Spring 2011
COMM 465: TV News Reporting

Professor
Dr. Bu Zhong
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☎ 814-865-1023

Class Meets
9:05 – 11:00 a.m. Tue. & Thur., 213A Lubert

Office Hours
9:30 a.m.-noon, Wed. or by appointment
If you see my door is open, you are welcome any time.

Virtual Office Hrs
8:00-9:30 p.m. Mon., Wed.; 9:45 a.-12:00 p., Wed.

Virtual Office Hrs Link
https://breeze.psu.edu/bxz11officehour/ (PSU ID needed)

Class Blog
http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxz11/blogs/c465/

Tech Workshop
4:30-6:30 p.m. Tue. (For the first six weeks only)

Textbook

Required Materials
Dr. Z –Teaching Video: http://bzhong.blogspot.com
Local newscasts: WJAC-6, WTAJ-10 (5p, 11p)
Materials distributed via ANGEL
Three 33 or 60 minutes Mini DV tapes, One SVHS tape and 8 DVD disks.

Course Objectives
Students must acquire basic technical skills, and begin by attending a series of early-semester workshops. Each student will be required to demonstrate the following:

- Properly set up, white balance, frame and shoot “air-quality” video.
- Gather “air-quality” audio including natural sound elements that can be effectively used to enhance storytelling ability.
- Show proficiency in editing audio and video in assigned formats.
- Build and produce an E-portfolio by following a specific format and set of guidelines as set forth by the instructor and the College of Communications.
By the semester’s end, each student should demonstrate skills/knowledge in the following areas:

**Skills:**
- Choose and effectively research newsworthy topics.
- Conduct in-depth interviews on timely and newsworthy topics, using appropriate interview skills and techniques.
- Utilize various formats required for television news scripts and edited stories.
- Understand the key differences between writing styles and formats for television news versus writing and reporting on the web.
- Engage viewers for the web, and shoot and edit video, viewable on a two-inch screen.
- Critically evaluate own work and that of others for accuracy, fairness and clarity.
- Use appropriate broadcast style, including visual, audio and grammatical correctness.

**Knowledge and Understanding:**
- Local, state, national, and international news.
- Role of multimedia today.
- The evolving role of the electronic news industry.
- Professional ethics of the electronic news industry, the obligations and responsibilities to report news ethically.

**Assignments**

**TECH WORKSHOPS:** As part of COMM 465, you must complete technical workshops outside our regular class time. More details will come from Prof. Mannion, instructor of the workshop. Time: 4:30-6:30 p.m., Tuesday. Location: 213A Lubert.

**PACKAGES:** You will do four packages for this course. Before you do each pkg., you must get your package story idea approved by Dr.Z. (Note: Your pkg story ideas are different from “weekly story ideas,” which will be explained below.) All packages must be submitted accompanied by a Bicycle Wheel form (this format will be explained in class). Each package must include a countdown at the top of the packag and a script, including the tease and anchor lead-in, which should be uploaded on ANGEL. You will earn up to 5 bonus points if the pkg shows creative work and extra effort.

**STAND-UPS:** Creative and appropriate stand-ups are one of the effective ways to tell a great story. A poor stand-up, however, just distracts the viewer. Your package must contains a creative and appropriate stand-up for each story. A creative and appropriate stand-up you include in the story will award you up to 5 bonus points.

**WEEKLY STORY IDEAS:** At a newsroom, each reporter/editor/producer needs to contribute several story ideas every day they work. For the whole semester, you must contribute 8 story ideas that may engage residents in Centre County. You must post them on our class blog and upload on ANGEL. (Note: This assignment is different from the pkg story ideas you will submit for approval before you do the pkg.)

**CLASS BLOG:** For this course, you must contribute to our class blog (see the link on the front page), documenting what you learn in the course, sharing your thoughts on story ideas, news reports you did and watched on TV, and other course-related issues. You must post at least five blogs, excluding your story ideas. The major part of the grade will be based on the content of the information, the novelty or originality of the thought and the strength of the arguments you present, plus your comments on others’ blogs. I will also grade on spelling, grammar, and
punctuation. You must post 6 required entries, but you are welcome to post more. I will also check how many comments your blogs attract. Take time to read others’ blogs and leave comments whenever you can. (You need an account at intensedebate.com for making comments on others’ entries. Visit www.intensedebate.com today and open your comment account by using your full name. Otherwise we do not know who make those comments.)

