

COMM 208 - 202 Reporting Fundamentals II: Technology for Journalists

Spring 2020

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10-11:15 a.m.

School of Communication Room 100 (studio)

Professor Lee Hood, Ph.D.

Office: Lewis Towers 910B; phone 312-915-8538

Home phone: 630-510-3128; cell phone 630-235-4141 (please, no calls after 9 p.m.)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-12:30 and 2:30-4:00 p.m. (or by appointment)

E-mail: lhood1@luc.edu Twitter and Instagram: @leehoodloyola

◆ Course Goals and Objectives

This course is designed to teach you the fundamentals of basic technologies used by today's journalists to report events and tell stories. The course will be divided into broad sections focused on writing and blogging; social media in journalistic contexts; still photography; audio; video; and information graphics. Each section will be presented with a goal of making you feel comfortable and confident in using these technologies to report and produce well-written, well-edited stories across platforms. The aim is to help you brand yourself and your content as a legitimate source of journalism. Ultimately, this course aims to offer you a taste of different mediums and technologies to help you choose how best to tell your stories, as well as your own path within journalism.

◆ You will need:

- Flash drive, external hard drive, or cloud storage (minimum 4 GB)
- Notebook or folder for keeping numerous handouts and instruction sheets
- No textbook is required, though it will be helpful to have access to an Associated Press Style Book.
- Additional readings will be provided as the semester progresses.

The School of Communication has a variety of equipment that we can use for class-related projects. This equipment may be checked out through the Owl Lab in SOC 004 (additional details to follow). Your own equipment and devices will likely be suitable for many assignments, as well.

◆ Assignments and Projects

Assignments, both in class and on your own, will be designed to help you develop your skills using communication technologies in a journalistic setting. The major sections will also include larger projects on which to demonstrate those skills. In addition, each person will maintain a blog and *professionally focused* Twitter and Instagram feeds for your stories, both on a beat of your choice and on other general-assignment topics.

Other small assignments will aim to help you understand more fully the uses of these technologies, both by journalists and by the public.

Additional considerations:

- **Story Subjects:** For objectivity and in keeping with standard professional practice, avoid doing stories using your own family members, significant others, close friends or roommates as subjects. The best rule of thumb is: Don't build stories around people you are related to or are particularly close to. Likewise, avoid doing stories about groups you belong to. Such stories will receive a grade reduction, unless: 1) it is a unique circumstance, 2) the story is *about* your connection to the story subject, *and* 3) the connection is revealed in the story. *Please speak to Professor Hood if you have a story idea that would justify first-person involvement, but these should be the exception and not the rule.*
- Also, you are expected to make a concerted effort to round out your stories with a diverse subject base, particularly ethnically and culturally.
- **Beat assignments:** As you choose your beat, it will be important to keep in mind that many of your stories will require interviewing sources. I.e., your blog will be for covering newsworthy stories, not for expressing your opinion on a topic.
- **Fact error deduction:** Facts are of vital importance in journalism. Therefore, fact errors in stories receive an automatic deduction. Take care to make sure names are spelled correctly and that other facts are accurately presented. In the words of the late President Lyndon Johnson, "In the arsenal of truth, there is no greater weapon than fact."

Deadlines: Meeting deadlines is vital in journalism. Assignments not turned in on time will receive an automatic reduction in grade.

Final Project

There will be a final project in lieu of a final exam, which will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the skills you have acquired throughout the semester. The project will incorporate several elements using the various technologies. Final projects will be due on the day and time of our scheduled final, **Tuesday, April 30, 1 p.m.** You will also be assigned to peer-review a classmate's project. Details will be distributed later in the semester and on Sakai.

Attendance/Punctuality/Professionalism

You are expected to attend every class, and absences will impact your ability to get the most out of the course. Your attendance and timely arrival in class will be counted as part of your in-class grade. If you have a genuine emergency, please notify me *prior* to class if possible. Assignments missed for unexcused absences may not be made up. In addition, points may be deducted for excessive disruption or obvious disengagement from class sessions (such as reading or sending texts, checking your email, etc.). Deductions are also given for not returning equipment on time.

At Loyola, we respect that you may miss class due to religious observances. In these circumstances, please notify me ahead of time that you will be gone.

◆ Grading

Grades will be weighted as follows:

Website, Blog, Social Media	30%
Other major projects	30%
In-class and smaller assignments	20%
Final project	20%

Grading scale

Assignments will be graded on a point system. At the end of the semester, the accumulated points will be converted into a letter grade based on the following scale:

A 94-100%; A- 90-93%; B+ 87-89%; B 84-86%; B- 80-83%;
C+ 77-79%; C 74-76%; C- 70-73%; D+ 67-69%; D 60-66%

◆ Rules and Responsibilities

Academic Integrity

Loyola University and the School of Communication expect academic integrity and have policies regarding academic dishonesty. Specifically for the SOC:

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g., failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes*;
- Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Specifically for this course:

*--You are not allowed to copy someone else's audio, video or visuals from the Internet, DVD, or any other source without proper attribution – and any use of such work in your stories should be limited to a few seconds and with a very clear purpose (e.g., YouTube video). You **cannot** use content from another journalist or organization in your work.*

Turning in work that is not your own and representing it as yours will result in failure on the assignment and possible dismissal from the class.

