** *Do I need multiple speakers in the Prologue? I'm thinking of building a Prologue that's entirely from my profile's point-of-view.*

**A:** It's OK in Prologue to have one voice set up the program. Up to you.

**Q:** *How do I bring my title in?*

**A:** Your Prologue must lead into your title. You need an audio and video approach to bringing in your title. You need final statement that sets up the title. It should come from your profile, as he or she is the star of the program. You also need a video approach to your title. How does the title come in? Over what video? You can't just say, "Fade up title." You have to explain how the title comes in. Hold the title, then fade to black and come up on your first commercial break.

**Q:** *Should I use a subtitle?*

**A:** Your title must tell us what the non-fiction program is about. It should not be general. It needs to be specific and relate directly to the story you are telling. You can often create this clarity by including a subtitle to sum up your story.

You would format the title/subtitle like this:

Title:

Subtitle

**Q:** *I have a three-page Prologue and I think the treatment (with the amount of information I have) will be at least 50-60 pages. Should I make the Prologue a little longer or maybe narrow the topics a little more in the non-fiction program so it relates more directly to my profile?*

**A:** Hard to say whether three pages is too short. The Prologue should set up your non-fiction program, not the other way around. So don't cut down the non-fiction program to match the Prologue. A three-page Prologue could be OK as long as it feels complete. Just make sure it sets up the show, appeals to the viewer and leads into the title.

**Q:** *I am finding that narration seems to set up the program well – why not use it to lay everything out.*

**A:** You need a Prologue that will grip the audience, involve the audience, make the audience care. You can't just sit down and knock out narration copy and call it a day. Where is creativity? Where is a Prologue that shows innovation, thought, careful preparation? Don't let a narrator drone it about something we don't care about or know anything about. Let your speakers talk, let us experience their lives through them.



**Q:** *Can I use my umbrella in the Prologue?*

**A:** It's OK to use an umbrella segment in the Prologue as long as you have an opening umbrella segment for the beginning of the Middle (non-fiction program proper). The Prologue umbrella piece would have to be something that doesn't provide set-up information that is vital for the umbrella to make sense. Save that for the Middle. But if there's something that can give you a kind of preamble, a kind of lead-up to the umbrella and the rest of your non-fiction program, something intriguing or interesting or evocative but expendable in terms of overall story, it would be perfectly acceptable.

**Q:** *There is an event that my profile is attending next week and I'm hoping it's interesting enough to use as my umbrella. But the Prologue is due this Tuesday.*

**A:** What you could do is to create the umbrella of the event knowing it will change in your final project, but indicating what probably will happen (by putting the material in parentheses, we will understand this is anticipated and not actual).

Try to find out what the event is so your anticipation can be fairly close to reality – and remember, you can change all the details in your final project.

You might also think of a Prologue in which there is no umbrella. The umbrella would start at the beginning of the Middle.

**(For more about Prologues and umbrellas, see final treatment section below.)**

RULES TO FOLLOW FOR THE NON-FICTION PROGRAM TREATMENT:

1. Double-Space all WRITTEN NARRATION.
2. Single-space all AUDIO on the right side of the page. AUDIO: ONLY WHAT WE HEAR
3. Single-space all INSTRUCTIONS on the left side of the page.
4. Leave plenty of white space between audio statements and between audio-video instructions. Don't be afraid to use a lot of paper.
5. Put at least one inch of white space between your video and audio columns
6. LEFT SIDE OF THE PAGE -- ALL AUDIO AND VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS
7. RIGHT SIDE OF THE PAGE -- ONLY AUDIO THAT WILL BE HEARD BY THE VIEWER

Other notes:

- \*Do not put (More) at the end of each page
- \*Do not write in All Caps
- \*Put your name and page number on each page
- \*Follow instructions in syllabus and in class on basic copy preparation

You will be graded in the following categories:

- \*Completeness
- \*Organization
- \*Clarity
- \*Continuity
- \*Writing
- \*Reporting
- \*Research
- \*Visuals
- \*Style
- \*Effort

Some valuable advice for doing your final project:

\*Remember: this is a general summary of content. Do not clutter up your summary with technical details or meaningless phrases (The audio will be supplemented by video.) Do not state the obvious: "The montage will consist of a variety of footage..." "He too will have a chyron stating his name and title in white..." "the audio element will then change to sound under and a voice-over of the main profile will become audible."

\*On-Camera and voice-over statements are always sound full. Remember to do the assignment: Sum up the video and audio content of the general summary. Content is the key word.

\*Do not refer to interviews. There are no longer any interviews. There are just sound statements on camera or voice over. Interviews no longer exist

\*Introduce as many of your speakers as possible early in the middle. By using their voices on as many topics as possible, you can introduce them as early as possible.

\*Integrate and use as many voices as possible on each topic. Don't parade in one speaker at a time to make a point. Use all the voices as often as possible on each topic. Build a smooth-flowing audio continuity track throughout. Try to get their comments on as many topics as possible so they can make an appearance earlier in the program. Don't use one speaker for each topic. Unless you use these voices throughout, the program becomes disjointed and fragmented.

\*It is important to fill your program with as many actualities as possible since this gives viewers a chance to eavesdrop and find out things for themselves about your profile. Nothing makes for better TV than being able to eavesdrop and discover truths for yourself. When you can give that gift to your viewer, you're producing good Documentaries. Work on actuality sound full and let the viewers see and hear for themselves.

\*Do not refer to any times (Hold for about 5 seconds). You have no times at all. Nothing has been shot or edited. Leave out all times.

\*Work on a smooth-flowing audio continuity track. Put your topics into a good order. Do not jump back and forth in time. Cover each topic completely before you move on and use as many voices as possible on each specific topic.

\*Remember basic copy rules. Do not split sentences or paragraphs from one page to another. Read your work over for typographical and grammatical errors.

\*Number the pages consecutively from prologue to epilogue.  
Put your name and page number on each page.

\*Follow the examples in the your syllabus as to proper style and e-mail me if you have any questions.

The following treatment samples are from student projects. They provide examples of correct style and of problem areas. **The comments and corrections (in bold) point out some common mistakes.** Also included are comments about why these excerpts are successful. Note that the excerpts were lifted from various sections of the treatments. If chyrons and character descriptions are missing, it is because these occurred earlier in the non-fiction program. The italicized portions are from the teacher evaluations of the treatment. They are included here to give you insight on what works and what can be improved.