

# Medical and Science Video Storytelling

## [School of Media and Journalism](#)

MEJO 561 (HBEH 561, HPM 551), Spring 2017  
Monday, 2:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m., Carroll Hall 340

Professor: <a href="#">Tom Linden, M.D.</a> 328 Carroll Hall 919-962-4078 e-mail: linden at unc dot edu	Office Hours: Wednesday, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., or by appointment or when office door is open
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Teaching Assistant: Rossie Izlar e-mail: rizlar at live dot unc dot edu	Office Hours: TBA
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## Course Description and Goals

The purpose of this course is to teach the skills needed to produce environmental, science and medical video news reports for broadcast on [Carolina Week](#), the School of Media and Journalism's weekly television newscast. This class is a core course of the [Science and Medical Journalism Program](#). Please note that this syllabus is a dynamic document that may change at any time. Please consult this syllabus on a frequent basis for reading and reporting assignments and before you come to class.

As a participant in this course, you'll learn to do the following:

- Conceive and research an environmental, science or medical news report for television broadcast.
- Produce an environmental, science or medical video story.
- Write a video script.
- Basic performance skills for both taped reports and in-studio lead-ins and debriefings.
- Operate a video camera.
- Do digital video editing.

## Reading

Required reading for the course is an introduction to broadcast journalism. I also recommend that all students consult the *Associated Press Broadcast News Handbook* by Brad Kalbfeld that will serve as our style guide.

## Required Reading:

Wenger, Debora Halpern and Deborah Potter, [\*Advancing the Story: Broadcast Journalism in a Multimedia World\*](#), Third Edition, CQ Press, 2015, ISBN: 978148335001. (Second edition is also acceptable.)

## Optional Reading:

Cohn, Victor and Lewis Cope. *News & Numbers: A Guide to Reporting Statistical Claims and Controversies in Health and Other Fields*, Iowa State University Press (paperback), Second Edition, 2001, 211 pp., ISBN: 0813814243. **(recommended for students without a medical or public health background).**

## **Assignments**

The key to a successful environmental, science or medical television news report is good writing. Good writing requires an understanding of the material and the ability to communicate your ideas simply and clearly.

All scripts must be in my hands at the start of class on the respective due dates. Even with prior permission, submission of late scripts will result in a 10-point deduction per day. Not turning in a script will result in a zero grade. Misspelling of proper names will result in a 10-point deduction per misspelling. Misspelling of other words will result in a 2-point deduction for each word misspelled.

Once you learn the requisite scriptwriting skills, you'll work in production teams to prepare your reports for [Carolina Week](#). Each video reporting team will be composed of up to four students who assume jobs at various times of producer, videographer, video editor and reporter/scriptwriter. Students on each team will alternate between various producing, reporting, shooting and video editing roles. Since you're supplying news reports for broadcast on Carolina Week, it's expected that you'll watch the program regularly. See the [Carolina Week web page](#) for program [show times](#) and cable channels on campus and in the Triangle. On the week before your report airs, it's expected that you'll participate in Carolina Week's assignment meeting (check with the CW assignment editor for meeting times). On the Wednesday that your report airs, it's expected that you'll be in the newsroom at least 15 minutes before the show airs at 5 p.m. and be in touch with the show's producer to make sure that you've delivered all necessary materials for your report (usually including video package, video tease, and anchor intro and outro). Late delivery of on-air materials will bump your story off the newscast so make sure you know the deadlines set by the Carolina Week producers.

## **Exam**

There will be no midterm or final exam.

## Grades

Your grade will be based upon the following factors:

- Contributions to the production team based on your individual work as producer, videographer, video editor and reporter/scriptwriter. (50%)
- Your presence as an integral member of the Carolina Week news team. It's expected that you'll attend the Wednesday live broadcasts of CW and become a familiar face to members of the CW team. (30%)
- Your ability to work with your MEJO 561 team members in a collegial and professional manner. Keep in mind that succeeding in the broadcast field requires a great deal of teamwork. (10%)
- Classroom participation. (10%)

Contributions to your video team will be determined as follows: (40 points maximum):

a) Have you kept a **contemporaneous** work log of time spent in all out-of-class, project-related activities? **The log should note the amount of time (by date and in hours) spent each week during the preparation of your video report.** For each entry, note the job you performed (e.g., research, telephone pre-interview, scouting trip, etc.) The instructor will ask for the log (no more than one page) to be handed in at the last class session. You **cannot** pass the course unless you turn in your work log in a timely manner.

b) How have you collaborated with your team members? Keep in mind that succeeding in the television and reporting field requires teamwork.

c) What's the quality of your individual contribution whether as producer, associate producer, scriptwriter or reporter?

d) Have you completed your responsibilities within the team in a timely manner? Remember that broadcast professional standards of promptness and preparation are expected during every phase of the project. In broadcast journalism, one team member failing to deliver at any point in the production process can affect many people, including your team, the entire Carolina Week show and sources who are taking time away from busy schedules to accommodate you.

