

**JOMC 427 - Studio Production for Television News**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Fall 2007**

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Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 2:00p – 3:00p or by appt.

Class Hours: 12:30-1:45p Tues/Thurs  
Classroom: 135 Carroll Hall (TV Studio)

Text: Ron Whittaker (2006). *Television Production: A Free, Interactive Course in Studio and Field Production*. Available through Cybercollege.com  
([http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp\\_ind.htm](http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp_ind.htm))

Suggested Supplies: 1 new ½-inch 120-min S-VHS video cassette tape (to record own projects onto – for posterity)

**Course Philosophy:**

This course introduces students to the tools and skills needed to create a good quality studio production. This course does not attempt to teach students how to be creative. Rather, the course focuses on the tools necessary to realize the creative product. Accordingly, experimentation and practice are necessary to succeed in the course, and in-class participation is absolutely vital for a passing grade. The course is also intended to give students insight into what they may expect in “the real world” of studio production. Accordingly, there is no tolerance for tardiness, excessive absence, partial assignment completion, and other signs of lack of dedication or laziness, as these actions would typically result in a loss of job were the student employed in the field.

**Course Goals:**

- You will learn to recognize, use, and know the functions and limitations of the studio equipment introduced in class
- You will be able to critique others’ work according to the quality of pre-production and production
- You will be able to identify various types of video framing, composition, online editing, sound and lighting techniques and styles
- You will be able to plan and direct a short, clean, logically-flowing studio production

**Attendance Policy:**

You get two free absences. Period. Each absence after the two results in a half-grade deduction (e.g., a B becomes a B- at three absences). The only exception is if you're dying and have medical documentation to prove it. Use your two freebies wisely.

**Late Assignments:**

Accepting late assignments is unfair to the students who have sacrificed to turn theirs in on time. So unless you're dying (see above), expect an automatic 50% deduction each day the assignment is late, based on the grade your late assignment would be given if it were not late. In other words, if you would have received an 80% if the assignment were not late, you would get a 40% if you turned it in one day late, a 20% if you turned it in two days late, etc. This rule is not negotiable. If 90% of the class cannot meet a deadline, then 90% of the class will get the deduction. The other 10% who turned the assignment in on time will thank me later.

**Grading:**

F = 59% or below, D- = 60-62%, D = 63-66%, D+ = 67-69%, C- = 70-72%, C = 73-76%, C+ = 77-79%, B- = 80-82%, B = 83-86%, B+ = 87-89%, A- = 90-92%, A = 93-96%, A+ = 97-100%. You are graded according to the highest professional standards.

Each project is graded based on the following criteria:

- Pre-production (20%) – completion of required planning tasks, grammatical mechanics (writing should be grammatically correct and free of typos), adherence to writing format, thoroughness and extensiveness of planning, doability, thoroughness of conceptualization, translation of concept into workable material and actions
- Composition (20%) – framing choices, amount and layout of information within a shot, relevance of information to story (or planned content), choice of zoom and angle in relation to story relevance, ability to convey desired composition to camera crew
- Sound (20%) – incorporation of audio elements in the production, volume, ratio between ambient sound and target sound, purposeful or functional use of sound effects and/or music, proper use of microphones, ability to convey desired sound instruction to audio operator
- Online Editing (20%) – conciseness (how “tight” is it), continuity, variety of shots with respect to amount of information conveyed, amount of information conveyed with respect to story (or planned content), flow, purposeful or functional use of transitions, pacing, ability to convey desired switching to technical director and character generator operator
- Producing (20%) – effective use of instructions to crew, proper anticipation of upcoming video or audio events, adherence to time allotted, adherence to script (or planned content), attention to all aspects of the production (e.g., not letting any one crew member ‘fall through the cracks’), overall ability to convey desired studio operations

Below is a descriptive guideline for how grades are decided within the Electronic Communication division:

