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2020

### Television Journalism

Barbara Nevins Taylor  
*CUNY City College*

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MCA 34300-1EF 24421

Professor Barbara Nevins Taylor

Mondays 3:30 to 6 p.m.

Online via Zoom

**Syllabus for Television/Video Journalism MCA 34300**

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Prerequisite: MCA 333 or department consent

Office Hours: One hour before or after class. Text or email for appointments during these hours and at any other time.

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Coronavirus changed many things in our families, our friendships, our schools and communities. It made us painfully aware of the fragility of life and how important it is to work together for the common good. Many of us learned and acknowledged that we have to alter our behavior if we want to survive and prevent others from getting sick. Yet many others decided to ignore the advice of scientists and continue life as usual. The reality of 2020 feels like we get slammed with a new challenge every day, every hour.

Fear of the life-threatening virus, the conflict, the constant dilemmas and the solutions when they appear, may make you scared, angry, frustrated or depressed. But they also make great stories and that's where journalists come in. We step back and try to report about what's happening around us as objectively as possible. And yes, it is hard to remain objective when everything about this virus and the fallout seems so personal. But we try.

Journalists, TV and video journalists especially, fill an important role during this historic and difficult time. We need to tell the stories of life as we are living it now, of the politics tearing our nation apart, of the science and the doubters and other important issues. But we also need to make sure that we remain safe and do not endanger anyone else.

Some news organizations, Vice, for example, sent everyone home when at least one staffer contracted COVID-19 in March 2020. Reporters, producers and editors worked from home and learned to have their subjects shoot themselves and transmit video to the producers and reporters.

Other news organizations kept reporters on the streets or sent them back after lockdown periods. Journalists in the U.S. and all over the world [contracted](#) the virus as it spread. Some recovered, many did not. But journalists kept working. In June, the on-camera murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis unleashed a nationwide civil rights movement and put video journalists in the center of protests. They wore masks and tried to keep a distance, but the reality made that impossible.

TV and video journalists continue to do an excellent job, perhaps better than ever. They offer examples of grace under pressure and the ever-challenging job of being in the center of things, while commenting as an observer.

That's where you and this class come in. We will work together online for most of the semester. It is possible that we can return to campus in October to pick up professional cameras and learn how to use them. That's just a possibility and it's likely that we won't know until we get the green light, if we do.

We'll meet every Monday at 3:30 p.m. on Zoom. You'll learn to report using video, the techniques of live reporting, the important crafts of writing for video, interviewing, shooting, and editing. We'll also take a dive into the history of TV news and the cultural shifts that produced the evolving technology and practices.

You'll learn how to report and use video to tell a relevant journalistic story of a minute or two. This short form of video journalism easily translates to other platforms and social media and we'll tailor videos for all possible uses. But our emphasis will always focus on journalism and the facts that you gather.

We'll also have a TV/video professional Zoom in as a guest speaker most weeks. The schedule will depend upon their availability.

## **READING**

We will use the class website [CCNYtelevisionjournalism](#) for our reading material. The website features instruction for writing, shooting and editing. It will substitute for a textbook and offer us more flexibility. This class is part of the CUNY [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER) program.

Download the Associated Press - [AP app](#). It's free

Download the [Spectrum News app](#). For now it's free and it offers NY1 stories, which are worth following.

## **WHAT YOU NEED**

You'll need a notepad for reporting.

We have USB flash drives for you to save your work and will get them to you as soon as possible.

## **KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWS AND VIEWING AND LISTENING**

This is a new class. It will help you to see what journalists do every day. Watch the news to understand how producers construct a newscast and how reporters create video stories and report

live. Please begin to watch and view [Vice](#) online or on HBO at least twice a week. Local news stations: [NY1](#), [News 12](#), [PBSNewsHour](#), WABC-7, [WNBC 4](#), [WCBS 2](#), [WPIX 11](#), [WNYW-Fox5](#), as well as [CNN](#), [MSNBC](#), [FOX News](#), [BBCWorld News America](#)

## **CLASS ETIQUETTE**

Class online presents a lot of challenges. Some of you may want to hide your “self view.” Please don’t. It removes you from the on-screen action, which may be your goal, but it separates you from me and the rest of the class. So let’s stay together. Together is an important word this year. If you are using the phone feature of Zoom, then you obviously won’t appear on screen and that’s fine.

If you have a compelling reason for hiding your screen, please let me know via text or email.

You can use the chat function to ask general questions. Otherwise, I hope that you will participate fully.

## **CRITICISM**

We’ll be viewing and analyzing the work of classmates, and your courtesy and participation is required. Please remember that criticism is not a personal attack. We will talk about the work candidly and this will help your professional growth.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is mandatory. Broadcasting operates on deadline, so you have the chance to begin to develop good habits. We’ll treat our class professionally as we would treat a job in broadcasting, so attend all classes. Please arrive on time. Your attendance, punctuality, and class participation will be considered in your grade. If there is an emergency and you cannot attend a class, please email me. If you are absent four times, you will fail.

Two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

Four or more absences and we will ask you to withdraw from the class.

You must email a note from a doctor, a court of law, a fire fighter or a funeral director for an excused absence.

Students who must miss class or must be late because of religious beliefs will be accommodated.