The quality of your completed video report will be based on the following (40 points maximum):

- a) Does the story have a strong focus?
- b) Is the story compelling?
- c) Are the environmental, science or medical lessons accurate and explained in a way that a non-scientist can easily understand?
- d) Have you interviewed more than one knowledgeable source?
- e) Are appropriate archival materials included (e.g., photos, videos, recordings, art)?
- f) Was the story fact checked?
- g) Is there a human interest angle?
- h) How is the sound quality? (Please note stories with poor sound will NOT be broadcast).

i) How is the video quality? (Out-of-focus, shaky or poorly framed shots will NOT be acceptable and will prevent your piece from appearing on-air.)

To receive a passing grade, you can have no more than **one** unexcused absence. Failure to appear for a scheduled shoot or an in-studio report counts as an unexcused absence. **As noted above, to help me evaluate your contributions to your team, please keep a weekly log of out-of-class time that you spend on your individual activities on the team (e.g., time spent researching stories, pre-interviewing, interviewing, scripting, shooting, editing, etc.)** At the end of the semester, I'll ask you to hand in a one-page summary of your activities in which you itemize hours spent in various aspects of the course. Please **total** the number of hours spent in out-of-class activities. *Failure to return the end-of-semester weekly log by the spring 2017 reading day will result in an incomplete grade for the class and a drop of at least one letter grade for your final course grade.*

The following will be the grading guidelines that I'll use in determining your final course grade:

A: nearly perfect in execution... quality and quantity of work is exceptional.

A-: stands out from crowd (in a good way!)... good attitude... work is impressive in terms of quantity and quality... very few problems all term... works as if your career depends on it.

B+: very good performance... would get an unqualified job recommendation... consistently does more than required... a self-starter.

B: solid effort... should become a solid pro... would have no problem recommending this person.

B-: with a bit more polish, this person should make it in the reporting business... has a pretty good handle on video production and reporting.

C+: good in one phase of job, but consistent problems in another phase or contributed in only one phase.

C: acceptable work... follows instructions... understands basics... good team player... but didn't perform/contribute across the board... potential is there, somewhere, please show it to us.

D: provides substandard work.

F: fails to meet deadlines and/or does not contribute significantly to team projects and/or has more than one unexcused absence from class.

For graduate students, you can translate an A or A- into an H; a B+ through C into a P; and a C- through D into an LP.

## How To Succeed in This Course

- Attend classes consistently.
- Complete readings before the appropriate classroom discussions and ask for explanations for any concepts that you don't understand.
- Participate actively in class.
- Complete all production/shooting/editing/writing responsibilities by your deadline(s).

- Work cooperatively with team members.
- Make sure that all facts in your stories are accurate and properly sourced.
- Ask Dr. Linden questions either during class or during office hours if you're unclear about any aspect of this course.

## **Student Job Descriptions**

Producer: The producer is the person ultimately responsible for coordinating all research related to the report and lining up all people featured in the report. In consultation with his/her team and Dr. Linden, the producer determines the focus of the report. The producer also needs to scout field locations and provide preliminary and final shoot schedules to team members. As producer, you'll succeed by completing responsibilities in a timely manner. Remember that throughout the entire field shoot, the "buck" stops with you.

Videographer: The videographer is responsible for shooting video used in the report. It's your job to make sure that you have the camera reserved in advance of your shoot date. You also need to make sure the camera is operational and that you have the necessary SD card, batteries, adapters, tripod and lighting equipment. If any of your equipment fails, you should have a back-up plan to deal with that contingency.

Video editor: The video editor works in consultation with the team to edit the video report on Adobe Premiere, the software provided on J-school computers. As video editor, you're responsible for ensuring smooth transitions between shots and equalizing audio levels. If the videographer does her or his job well, then the video editor can edit a clean piece. If the videographer doesn't provide the necessary shots, provides poorly formatted or shaky shots or doesn't provide video sequences, then the video editor will be limited in what he or she can do. The video editor is also responsible for inserting into the piece supers at the proper times and in the proper format.

Reporter/scriptwriter: The reporter/scriptwriter's first responsibility prior to the shoot is to provide the team with a working script by the required deadline. After the field shoots are completed, primary responsibility on the team shifts from the producer to the reporter/scriptwriter. As scriptwriter, you'll complete several drafts of the script that you'll vet first with members of your team and then with Dr. Linden. In team disputes about the content or style of the script, the scriptwriter has the final say. If a team member believes that there is a factual or content error which can't be reconciled by the scriptwriter, then that team member should contact Dr. Linden. The reporter and video editor should be in the newsroom on the day that their report airs on Carolina Week.

