COMM221001 Broadcast & Digital Communication

Summer Session I
May 16-June 20

Class time: Mondays, Wednesdays, 6pm-9:15pm

Instructor: Christine Caswell
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Office Hours: by appointment/email

Lecturer:
Christine Caswell is the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Communication Department, Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, at Boston College. She teaches both in the Communication major as well as in the Journalism minor. Christine has nearly 3 decades of experience as a television and radio news journalist; most have been spent in the major market of Boston, MA. She has reported extensively on major criminal trials, including the OJ Simpson trial in Los Angeles and the Marv Albert trial in Arlington, VA. Her passion is to bring solid, credible, and meaningful storytelling to consumers of media. She has been awarded a Telly Award for her work with CatholicTV in addition to numerous individual Emmy nominations, a team Emmy award for best newscast at WHDH TV, and numerous Associated Press awards. Christine has been teaching at Boston College since 2000; her courses include Broadcast Writing, Feature Writing, Senior Seminar, Entertainment Media, Broadcast & Digital Communication.

Course Description:
This course introduces the student to a broad sampling of broadcast and digital writing styles utilized across many industry platforms. Areas of focus include news, sports, documentaries, commercials, public service announcements, educational television, and writing for specialized audiences. The theories, ethics and practices of this genre of communication will be introduced as well as interview methods and techniques. Case studies and practical assignments complement classroom discussions. Instructor is an industry veteran with expertise in how to apply classroom theory to practice.

Ground Rules:
Show up and participate. I encourage active participation and attention to detail. Complete assigned digital homework assignments on time as they will generate the next week’s discussion topic.

**Objectives:**
This course will provide you with the knowledge and understanding of how those in the electronic media write for clarity, content, impact and deadline. You will be able to identify the broadcast and digital style of writing, and how it differs from print. Think “conversational.” This is your motto by which to write.

These are some key objectives:
- Write clear and concise copy with a natural and logical flow of ideas (clear, concise, conversational, compelling = success!)
- Edit copy for mass broadcast and digital content.
- Write under pressure from looming deadlines.
- Capture your viewers’ or listeners’ attention, hold it, informing and impressing them with your words.
- Understand the powerful tool that is broadcast and digital media; how it cannot be handled in a slipshod manner as it may wrongly convict someone, ruin someone’s reputation, make them lose a job.
- Think critically about a story’s impact and the influence and power a storyteller may have.
- Plan, design, script and pitch different types of stories.

**May 16 Class 1**

Introductions
Broadcast and digital style of writing and storytelling
News and Entertainment crossover
The Clues to a Great Story TED Talk Andrew Stanton
[https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story)

**HW:** Read the syllabus thoroughly, especially the Reminders section.

**May 21 Class 2**

Sports Broadcasting
Sports, Entertainment, News podcasting
Guest Speaker: Jon Meterparel, veteran sports journalist, commentator, play-by-play

**HW**: The Journey from Print to Radio Storytelling  
http://training.npr.org/blog/webinar-the-journey-from-print-to-radio-storytelling/

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**May 23  Class 3**

The Journey from Print to Radio (and other mass media) Storytelling  
Conversational Writing  
The writing style  
Script types: reader, vo, vo/sot, package  
Segway example  
**Assignment #1  vo/sot script  DUE:  May 30**

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**May 28  NO CLASS  HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!**

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**May 30  Class 4**

Assignment #1 vo/sot script is **DUE** today  
Podcasting  
LORE  
Possible guest speaker  
Pod617  https://soundcloud.com/pod617  
https://www.thisamericanlife.org/about/make-radio  
Art of Interviewing/the interview technique  
Ethics in interviewing  
Antoine Dodson case  
Documentary  
**HW**: Watch Frontline “Trafficked in America”  
**Assignment #2  Interview  DUE June 6**

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**June 4  Class 5**
Communicating to special audiences
Children’s broadcast
Stereotyping/messaging young minds
Educational value/empowerment
http://www.fablevisionstudios.com/in-the-news/ Paper Girls case study
Public vs. commercial

Assignment #3 Comparison paper: PBS and Nickelodeon/Cartoon Network programming DUE June 11

June 6 Class 6

Assignment #2 Interview is DUE today

Advertising/Public Relations/Promotional Communication
Spot vs. PSA
Pamela Laffin case
Good spots, effective spots
https://www.ted.com/watch/ads-worth-spreading/thank-you-mom-pick-them-back-up
https://www.ted.com/watch/ads-worth-spreading/basketball
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1n6hf3adNqk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmHzsXO1EZg