HOW TO VIEW AND WRITE ON OUR CLASS BLOG?
1. Visit: http://blogs.psu.edu
2. Use your PSU ID and password to log in by clicking the green “Log In” button on the right. (Important: If you have not activated your Personal Web Space, you will be directed to do so. Note: Please allow three business days for your Web space to be activated. If you have already activated it, you will be taken to a Dashboard screen.)
3. When you on the Dashboard screen, choose the name of Class Blog and click the red button of “Write Entry” on the top of this page. Now you can write an entry for our class blog. (Note: You are highly recommended to write first in the MS Word and then copy and paste it to the class blog.)
4. For reading the class blog, visit: http://www.personal.psu.edu/bxz11/blogs/c465/

MULTI-PLATFORM WRITING: You will be required to write variations of your package script. In industry, scripts are changed for various newscasts, for feeds, and for the Internet. In class, you will convert your package script into the following: RDR, VO or VO/SOT, and Web Ready. Any element of plagiarism in a story means an automatic failing grade for the whole course (see “Academic Integrity” part for details). Script errors in spelling, grammar, typing or format will reduce your grade on that assignment.

Critiques
Critiquing our work and others is one of the most valuable learning tools we can utilize. Please treat it and others with care and respect. A good way to critique is to mention at least one element that worked in the project and one that needs improvement. One of the goals of the class is to help you identify which, if any, of the production functions you not only excel at, but also like doing.

Diversity
For our class, we will include a diverse selection of people and stories OUTSIDE the physical boundaries of Penn State. NO assignment will be accepted that is shot entirely on campus. For example, I will not approve a story idea that simply is a profile piece on a football player, but I probably will approve a story that focuses on the football player’s work in the Big Brother program. Actively seek out subjects from different ethnicities, races, socio-economic and academic backgrounds. Again, no PSU-related stories. (If such a story submitted, 50% of the grade will be deducted before grading.)

Deadlines
This course treats you like a professional journalist. You must think and act like a journalist. Journalists DO NOT MISS deadlines. Packages are due at the beginning of the assigned class. No late paper will be accepted unless there is a prior arrangement. I will NOT extend deadlines as it will add tremendous pressure on your later projects. Past experience has repeatedly showed that late assignments were among the poorest. Remember: The deadlines are not jokes.

Professionalism
Students are expected to act in a professional manner – meeting deadlines, cooperating with classmates, and generally contributing in a positive way to the class. Working as a
broadcaster often means searching for solutions in a group context. Teamwork is essential to a good broadcaster. Please come to class with a positive attitude. Some of the best TV journalists are those who know how to get along with everybody! Please present a professional attitude and demeanor toward your colleagues and interviewees. Students will be evaluated on their professional demeanor.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly and creative activity in an open, honest and responsible manner, free from fraud and deception, and is an educational objective of the College of Communications and the university. Cheating, including plagiarism, falsification of research data, using the same assignment for more than one class, turning in someone else's work, or passively allowing others to copy your work, will result in academic penalties at the discretion of the instructor, and may result in the grade of “XF” (failed for academic dishonesty) being put on your permanent transcript. In serious cases it could also result in suspension or dismissal from the university. As students studying communication, you should understand and avoid plagiarism (presenting the work of others as your own). A discussion of plagiarism, with examples, can be found at: http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cyberplag/cyberplagstudent.html. The rules and policies regarding academic integrity should be reviewed by every student, and can be found online at: www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20, and in the College of Communications document, "Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures." Any student with a question about academic integrity or plagiarism is strongly encouraged to discuss it with his or her instructor.

Note to Students with Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services, ODS located in room 116 Boucke Building at 814-863-1807(V/TTY). For further information regarding ODS, please visit their Web site at www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable academic adjustments.

Attendance

You need to attend class to learn. If you must miss a class, you MUST notify me via email or phone PRIOR to the class you will miss. I will excuse your absence for any reason you provide. But I will not accept such notice starting one hour before the class starts. If you miss a class without notifying me, you get an absence on ANGEL attendance sheet. No record there suggests you have a perfect attendance. For the first absence, 20 pts of attendance grade is deducted, and any absences after that, 40 pts deducted each. Three absences will result in “0” for attendance. More than three unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade, not just your attendance score. (If more than three absences happen, each extra absence will results in 40 pts being deducted from the final project.) If one has skipped more than four classes without legitimate reasons, she or he will be required to meet with me to discuss the possibility of an incomplete grade.