- D, D-, or F, needs to consider a different field
- D+, did not demonstrate understanding of the basics but tried
- C-, has glimpses of potential in a limited range
- C, acceptable work, follows instructions, understands basics, does the minimum to pass
- C+, good in one area of work, but consistent problems with another area
- B-, needs a bit more polish, pretty good handle on things, participates in class, does more than the minimum
- B, solid effort, would have no problem recommending this person
- B+, very good performance, consistently does more than required, a self-starter, would get an unqualified job recommendation
- A-, stands out, good attitude, work is impressive in quality, very few problems, works like career depends on it
- A, nearly perfect in execution, quality of work is exceptional
- A+, perfect (which is a near impossibility – we are all human)

Deductions may be taken from the overall project grade based on failure to complete key elements of the project. See individual project descriptions for more information about these deductions.

### **Honor Code:**

It is expected that each student in this class will conduct him/herself within the guidelines of the Honor System. All academic work should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity that this University demands.

### **Class Requirements-**

#### **Participation (20%):**

Every student will be assessed on their level of participation in the class. This is, in essence, your crewing score. Beyond attendance and ability to turn in assignments on time, this 20% of your total grade is based on your performance as a crew member for your fellow students, such as how well you have picked up each position, e.g., cameras, audio, technical directing, graphics, etc. Your performance will be assessed during project runs, when other students are counting on you to be a good crew member for their projects (just as you would wish they do well when you are directing your own project).

#### **Exam (10%):**

There is one final exam with no make-up opportunity. Missed exams get 0 points. This final will cover all class material and in-class experience with the studio equipment.

**Project 1 (20%):**

The first project is a 2-minute studio ‘infomercial.’ This exercise is to get you familiar with planning and directing a simple production. Your fellow students will be your crew. Students will be getting participation points as crew members.

You will first storyboard your idea for this project. This will be turned in as homework. Next, you will turn in a script for your actors (fellow students). This will be in the specified script format. Finally, you will have up to 30 minutes to rehearse and direct the project for a grade. During the live-to-tape production, you will be graded on your ability to direct your storyboarded vision. You will not be graded on the ability of other students to operate the equipment (that is each individual’s participation grade).

An initial project grade will be based on the grading criteria outlined above under the grading section. Any deductions for non-completion will be applied to this initial project grade and will result in the overall project grade.

**Project 2 (20%):**

The second project is a 3-minute studio interview segment with either a student or a real guest—your choice. This exercise is to introduce you to the world of lighting a set and proper mic placement and use, in addition to less-choreographed live television.

You will first create a rough outline, including a list of 15 questions for your host to ask your guest. Opening and closing lines for your host should also be included. This will be turned in as homework. Next, you will create a rough shot list, similar to a storyboard to use as a guide when directing. Finally, you will arrange for your host and guest to come in to class, and you will have up to 20 minutes to briefly run through and direct the 3-minute interview segment. During the live-to-tape production, you will be graded on your ability to direct your outlined vision. You will not be graded on the ability of other students to operate the equipment.

An initial project grade will be based on the grading criteria outlined above under the grading section. Any deductions for non-completion will be applied to this initial project grade and will result in the overall project grade.

**Project 3 (30%):**

The final project is a 5-minute news brief. This is a culmination of the skills learned during the course of this semester. It will consist of:

1. a tease (brief summaries of the stories to come to whet the appetite of the viewer)
2. the open (standard news open used in class)
3. a reader without an over-the-shoulder graphic (OTS),
4. a reader with an OTS (over-the-shoulder graphic)
5. a V/O (story introduced by the anchor with parts that are read over footage), and
6. a final reader
7. a closing with credits

First, you will research and gather footage (this can be “borrowed” from a news channel) to use in your second story. Second, you will provide or write the script, consisting of the news stories, the tease and the close (you can borrow stories from a newspaper or telecast). Be aware that you are only filling a 5-minute newscast, so you will want to time your stories beforehand. Third, you will write the news script in proper format for your news brief. Finally, you will have up to 20 minutes to rehearse and direct

your final newscast production. Your fellow students will be your crew. During the live-to-tape production, you will be graded on your ability to direct your script. You will not be graded on the ability of other students to operate the equipment.