**If you are in two courses that generate news stories (for example, this class and Mosaic), it may be permissible to cover the same story for both courses if: 1) the stories are in different formats (such as broadcast and print), and 2) both professors know about and approve of the arrangement.*

You can find Loyola's policies regarding academic integrity at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Managing Life Crises and Finding Support

Should you encounter an unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), I strongly encourage you to contact the Center for Student Assistance & Advocacy (LUC.edu/csaa) to submit a CARE referral for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. Learn more about the center and its resources at: <https://www.luc.edu/csaa/forstudents/studentresources/>

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) (formerly known as SSWD). We will accommodate your needs as best we can. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SAC website: <http://www.luc.edu/sac>.

Cell phone and computer use

As this is a technology course, we will be using computers and your phones for many class-related activities. However, you will be expected to show discretion and *not* use them for purposes unrelated to class. If you use a computer to take notes during lecture or instruction portions of the class, you may be asked to send your notes to Professor Hood at the end of the session.

◆ Electronic Communication & Information

Sakai: Course information and assignments will be available on Sakai, and you will be able to submit some assignments there. Please notify me if you have any problems using the class Sakai site.

Email: I will answer email within 24 hours on weekdays but will not always access it on weekends. You may not receive a response to a late Friday email until Monday.

◆ About your professor

This is my eleventh year at Loyola, and I was recognized in 2018 with the national Edward L. Bliss award for distinguished broadcast journalism education. I have 18 years of experience in television news, most of that as a producer. I worked at TV stations in Denver, and before that produced and anchored newscasts in Huntsville, Alabama. My newscasts earned regional Emmy awards for hard news and spot news and a Colorado Broadcasters Association best newscast award. I also have experience in reporting (both news and sports), photography and editing, and worked in radio and newspapers before starting my television career. I hold a PhD in Communication from the University of Colorado. My research interests include journalistic uses of technology; local news and the audience relationship to it; as well as corporate and consolidation influences on local news and local news outsourcing. I have a master's degree from the University of Colorado and a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Missouri. I am a member of the Chicago regional board of directors for the National Television Academy.

Tues Jan 14 General introduction and expectations; role of technology in journalism

Thur Jan 16 Blogging styles and purposes; setting up blogs and social media accounts; journalistic-style writing refresher

Tues Jan 21 Beat reporting; headlines and SEO basics
Due: Classmate profile; Twitter and Instagram accounts set up by this date

Thur Jan 23 Using and monitoring social media in journalism; using Twitter in real time; bit.ly's and related tools
Due: "Blog log" assignment

Tues Jan 28 Posting photos and videos to your website; captions and credits; legalities and ethics of using images (Creative Commons, etc.)
Due: Beat names and ideas

Thur Jan 30 Wisdom from the field: expectations for a well-rounded journalist
➤ Guest speaker: Christine Taylor, managing editor for audience, Chicago Tribune

Fri Jan 31 Blog site set up; first blog and social media posts due by 11:55 p.m.

Tues Feb 4 Photography unit: Uses, tricks and techniques; digital photo editing

Thur Feb 6 Shooting with a DSLR
Due: Photo assignment #1 (by Friday 11:55 p.m.)

Tues Feb 11 More photo editing, combining photos and text

Thur Feb 13 Photography unit continues: photo authentication and verifying images
Due: Photo assignment #2, Twitter event "watching" assignment (by Friday 11:55 p.m.)

Tues Feb 18 Intro to broadcast writing and audio stories; gathering and using sound

Thur Feb 20 Audio unit continues; using the podcasting equipment

Tues Feb 25 Non-linear audio editing
Due: Audio interview for editing

Thur Feb 27 Putting together audio stories

Week of March 2 **Spring Break**

Tues Mar 10 Video unit: Uses, how-to, video editing, basic story types

Thur Mar 12 Video editing basics
Due: Multimedia photo projects and audio wraps (by 11:55 p.m. Friday)

Tues Mar 17 Newsgathering on deadline: Illinois Primary Day

Thur Mar 19 Finishing Primary stories

Due: Primary stories (by 11:55 p.m. Friday)

Tues Mar 24 Shooting video sequences: tools, tricks and choices

Thur Mar 26 Video editing continues

Due: Video sequence shot (for editing and uploading in class)

Tues Mar 31 Mobile newsgathering on deadline

Thur Apr 2 Finishing mobile video packages

Due: Mobile video packages

Tues Apr 7 Information graphics: maps, timelines, polls

Thur Apr 9 Information graphics

Tues Apr 14 Information graphics; final project expectations

Thur Apr 16 Studio work: Green screen and other techniques

Due: Information graphics assignments (by 11:55 p.m. Friday)

Tues Apr 21 Studio work II

Thur Apr 23 Semester wrap-up; last day of class

Tues Apr 28 **Final Projects due by 1 p.m.**

(peer review of classmate's project due later)

** We will try to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes if circumstances dictate or special opportunities arise.
Expect additional assignments and due dates as the semester progresses.*