Class Computer/Cell Phone

The monitors need to be off (black) when the class starts. I will leave time for you to read emails, update Facebook. If you use the computers or other device for non-class related activities, it is considered an unexcused absence. (Don’t type in class. we all can hear the annoying sound.) On being considerate to your fellow students and instructor, turn off all cell phones, iPods, etc. while in class. They must be off (i.e., not on vibrate, no text messages, no voice mail notification).
Food and Drink Policy
In accordance with Penn State policy AD62, all food and drink is prohibited in technology classrooms with the exception of bottled water. If a medical situation requires you to consume food or beverages other than water in class, please bring in justifying documentation.

Grading
1. Tech Workshop Quiz 70 pts
2. Class Blog (5 entries and 20 pts each) 100 pts
3. Project 1 – Profile a young person (team) 80 pts
4. Project 2 – Profile an old person (team) 100 pts
5. Project 3 – Hard news package (individual) 120 pts
6. Project 4 – Feature news package (individual) 130 pts
7. In-class writing (50 pts for each set of scripts) 100 pts
8. Multi-media Projects (from Prof. Chandler) 100 pts
9. Final Project Part I: Document Folder (Resume & cover letter, 30 pts; Newscast critique: 50 pts) 80 pts
10. Final Project Part II: (Resume Disk: Montage – 40 pts; 3 re-edited pkgs – 90 pts; Scripts – 30 pts Teases, and the file detailing changes made – 20 pts) 180 pts
11. Story ideas (10 pts each) 80 pts
12. Attendance 100 pts

Total 1240 pts

Bonus Opportunities
13. Doing an extra pkg for bonus points up to 100 pts

Total possible 1340 pts

For the final grade (these are based on university guidelines):

A (95-100%) C+ (77-79.9999%)
A- (90-94.9999%) C (70-76.9999%)
B+ (89.9999-87%) D (60-69.9999%)
B (86.9999-83%) F (0-59.9999%)
B- (80-82.9999%)

A Very Important Note:
Please check ANGEL often for all course-related materials, especially your grades and attendance. If you find any error, I will be happy to correct it as long as you notify me within two weeks after the grade or attendance record is updated on ANGEL. Do not wait until the final weeks to do this. Do it constantly throughout the semester.
C465 Course Schedule

Week 1
1/11 Course intro, syllabus, your career goals, regular and virtual office hours, class blog.
Assignments: Introduction & Ch-1; Read this syllabus. Watch TV- WTAJ-10 (6 p.m. or 11 p.m. newscast). For the first seven weeks, watch WTAJ-10 and critique its newscast. From Week 8-15, watch and critique WJAC-6. (This assignment will not be repeatedly listed here.) Class Blog: Apply for your personal space (if not yet), and open an account at www.intensedebate.com.

Post your bio card on C465 class blog: Your photo, name, year at PSU, career goal, internships done or planned, hometown, plus a few sentences to help us know you better. (Format your title like this: “Your full name + a newspaper-style headline,” e.g. “Dana Reeser: I am a dreamer.”)

1/13 Lecture: Local Media Market; Types of stories – RDR, VO, VO/SOT, pkgs, donuts, and live reporting; Bicycle Wheel Format;
Video: Texas TV journalists during Hurricane Katrina
Assignments: Introduction & Ch-1;

Week 2
1/18 Lecture: Visual Storytelling
Video: Awarded news pkgs
Project procedures – story ideas, tape log and script format
Assignments: Ch- 2. Story idea 1: Due 2/10 at the start of the class on class blog. (Note: Story ideas will be due either Tuesday or Thursday before the start of the class on our class blog. From now on, only their due dates listed.)

1/20 News talk: Sharing news and story ideas
Lecture: Photojournalism
Assignments: Project 1 story idea (due: 1/27); TV Production CyberCollege modules at: http://www.internetcampus.com/tvp_ind.htm

Week 3
1/25 Story Idea 1
Class Discussion: Good video stories
Watch TV- WJAC-6 (6 or 11p newscast); Project 1- Profile pkg 1 (Due: 2/10)

1/27 Lecture: Field Reporting
Video: Good Stand-ups and Teases
Assignment: Ch-4 & 11
Due: Project 1 story idea (upload it on ANGEL, no hard copy needed)

Week 4
2/1 Story Idea 2
Lecture: Writing for TV 1 – General Principles
Assignments: Ch-8; (Don’t forget watch TV.)
Due: Project 1 Story Idea