An initial project grade will be based on the grading criteria outlined above under the grading section. Any deductions for non-completion will be applied to this initial project grade and will result in the overall project grade.

### **Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)**

Wk 1:	Aug 21	Syllabus Review and Studio Orientation Talk: Production Process In class: Equipment demonstration & practice Readings (3): Production Overview—Production Steps ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp004.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp004.htm</a> ) Producing and Directing—Studio Production ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp059.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp059.htm</a> ) Producing and Directing—Switchers, Special Effects ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp060.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp060.htm</a> )
	Aug 23	Introduction to camera shots & movements Talk: Basic Composition In class: Studio Drills Readings (4): Composition and Graphics—Composition—Setting the Scene ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp022.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp022.htm</a> ) Composition and Graphics—Elements of Composition I ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp023.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp023.htm</a> ) Composition and Graphics—Elements of Composition II ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp024.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp024.htm</a> ) Composition and Graphics—Elements of Composition III ( <a href="http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp025.htm">http://www.cybercollege.com/tvp025.htm</a> )
Wk 2:	Aug 28	Scripts, Blocking, Examples <b>Assignment of Project 1</b> In class: Critique of infomercials In class: Studio Drills

	Aug 30	<b>Storyboard for Project 1 due</b> Storyboard pitches, talent selection In class: Studio Drills
Wk 3:	Sept 4	In class: Studio Drills
	Sept 6	In class: Studio Drills <b>Script for Project 1 due</b>
Wk 4:	Sept 11	In class: Studio Drills
	Sept 13	<b>Project 1 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 1's and reviewing
Wk 5:	Sept 18	<b>Project 1 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 1's and reviewing
	Sept 20	<b>Project 1 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 1's and reviewing
Wk 6:	Sept 25	<b>Project 1 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 1's and reviewing
	Sept 27	<b>Assignment of Project 2</b> In class: Review/critique of interview shows In class: Planning, Studio Drills
Wk 7:	Oct 2	<b>Rough Outline and Questions for Project 2 due</b> Studio Lighting Techniques In class: Studio Drills
	Oct 4	<b>Shot List for Project 2 due</b> In class: Studio Drills
Wk 8:	Oct 9	<b>Project 2 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 2's and reviewing
	Oct 11	<b>Project 2 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 2's and reviewing
Wk 9:	Oct 16	<b>Project 2 Performances</b> In class: Taping Project 2's and reviewing
	Oct 18	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK

Wk 10:	Oct 23	Orientation to Television News In class: Critiques of television newscasts In class: Demonstrating news production software
	Oct 25	<b>Assignment of Project 3</b> In class: Studio Drills
Wk 11:	Oct 30	In class: Studio Drills
	Nov 1	In class: Review and studio drills
Wk 12:	Nov 6	In class: Review and studio drills <b>Stories for Project 3 due</b>
	Nov 8	In class: Studio drills
Wk 13:	Nov 13	In class: Review and studio drills <b>Footage for Project 3 due</b>
	Nov 15	News Scripting In class: Scripting and studio drills
Wk 14:	Nov 20	In class: Studio drills with scripts <b>Script for Project 3 due</b> Study guide for Final Exam distributed
	Nov 22	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK
Wk 15:	Nov 27	<b>Project 3 performances</b> In class: Taping Project 3's and reviewing
	Nov 29	<b>Project 3 performances</b> In class: Taping Project 3's and reviewing
Wk 16:	Dec 4	<b>Project 3 performances</b> In class: Taping Project 3's and reviewing
	Dec 6	NO CLASS – READING DAY
Wk 17:	Dec 11	<b>Final Exam</b> 12:00pm – 2:00pm