

## JOUR 411: Broadcast and Digital Writing for Video and Audio for Non-Majors 2 Units

**Fall 2020 – Mondays – 9-10:40 a.m.**

**Section:** 21454R

**Location:** Online

**Instructor:** Lew Rothbart

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** By appointment, online or by phone

### I. Course Description

This is a focused Broadcast-style Journalism course on using writing and reporting skills specifically for storytelling with video and audio. You will develop and sharpen your skills in a hands-on, 13 week session of evaluating, writing, reporting and editing of news stories. It will also incorporate key aspects of digital journalism and social media with the overall goal of developing skills every journalist needs in these days of multi-media news reporting. The course will also be flexible enough to incorporate your specific needs and will also use examples of current events to show how storytelling techniques are used in the media environment. This class will provide new skill sets for journalists and non-journalists alike.

### II. Student Learning Outcomes

You will develop a solid and broad-based knowledge of broadcast news writing and reporting, from developing a story idea to a finished presentation. You will learn how to recognize, conceive, develop, and research stories, set-up interviews and “shoots,” write and format stories in all forms from voiceovers to using “sound bites,” and complete finished packages and projects. You will also view edited video and interviews, as examples of professional-quality journalistic stories from newscasts, websites, and mobile platforms. As you progress, you will be compared and judged against professional standards.

We will also focus on diversity and its journalistic applications in the development of skills relevant to living and working in a diverse world.

### III. Course Notes

This is a letter grade class unless otherwise requested. The class will be online, using Zoom and Blackboard. Recordings will be made of each class session and can be used if you miss a class (please don't) or need it for reference. Other class information such as assignments, videos, guidelines, and examples will be posted in Blackboard.

### IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments

You will have weekly assignments to build writing skills, as well as a midterm and final project. At least three of the assignments will be complete packages which you will have to conceive, research, develop, set-up, shoot, write, and edit. I will help you develop your projects and all will require prior approval before you begin. The third package will serve as the Final Project for the class.

### V. Grading

#### a. Grade Breakdown

Assignment	% of Grade
Weekly Assignments	20%
Midterm	15%
Package #1	15%
Package #2	15%
Package #3 (Final Project)	30%
Class Participation	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## b. Grading Scale

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

## c. Grading Standards

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis and you will be judged first on the accuracy, fairness and objectivity of your stories. You will then be evaluated for broadcast style, editing, production value, originality and the ability to meet deadlines.

**“A” stories** are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor copyediting (i.e., they would be aired or published). Video work must also be shot and edited creatively, be well paced and include good sound bites and natural sound that add flavor, color or emotion to the story.

**“B” stories** require more than minor editing and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission. For video, there may be minor flaws in the composition of some shots or in the editing. Good use of available sound bites is required.

**“C” stories** need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many spelling, style or omission errors. Camera work and editing techniques in video stories are mediocre or unimaginative, but passable. Sound bites add little or no color - only information that could be better told in the reporter’s narration.

**“D” stories** require excessive rewriting, have numerous errors and should not have been submitted. Camera work is unsatisfactory or fails to show important elements.

**“F” stories** have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, are late, have numerous errors or both. Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. Any misspelled or mispronounced proper noun will result in an automatic “F” on that assignment. Any factual error will also result in an automatic “F” on the assignment. Accuracy is the first law of journalism. The following are some other circumstances that would warrant a grade of “F” and potential USC/Annenberg disciplinary action:

- Fabricating a story or making up quotes or information.
- Plagiarizing a script/article, part of a script/article or information from any source.
- Staging video or telling interview subjects what to say.
- Using video shot by someone else and presenting it as original work.
- Shooting video in one location and presenting it as another location.
- Using the camcorder to intentionally intimidate, provoke or incite a person or a group of people to elicit more “dramatic” video.
- Promising, paying or giving someone something in exchange for doing an interview either on or off camera.
- Missing a deadline.