June 11 Class 7

Assignment #3 is DUE today
Advertising/Public Relations/Promotional Comm (con’t)
Practice PSA
In-class exercises
The pitch
http://tommartin.typepad.com/positive_disruption/2012/06/ad-agency-rfp-strategies.html

Assignment #4 FINAL PROJECT

June 13 Class 8

Scripting and creative workshop
Writing
Storyboard
Effective storytelling
Pitch Letter
The impact of music, humor, testimonials

June 18 Class 9
Final Project Presentations Group 1

June 20 Class 10
Final Project Presentations Group 2

REMINDERS:

All scripted work must be typed and proofread. Handwritten work will not be accepted. When you write for air and broadcast, there is no room for mistakes. You could cost someone their reputation, wrongly convict someone of a crime. You may dent your own credibility as a journalist/storyteller. Trust may be broken. Proofread EVERYTHING. Check it twice. Use a dictionary. Presentation is a big part of your assignments. Points will be taken off for spelling and grammatical errors. If you have a spelling or grammatical error, you will automatically begin at a B+ grade and go down from there. Remember, in the industry, you will not be hired if you do not pay strict attention to detail.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required as a condition of successful completion of the course. After missing any class session, a student is responsible for finding out about assignments, due dates, announcements, handouts, and so forth that were covered during the missed session, and for making up any missed work. The student is also responsible for obtaining class notes from a classmate for the session, and for learning the material from that session for any relevant assignments. I will not be available to re-lecture a three hour class meeting time. It will be your responsibility to connect with a classmate.

The equivalent of 2 weeks of absence from any course will reduce a student's course grade by one full letter grade. Absence from a combined total of 3 weeks of class meetings will result in automatic failure of the course. Thus, if the class meets once a week, 3 missed sessions equals automatic failure.
Absences for any reason, including illness, personal crises, athletics or other extra-curricular activities are included in this total. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss 3 or more weeks of a particular course, then that student should not enroll in the course. A doctor’s or Dean’s note will be necessary for documented absences.

**Statement on Academic Integrity from the College of Arts and Sciences:**

The College [of Arts and Sciences] expects all students to adhere to the accepted norms of intellectual honesty in their academic work. Any forms of cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty or collusion in another's dishonesty is a fundamental violation of these norms.

**CHEATING** is the use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in any exam or other academic exercise submitted for evaluation. This includes data falsification; the fabrication of data; deceitful alteration of collected data included in a report; copying from another student's work; unauthorized cooperation in doing assignments or during an examination; the use of purchased essays, term papers, or preparatory research for such papers; submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from the instructor(s) involved; and dishonesty in requests for either extensions or papers or make-up examinations.

**PLAGIARISM** is the deliberate act of taking the words, ideas, data, illustrative material, or statements of someone else, without full and proper acknowledgment, and presenting them as one's own.

**COLLUSION** is assisting or attempting to assist another student in an act of academic dishonesty.

As part of your scholarly development, you must learn how to work cooperatively in a community of scholars and fruitfully utilize the work of others without violating the norms of intellectual honesty. You have a responsibility to learn the parameters of collaboration and the proper forms for quoting, summarizing and paraphrasing.

Faculty members who detect any form of academic dishonesty have the responsibility to take appropriate action. The faculty member also has the responsibility to report the incident and penalty to the Department Chairperson and the appropriate Class Dean. The report will remain in your student file until you graduate.

If the gravity of the offense seems to warrant it or if the faculty member prefers that another academic authority decide the matter, he or she may refer the case to a Dean. In addition, if the student is unwilling to accept the faculty member's decision, he or she may choose to have the matter adjudicated either by an
Associate Dean or by an Administrative Board. The section of the College of Arts and Sciences in the Boston College Undergraduate Catalogue has further details about this process.

Academic integrity is a very important matter. If you have any questions in any of your courses about what is allowed or not allowed, please discuss the matter immediately with the instructor.

Letter Grades:

94-100        A
90-93          A-
87-89          B+
84-86          B
80-83          B-
77-79          C+
74-76          C
70-73          C-
67-69          D+
64-66          D
60-63          D-
0-59           F

Grading Rubric:

Assignment #1       15%
Assignment #2       15%
Assignment #3       15%
HW, readings       10%
Final Project      25%
Active Participation 20%

100%