All team members: You should plan on being available to the CW news team the Wednesday afternoon that your piece airs. Make sure that your story is loaded by the deadline, that all graphic requests are turned in to the graphic artist well before the piece is edited and that the script is transferred to the CW web site immediately after the newscast. During the production

process, team members will share in logging video, a laborious process but critical to the shaping of the script. (Logging must be completed by the designated deadlines as late logs will delay the scriptwriter in meeting his/her deadlines.) Also, it's expected that all team members will participate in video editing sessions.

Selection of teams: Dr. Linden will determine who will be on each team. Graduate students will be held to a higher standard than undergraduates although all work is expected to conform to professional broadcast standards.

## Course Schedule

**On Wednesday, Jan. 11, at 1:00 p.m. all class members should attend the spring organizational meeting of Carolina Week in Carroll Hall 132 ("Carolina Week Newsroom"). At the meeting you'll get an overview of the operation of the newscast and meet the program's producers, anchors, reporters and technical staff, as well as the CW news director, Professor Lynn Owens. The meeting should last no more than 60 minutes.**

**WEEK 1: JAN. 16 - No class (Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday)**

Assignment (for next class on Jan. 23):

- Read Wenger & Potter (Preface and Chapters 1 through 6).
- If you have no experience interpreting medical or scientific statistics, browse the Cohn and Cope book on reserve in the Park Library.
- Read "Medical Reporting for the Electronic Media" (chapter by Dr. Linden) in Health Writer's Handbook by Barbara Gastel, M.D. (Sakai -> Resources).
- Return Student Data Form to Dr. Linden (form available in Sakai -> Resources).

**WEEK 2: JAN. 23 - Introduction to "Medical and Science Video Storytelling"**

- \* Learn the basic purpose of the course.
- \* Get acquainted with Carolina Week's story format.
- \* Review fundamentals of writing video news and feature reports.
- \* Learn how to construct a medical television news script.

Assignment (for next class on Jan. 30):

- Each student email 50-word story pitch to Dr. Linden by Sunday, Jan. 29, 6 p.m. Include suggested B-roll and contact information about your three sources.
- Dr. Linden to email class members their team assignments by Friday, Jan. 27.
- Review Wenger & Potter (Preface and Chapters 1 through 6) for further discussion next Monday.

**WEEK 3: JAN. 30 - Medical and Science Video Storytelling (cont.) & discussion of story**

pitches

Assignment (for next class on Feb. 6):

- Each team pitch one story idea via email to Dr. Linden by Friday, Feb. 3, 12 noon. Also bring hard copy of story pitch to class on Monday, Feb. 6.
- Watch [Lynda.com](http://Lynda.com) instructional video entitled "Premiere Pro CS6 Essential Training" with Abba Shapiro. You need to sign in to lynda.com with your onyen to gain free access. The video runs about eight hours and is very helpful if you don't have prior video editing experience. Focus on sections 1 through 11.
- Attend CW newscast at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 1, in Carroll 132.

**WEEK 4: FEB. 6 - Writing for Video/Preparing the Script/Fundamentals of Setting Up the Video Shoot**

- \* Learn script format.
- \* Discuss interview techniques.
- \* Tips on script writing and video field production.
- \* Introduction to Adobe Premiere video editing application.

Assignment (for next class on Feb. 13):

- Check out camera and tripod and shoot enough b-roll so you can put together a sequence of wide, medium and tight shots as per class discussion. Check out [this page](#) for examples of various types of camera shots.
- Read tutorial on video techniques from the [Knight Digital Media Center](#).
- [Watch video](#) on camera shooting tips.
- Attend CW newscast at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 8, in Carroll 132.

**WEEK 5: FEB. 13 - Fundamentals Of Shooting Video**

- \* Tutorial on using video cameras.
- \* Tips on putting together a package.

Assignment: (for next class on Feb. 20):

- Watch [Lynda.com](http://Lynda.com) instructional video entitled "Video Journalism Shooting Techniques" with Jeff Sengstack.
- ALL teams -- get acquainted with your lighting equipment. Each team should shoot one lighted, B-roll indoor sequence incorporating wide, medium and tight shots. Also, each team should do a mock interview and shoot the following sequence: short bite -> reverse shot of reporter edited over the audio of the interviewee- > followed by second bite. Remember that the purpose of the reverse shot of the reporter is to avoid a jump cut from one bite to the next. Check your video to make sure it's properly lit and that the audio is

clear. Bring your sequences to the next class on a flash drive.

- Attend CW newscast at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 15.

### **WEEK 6: FEB. 20 - Fundamentals Of Video Shooting & Editing**

\* Continued tutorial on video shooting and editing.

\* Critique A and B team B-roll and interview sequences. (Please remember to bring to class your sequences on a flash or hard drive.)