## d. Grading Timeline

Your assignments are due as listed in the syllabus (usually weekly except for the bigger projects) and I will return them to as soon as I grade them. The sooner you turn them in, the sooner you’ll get them back. We will do peer review as part of the class as well. If for any reason an assignment is going to be late you must let me know, otherwise you will get an “F” for missing the deadline.

## VI. Expectations

### **WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:**

1. Class starts at on time. Chronic tardiness will affect your final grade, as will absences. Let me know if you are going to miss a class, leave early or come late. You receive no credit for in-class work that day. There is no make-up for material we cover

in a class you miss. I'm not going to provide any in-class notes. If you are requesting an excused absence, you must provide documentation.

2. Assignments are due at the time I designate. All assignments will be complete, typed, and emailed to me. Assignments completed not following directions will be graded lower. If you are absent, you are responsible for getting me your homework by the due date/time. **No late assignments are accepted.**
3. There will be no make-ups for the Midterm. There will be no extensions for the final project. You must complete the Midterm and Final Project to pass the class.
4. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a fellow student. I do not email notes or handouts.
5. Class participation is expected and will help your final grade. Everyone is expected to contribute. I want to hear your input, you are part of the process. Lack of participation will reduce your participation grade.
6. Avoid any texting, browsing, or any cell phones use that's not class-related. Doing so will have a negative impact on your grade. Computers for class work ONLY.
7. There should only be one discussion going on at a time in class. Paying attention to the speaker, whether it's the instructor, a fellow student or a guest is a sign of respect and professionalism. Disruptive behavior, such as talking out of turn, random chats, and carrying on side conversations will negatively impact your grade.
8. The syllabus is our guideline but the class will change during the course of the semester to accommodate current events, assignments, and any speaker schedules.
9. You are expected to check Blackboard every week for updates on homework and assignments. I will post the week's homework within 24 hours of our last class and it may already be in the syllabus. You are also responsible for checking your USC email account, which is how I will communicate with you.

#### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:**

1. I am open to your questions and welcome the opportunity to discuss any issues concerning you. Please don't hesitate to talk to me.
2. I am fair. When you get a paper back from me, you'll have a good idea why you earned the grade you did and what can be done to improve your writing. However, if it's not clear, let's talk. The more discussion, the better the understanding.
3. This syllabus is a general guideline for what we will cover during the semester. Other assignments, such as written homework and class projects will be assigned. In addition, we will have in-class writing most weeks.
4. I'll guide you along to improve your writing, but feel free to help guide our discussions. Bring to class your questions, observations and opinions about how you see new coverage in the real world. Our most pertinent and interesting class time will come from what's happening in our world today.
5. I am available for questions and conversations before and after class and by appointment. Ready access is through email. I will respond to all messages within 24 hours, unless my message service indicates otherwise.

#### **VII. Assignment Submission Policy**

All assignments are due on the dates specified. Late assignments will automatically be given a grade of F unless you have contacted me for prior permission. Assignments turned in late, even with permission, may be subject to a grade reduction. If the work was an A, you may only get a B for it. Assignments may be submitted by email if approved or given instruction to do so. Most assignments will be submitted by email unless otherwise specified.

Students are encouraged to submit their work for consideration to Annenberg Media or the Daily Trojan, or pitch it to mainstream media outlets. Visit <http://bit.ly/SubmitAnnenbergMedia> for more information about that submission and review process and email Daily Trojan news editors at [dt.city@gmail.com](mailto:dt.city@gmail.com) for more on how to pitch your work to the campus newspaper.

#### **VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

There will be reading assignments, websites, journals, handouts, viewings, and other supplementary material. I will not assign a lot of outside study, but the work I do assign is important so pay attention to it.

#### **IX. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used for Annenberg classes. Please refer to the [Annenberg Digital Lounge](#) for more information. To connect to USC's Secure Wireless network, please visit USC's [Information Technology Services](#) website.

