

MCM 3361 ^[L]_[SEP] Broadcast News Writing and Reporting

W 5 - 7:50 p.m.

A.J. “Alex” Avila, PhD

^[L]_[SEP] **3 hrs. Credit** ^[L]_[SEP]

Spring 2017

DRCB 305 ^[L]_[SEP]

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Office hours: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Wed and
by appointment

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Description: This course is an intensive media production workshop designed to simulate broadcast news production requirements. This includes: “Philosophy and techniques of electronic journalism” practice in writing and editing news copy; development of audio/video skills applied to news; and, discussion of current issues facing broadcast journalism.

Objectives: Produce materials for use within news or other programs presented on cable channel 7. This type of class doesn’t fit into the typical class mold. Handouts will specify certain behavior, including your assignments, time frames, duties, and completion procedures.

Methods: This class will require time outside of scheduled class meetings. You may also be expected to assist in providing story ideas and contacts. Based on required prerequisites, it is expected that you can already shoot, edit and write scripts.

Lecture progress: We shall attempt to hone the writing, reporting, editing, and newsgathering skills of students. Production procedures, script form, and production protocols will be emphasized. Exams will include materials from lectures, writing exercises, handouts, and experience.

Attendance Policy: Arriving late (after roll) to class and leaving early (before dismissed) shall be counted as an absence. If class is missed due to illness* or other excusable reasons, you are expected to see the instructor immediately upon return to school regarding missed work. Missing class for any reason other than an excused absence on any day that work is required, or an exam is given, will result in the immediate and non-negotiable loss of that grade. If an excused absence results in the missing of work or exam, it is the student’s responsibility to make an appointment so a make up quiz may be given or alternate due date assigned. Assignments due when absent, are expected to be

given to the instructor before the class period to be missed unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

University policy dictates that students are allowed 3 hours of absence without damaging your grade. I allow slightly more. Students will lose 1 letter grade after 5 absences in classes meeting 3 times per week, 4 absences in classes meeting twice a week. Excessive absence will only cost you 1 letter at most unless you miss more than 25% of class meetings, in which case you automatically fail the class. Any student with perfect attendance will receive no lower than a “C”, providing they make an effort to do the work and do not cause problems (my call). **If you are absent when I take roll it is considered the same as an absence.** With the exception of catastrophic illness (more than a week of consecutive absence), or sanctioned university activities, all absences count toward your free days. Do not bring notes or excuses. I’m very meticulous about this and I will not argue absences. I’m serious about absences!

Critiques

Students’ work will at times be read, displayed or distributed to class. This is one way to learn what works well and what doesn’t, by example. Critiques and comments are to be respectful and constructive.

Exams: All quizzes, exams and tests will be given only at the scheduled time with no make-up (excepting students absent for sanctioned events such as athletics and religious holidays). Once any testing has begun, students cannot leave the room until they are finished. Anyone entering the room more than 10 minutes after the start of testing, or after any student has completed the testing and left, will not be allowed to begin the testing process.

Tests & Projects: Packages will be added together and that will constitute 70% of your grade. You are expected to do one (1) package or VO/SOT per week after the third week of class. If you do not, a zero will be added to your average. You are not allowed to do more than 1 assigned package per week. There will be news quizzes/assignments, worth 30% of your grade. You **MUST** do 1 package or VO/SOT per week!

All writing projects (scripts) must be neatly typed or word-processed using a standard script form (I will supply a template). Handwritten material will not be accepted. Test answers must be neatly printed. All video editing will be done in the editing suites next to the newsroom (112 & 113). These are Mac based Adobe Premiere editors. If you don’t know the program, you’ll have to learn it. All shooting will be done with the JVC

GY100s assigned to NEWS. Do NOT use any other cameras or any other editors, PERIOD. The GY100s are a flash drive camera and do not require you to capture the video. Finished products will be .mov files. All files will be submitted to your folder in your class folder on the network share drive.

You must purchase at least 1 SDHC class 10 flash card for storage. It needs to be at least 8 gigs. Look for deals from NewEgg or other web companies. Average cost is about \$25 or less. Do NOT buy them at Walmart (made in China).

Grading

A-100-90

B-89-80

C-79-70

D-69-60 (MCM majors receiving a grade of D or lower will be required to repeat the course.

What is expected of you: This class is time consuming. If you're not prepared for that, you need to drop. Due to a shortage of equipment and the size of this class, production teams of two people will gather news materials. Once the materials are gathered, however, each person is responsible for his or her individual work. You do not produce in pairs. You are not graded in pairs.

Each week one person will do a package and one person will do a VO/SOT on the same story. Each story should be the unique work of each student and should not be verbatim to each other. Each person will receive a grade for the piece they turned in. All stories are due Wednesday in class. Excuses are not accepted, only finished projects.

You are also expected to contribute story ideas. You will submit a minimum of 3 new ideas each pitch session for consideration for the following week's story. These will be typed with story info, contact person and phone number. Do not schedule interviews during class. Do not try to edit stories during class time either. For the most part, this class will operate much the same as a reporting job. Dress responsibly and professionally when you go on shoots. You are to use the cameras bought specifically for broadcast journalism and only those. All video is now shot in HD format. **ALWAYS** have 2 people at an interview, one to shoot, one to conduct the interview.

Equipment use policy: It is the policy of our department that you agree to pay for repair or replacement of equipment checked out to you, if it is broken or lost. Failure to abide

will result in no grade for the course. You must use our specific equipment. And you must treat the equipment with care.

Any and all assignments are due at the beginning of class. After class is LATE. Late work is not accepted. Keep track of your own grades, keep quizzes and tests as well as projects and papers if you are worried about grade totals.

It's important to remember that mass media works on a time driven concept. After a deadline, it becomes garbage. Do NOT ask if there is anything extra you can do, just do the required stuff and do it as best you can.

All electronic devices must be turned off or silenced before class begins service (your Bluetooth ear piece included). If you feel you must answer a call during class, take your things and leave class for the day. You will be counted absent. This includes text messaging and checking messages.

Classes may require specific information that will be included in a handout at a later date.

Appropriate Dress: Pants that show underwear, or where underwear should be, are inappropriate. Hoods are not to be worn during class (ever), nor are bulky coats or head coverings. If special attire is required, contact me prior to attendance. Note - Special attire regulations apply to production shoots as well.

Required materials: 2 SDHC class 10 (or higher) cards, a current SHSU ID

(Note: The next four sections are covered on the SHSU webpage at:

<https://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

If you're caught cheating on an exam, plagiarizing a research paper, or representing the

work of others as your own, you will fail the course. This is non-negotiable.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential.

NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

Instructor Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Study Tips

Writing Center: The Sam Houston Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open M-F from 8am until 7pm, Friday from 8am until 3pm, and Sunday from 2pm until 7pm.

Writing tutors will work with you one-on-one to help you generate, organize, or revise a draft of any assignment in any subject. You can drop by to work with a tutor or call (936) 294-3680 to schedule an appointment.

Classroom Rules of Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link:

<https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Section 5.2.22 defines classroom disturbances.

My Best Advice: Learn to manage your time wisely. Don't wait for the last minute to do your story. Get started as soon as you get your assignment. Don't expect people to call you back. Be persistent! There will be many handouts. Read them and keep them.

This is a deadline driven class designed to mimic real-world news deadlines. A lot of outside time is needed for this class. Do the work and the grade will take care of itself. Because there are ALWAYS new deadlines, falling behind on your assignments can be fatal. You have been warned.