#### Assignment: (for next class on Feb. 27)

- Team A - start shooting your story #1 that will appear on March 1 Carolina Week newscast.
- Team A - email script #1 to Dr. Linden by 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26.
- Team A scriptwriter to meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, Feb. 27, at 10 a.m. to discuss script.

### **WEEK 7: FEB. 27 - Putting together a video package**

- In-class critique of script #1 by Team A.
- Tips on voicing your track and doing a standup.

#### Assignment: (for next class on March 6):

- Team A - attend Carolina Week assignment meeting next Monday to pitch your story.
- Team A story #1 to air on March 1 Carolina Week newscast.
- Team B - email script #1 to Dr. Linden by 5 p.m. Sunday, March 5.
- Team B scriptwriter meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, March 6, at 10 a.m. to discuss script #1.

### **WEEK 8: MARCH 6**

\* In-class critique of Team A #1 package that aired on March 1.

\* In-class critique of script #1 by Team B.

#### Assignment: (for next class on March 20):

- Team B finish shooting and editing your package for broadcast on March 22.
- Team B attend Carolina Week assignment meeting Monday, March 20, to pitch your story.
- Scriptwriter for Team B story meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, March 20, at 10 a.m. to discuss script.

### **MARCH 10 - MARCH 19 (Spring Break)**

### **WEEK 9: MARCH 20**

- \* In-class critique of Team B package #1 to air on March 22.
- \* View "[Chasing Heroin](#)," a Frontline special on PBS.

Assignment: (for next class on March 27):

- Team B report #1 airs March 22 on Carolina Week.
- Team A - email script #2 to Dr. Linden by 5 p.m. Sunday, March 26.
- Team A scriptwriter meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, March 27, at 10 a.m. to discuss script #2.

#### **WEEK 10: MARCH 27**

- \* In-class critique of Team B package #1 that aired on March 22.
- \* Continue viewing of "[Chasing Heroin](#)," a Frontline special on PBS (time permitting)

Assignment: (for next class on April 3):

- Team A - continue to work on story for broadcast on April 5.
- Team B - research and start shooting your next story.

#### **WEEK 11: APRIL 3**

- \* In-class critique of Team A package #2 that will air on April 5.

Assignment: (for next class on April 10):

- Team A's report #2 airs on April 5 Carolina Week.
- Team B scriptwriter meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, April 10, at 10 a.m. to discuss script #2.

#### **WEEK 12: APRIL 10**

- \* In-class critique of Team B script #2.
- \* In-class critique of Team A package #2 that aired on April 5.

Assignment: (for next class on April 17):

- Team B - continue to work on your #2 package to air on April 12.
- Team A - research and start shooting story #3.
- Team A - email script #3 to Dr. Linden by 5 p.m. Sunday, April 16.
- Team A scriptwriter meet with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, April 17, at 10 a.m. to discuss script #3.

#### **WEEK 13: APRIL 17**

- \* In-class critique of Team B package #2 that aired on April 12.
- \* In-class critique of script #3 by Team A.

Assignment: (for final class on April 24):

- Team A package #3 airs on April 19 Carolina Week.
- Team B - email script to Dr. Linden by 5 p.m. Sunday, April 23.
- Scriptwriter of next week's story meets with Dr. Linden in his office Monday, April 24, at 10 a.m. to discuss script.
- Turn in weekly log of various writing, interviewing, shooting and editing tasks during the semester's class. Be sure to total for **each week** all hours worked on video packages **outside** of class. Bring to final class on Monday, April 24.

#### **WEEK 14: APRIL 24**

- In-class critique of Team A package from previous week.
- In-class critique of script by Team B.

#### Assignment:

- Complete online class evaluation.
- Team B package #3 airs on April 26 Carolina Week.

### **AEJMC Values and Competencies**

If you successfully complete this course, you will be familiar with the following values and achieve the following competencies (in **bold face**) as established by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Specifically, you will know how to:

- **Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press as well as understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications, especially in the area of radio and television broadcast;**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;**
- **Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;**
- **Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically**

**in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;**

- **Think critically, creatively and independently;**
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- **Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;**
- **Critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;**
- **Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;**
- **Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which you work.**

## **The Honor Code**

The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. I am committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>. If you have questions, it's your responsibility to ask me about the Code's application. All exams, written work and other projects must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

(In this course, fabricating a source, fabricating purported statements of fact, willful misrepresentation of data or other information, and/or plagiarism will result in a reportable Honor Code violation.)

## **Seeking Help**

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

## **Diversity**

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2016-2017 UNC Catalog <http://www.catalog.unc.edu/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender,

race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

## **Accommodations**

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. For information, please visit their website <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, 919-962-8300, or e-mail at [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu). A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time; however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to finals and during finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester.

**--syllabus revised Jan. 10, 2017**