## X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (13 weeks: 8/17/20 – 11/13/20)

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to change enrollment option to Pass/No Pass or Audit for Session 001

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to drop a class and receive a refund to avoid a mark of “W” on student record and STARS report

**Friday, September 4:** Last day to purchase or waive tuition refund insurance for fall

**Friday, October 2:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript only. Mark of “W” will still appear on student record and STARS report and tuition charges still apply. [Please drop any course by the end of week three for session 001 (or the 20 percent mark of the session in which the course is offered) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, October 2:** Last day to change a Pass/No Pass course to letter grade

**Friday, November 6:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

## XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

**Important note:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings, In class, and Homework
<b>Week 1</b> <b>Monday, 8/17</b>	Class Outline & Syllabus review Examine Goals and Outcomes Broadcast News Writing Basics Leads and Copy Stories for TV and Radio	Learning to write in broadcast style. Using short sentences, action verbs, and how broadcast is different from print. Other broadcast-writing “rules of the road.” In-class: Write a “reader” in class.
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Monday, 8/24</b>	Writing to Video Writing a Voice Over TV, Cellphone, and Radio Formats Active Voice	How to write effectively to pictures 3 Step Rule: Give the info, Write to pictures, Write to time In-class: Write a VO Homework due this class: Find a story online and write :20 <u>broadcast</u> style reader
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Monday, 8/31</b>	Story Leads Refining the VO Adding sound The VSV Cutaways	What is a “lead” and why is it important? Let the pictures and natural sound tell the story Writing in and out of sound Jump cuts In-class: Writing VSVs Homework: Writing for Radio readings: <a href="http://bsideradio.org/learn/writing-a-radio-script/">http://bsideradio.org/learn/writing-a-radio-script/</a> <a href="http://training.npr.org/audio/what-does-a-radio-script-look-like">training.npr.org/audio/what-does-a-radio-script-look-like</a> <a href="https://beonair.com/tips-for-writing-a-radio-news-script/">https://beonair.com/tips-for-writing-a-radio-news-script/</a>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Monday, 9/7</b>	NO CLASS Meeting-Labor Day	Labor Day Homework due this week: LEADS QUIZ. In Blackboard there will be some short stories: Write a lead for each of them. Just a lead, DON’T rewrite the whole story. Remember they are for broadcast. Email them to me.
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Monday, 9/14</b>	Review VSV & alternate forms Pitching stories Intro to the Package form What to put where Conceiving and Developing stories What to look for & shooting video Discuss ideas for your simple Pkg #1 -About 1:00 -Must have one interview -On or off-cam reporter (you) close	In-class: Write another form of VSV Homework: Radio Vox Pox readings: <a href="https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%201/volume1_22.htm">https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%201/volume1_22.htm</a> <a href="https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%201/volume1_23.htm">https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%201/volume1_23.htm</a>
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Monday, 9/21</b>	Setting up and shooting interviews Final approval for Package #1 Writing a “paper package” Using the video to tell your story	Watch these videos BEFORE today’s class: <a href="https://youtu.be/u6b9Thwn4no">https://youtu.be/u6b9Thwn4no</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/UqWLqYqAnxc">https://youtu.be/UqWLqYqAnxc</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/InhaFzWcisY">https://youtu.be/InhaFzWcisY</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/NZ808YVuRIQ">https://youtu.be/NZ808YVuRIQ</a>