2/3 Lecture: Writing for TV 2: Tease, RDR and VO/SOT; Script Formats
Video: Good Teases

**In-Class Writing 1** – Tease, RDR and VO/SOT
Assignment: Story Idea for Project 2 – Profile pkg (Due: 2/10)

**Week 5**
2/8 Editing time – no class

2/10 Story Idea 3
Web Project by Prof. Curt Chandler (first 20 min)
Lecture: Critiquing Project 1
**Due**: Project 1 – Profile pkg 1 (copy it to DRZ’s external hard drive or burn a CD);
Project 2 story idea (Upload it on ANGEL, no hard copy needed).
Assignments: Ch-3; Project 2 – Profile pkg 2 (Due: 3/3); Blog 1 – Reflections on producing my first package (Due: midnight, 2/11).

**Week 6**
2/15 Story Idea 4
Lecture: Editing Principles
Assignments: Ch-7;

2/17 Lecture: Writing for TV 3: News pkgs
**In-Class Writing 2** – A news pkg
Assignments: Ch-7

**Week 7**
2/22 Story Idea 5
Lecture: Broadcast Interview (Field practice for the 2nd hour, bring in your own mini DV tapes) Assignment: Project 3 story idea (Due: 3/3)

2/24 Lecture: Lighting Basics

**Week 8**
3/1 Editing time (no class)
Assignment: Switch to watch WTAJ-6 Newscast. (This assignment will not be repeatedly listed in the syllabus.)
Informal course evaluation for DRZ

3/3 Story Idea 6
Lecture: Critique Project 2
**Due**: Project 2 – Profile pkg 2; Project 3 story idea
Assignments: Ch-12; Project 3 – Hard news pkg (Due: 3/31); Project 4 story idea (Due: 3/31); Blog 2 – Reflections on producing my second package (Due: midnight, 3/4).

**Week 9** (Spring Break, No Class)

**Week 10**
3/15 Story Idea 7
Lecture: On-air delivery – Voice and delivery training anchor-reading in studio (Dress up today)
Assignments: Ch-12;
3/17 Anchor Reading in Studio by appointment with Jim Dugan by email (jrd138@psu.edu) (no class)

**Week 11**
3/22 Story idea 8 (The last one)
Lecture: Writing for Web-ready stories
Tour of Multimedia Studio (for the 2nd hour)

3/24 Lecture: Live Shots (Dress up today and bring in your own mini DV tape)

**Week 12**
3/29 Lecture: Sports Reporting
Assignment: Project 4 – News feature pkg (Due: 4/28).

3/31 Critique Project 3
**Due:** Project 3 – Hard News pkg; Project 4 story idea. Blog 4 – Reflection on producing my third package (Due: midnight, 4/1).

**Week 13**
4/5 Lecture: Diversity in Newsroom
**A Reminder:** Final Project I (Due: 4/26), Final Project II (Due: 4/28).

4/7 Lecture: Cover Letter, Resume and Job Market, Instructions for Final Project

**Week 14**
4/12 Guest Lecture: Web Project (1) by Prof. Chandler
**Due:** Blog 5 – Reflection on C465 as a whole.

4/14 Guest Lecture: Web Project (2) by Prof. Chandler

**Week 15**
4/19 Lecture: Future of News Media
Course Evaluation - Do the SRTE on ANGEL

4/21 Individual conferences on Final Project (No class)

**Week 16**
4/26 **Final Project Part I – Document Folder: Due at noon in my office:** 1. Critique of a local newscast (WTAJ-10). 2. Cover letter addressed to me; 3. Your resume. 4. The link to your e-Portfolio (All neatly put in a nice folder.)

4/28 **Final Project Part II – Project 4-News Feature pkg; Resume Disk, Related Scripts:** **Due at noon in my office.** (Note: Each pkg should be a separate file on the disk. Test and make sure the files can be played on computer before turning them in.)

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**COMM. 465: WORKSHOP SCHEDULE** (213 Lubert—classroom or edit labs on Tue. 4:30-6:30p)

**WEEK ONE:** 1/11: Camera training  **WEEK TWO:** 1/18: Camera training  **WEEK THREE:** 1/25: Non-Linear Editing  **WEEK FOUR:** 2/1: Non-Linear Editing  **WEEK FIVE:** 2/8: Graphics /lighting

*Week Five will begin with a one-hour graphics and special editing topics in Finestra lab. Second half of same workshop is a 45-60 minute lighting workshop on same floor of building.*