<b>Week 7</b> <b>Monday, 9/28</b>	In-Class editing training. Watch email for editing links for this class. (Prepare ideas for Pkg #2)	Yom Kippur If you observe this Jewish holiday, please watch the class recording.
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Monday, 10/5</b>	Pkg #1 due today. Please email to me. IN-CLASS MIDTERM: Two stories. I will provide the video and info, you write: -1 VO -1 VSV Unless we have time, email your pitch for Pkg #2.	Elements for Pkg #2: -About 1:00-1:15 -Must have at least 2 interviews -Must have at least 2 locations -Standup bridge or close (you on camera) Homework: Watch some of these standup examples and bring any questions to class. You don't have to watch all of them, although they are fun. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9MdnEjQgWM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9MdnEjQgWM</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNkvqM0tbU8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNkvqM0tbU8</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSdfjwBO-M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSdfjwBO-M</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VoxCTOIJrw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VoxCTOIJrw</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PzkJIkH6M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PzkJIkH6M</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj-OCOAd7A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj-OCOAd7A</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnqDRBpUhrA&amp;t=56s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnqDRBpUhrA&amp;t=56s</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbaFgCMuBZw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbaFgCMuBZw</a>
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Monday, 10/12</b>	Midterm review Package reviews, in-class Framing interviews-screen thirds, tight shots, examples if time.	
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Monday, 10/19</b>	Pkg 2 due today. Email to me. The long form story. Breaking down a story into elements. What to show and say when. Ethics in your writing. Pitch & approval for Pkg 3	Pkg #3, Note all special requirements: At least 3 separate interviews, at least 2 locations, a standup bridge or close (you on camera,) 1:20-1:30. Also include your written track and a suggested anchor intro along with your video package,
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Monday 10/26</b>	Refining Package elements and looking at special effects and editing. Standups and bridges-How & Why	In class: more review of package examples Homework TBA
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Monday, 11/2</b>	Final Project troubleshooting Using still pictures and graphics.	Examples in class
<b>Week 13</b> <b>Monday, 11/9</b>	Pre-evaluation of final packages for content, elements, and production. <b>NOTE:</b> Special next week for class.	
<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <b>Monday, 11/23,</b> <b>11 a.m.-1 p.m. <u>NOTE</u></b> <b><u>DIFFERENT TIME</u></b>	Final Class Meeting Final Pkg #3 due today. Please submit early so we can review these in class. <b>NOTE:</b> Special time for class.	Final Project due today. Review and peer evaluation of projects in class

## XII. Policies and Procedures

You should not miss any classes. If, for any reason, you are going to miss a class, you need to notify me. You will need to check your USC email and Blackboard for updates or class assignment changes or additions.

When you go out to shoot a story, dress appropriately. You want to be taken seriously and remember you are representing Annenberg and USC. Use your USC email, not "cutesy" personal email for any outside contacts. It looks more professional.

Please use appropriate social distancing, mask, and glove precautions to stay safe and healthy. Do not put yourself in any health or physical danger for the sake of any class assignment.

## Communication

Please feel free to contact me outside of class if you have a question or problem. I don't have any on-campus office hours but email me any concern and I will respond within 24 hours or less.

## 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 that undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to 1 percent of the total available semester points for this course. To receive approval, you must request an internship letter from the Annenberg Career Development Office and send it to sign by the end of the third week of classes. Then you 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 into me by the last day of class. Note: The internship must be unpaid and can only be applied to one journalism or public relations class.

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### a. Academic Conduct

#### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### *USC School of Journalism Policy on Academic Integrity*

The following is the USC Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity and repeated in the syllabus for every course in the school:

"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 plagiarizing, fabricating, cheating on examinations, and/or purchasing papers or other assignments faces sanctions ranging from an 'F' on the assignment to dismissal from the School of Journalism. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards (SJACS), as per university policy, as well as journalism school administrators."

In addition, it is assumed that the work you submit for this course is work you have produced entirely by yourself, and has not been previously produced by you for submission in another course or Learning Lab, without approval of the instructor.

### b. Support Systems

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender

identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care-report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care-report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and micro-aggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/note takers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally "breaking bread" over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

### **XIII. About Your Instructor**

Lew Rothbart has worked for NBC News, ABC News, and CNN, along with several local Los Angeles radio and TV stations. He has conducted seminars for foreign journalists and been a speaker at PR Conferences, and Business Crisis Seminars, He has been a news director, executive producer, line producer, segment producer, assignment editor, field producer, content producer, news writer, video editor, and occasionally swept the floors.