## **DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES AND COURSE OUTCOMES**

### **STUDENTS WILL LEARN:**

Social history as they explore the creation of broadcasting and evolution of television news.

How to use analytical skills to evaluate how news stories and newscasts are constructed.

How to work ethically to find the truth, pursue accuracy, fairness and diversity, and report strong news stories.

How to think creatively, independently and critically about local and world events.

How to gather information, synthesize complicated details and craft a succinct, logical story with a beginning, middle and end.

How to develop interviewing skills and use them effectively.

The crafts of writing, reporting, shooting video or visuals, editing and presenting a news story.

How to work as part of a team and collaborate with others to produce and report news stories.

### **LATE AND INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS**

In journalism deadlines count. You need to complete your work and assignments to meet every deadline. Please consult with me if you have a problem making a deadline. But remember, in life excuses can't compete with excellent work.

### **TESTS AND QUIZZES**

Because we plan to cover a great deal in a short amount of time, we'll have a quiz or test at the beginning of every class. It will cover news, readings from the website and whatever I provide to the class.

Your video work and writing assignments will be graded as tests and your final TV news package will serve as your final exam.

### **GRADES**

Attendance	Required
Punctuality	Required
Reading	Required
Participation, Tests And Homework	20 Percent
Writing	20 Percent
Reporting, Shooting, Editing and Producing	20 Percent
Your video stories	40 Percent

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week One**

#### **Monday, August 31**

Meet and greet to learn what our class offers.

The responsibility of the individual journalist.

How do we tell stories with video.

Setting up a shot to get the best image.

Shooting an interview.

Shooting sequences.

1. Homework: Read [Video Storytelling](#) on [CCNYtelevisionjournal.com](#).
2. Write a three-paragraph, 300-word essay to answer these questions:

Who am I?

Where am I from?

Where am I going?

3. Download your video. See the instructions on the website.  
<https://ccnytelevisionjournalism.com/2020/01/25/how-to-bring-in-footage-from-your-phone/>

No need to edit. We will show you how to bring your video into Premiere next week.

You will get a flash drive and headsets.

4. Try to familiarize yourself with the [TV Keywords](#). It will help you down the line if you start now.

### **Week Two**

#### **Monday, September 7**

**No Class**

### **Week Three**

## **Monday, September 14**

Bring the video you shot to class.

Quiz on readings and news

The language of TV news and visual journalism.

Elements of a good video story with video examples.

Open Premier and bring in the video.

Learning Premier Pro <https://ccnytelevisionjournalism.com/2018/09/05/premiere-pro-editing-2/>

Homework:

Read: [Writing TV News Stories](#) on the class website.

Read: [How we write](#) on the class website

## **Week Four**

### **Monday, September 21**

News Quiz

Forms of a TV story with video examples.

How to create a script for your story using the template provided.

Write your story that reflects the video that you shot.

Edit the story you created for your exercise.

Homework:

Read: [Clunky words and phrases to avoid](#).

## **Week Five**

### **Monday, September 28**

News Quiz

Show your stories.

Guest speaker TBA

Homework:

Read: [Interview Techniques](#) on the class website

## **Week Six**

### **Monday, October 6**

News Quiz

Video examples of good interviewing.

Interviewing exercise

A quick and dirty guide to the history of TV news.

Homework:

Read: [What Makes a Good Story](#) on the class website.

Think about the story that you would like to report for your big story.

## **Week Seven**

### **Monday, October 12**

**Columbus Day**

**No class**

## **Week Seven**

**Classes follow Monday on Wednesday**

### **Wednesday, October 14**

News Quiz

Review of What Makes a Good story.

Story idea discussion.



We want borrow an idea from the film industry and write the logline of the story in one sentence. What is your story about?

- What makes it a news story?
- Why is it relevant?
- Why would we watch it?
- Who will you interview?
- What footage will you shoot?

[Resources](#) for story contacts.

Guest Speaker TBA

Homework:

Research your story idea. Come up with a plan for shooting. Write a brief set-up sheet that outlines

- a. Who you will interview?
- b. What b-roll will you shoot?
- c. Where will you shoot?
- d. When will you shoot?
- e. How will you stay safe?

## **Week Eight**

### **Monday, October 19**

News Quiz

Discussion of your story ideas.

Review of VO and VO SOT with video examples.

Write a VO and VO SOT from the material you shot for your exercise.

You edit a VO and VO SOT using your exercise video.

Homework:

Prepare to do a “live” report via Zoom during class. Pick something simple to report about. You will talk directly to the greenlight on your computer. No video is needed.

Read information about Reporting Live on the class website.

## **Week Nine**

### **Monday, October 26**

News Quiz

Covering breaking news with examples.

Video examples of live reporting.

You get to make a “live” presentation.

We’ll record your presentation and analyze it.

Homework: Begin to work on your story.

## **Week Ten**

### **Monday, November 2**

News Quiz

A review of video stories. What video have you shot?

What do you need to move your story forward?

Ethics, copyright and how it affects the material you use in a video.

Using graphics and data in a video story for trends and surveys.

Review your script and begin to edit.

Homework: Continue to work on stories.

## **Week Eleven**

### **Monday, November 9**

News Quiz

Writing to video with examples.

Video review with examples of good editing.

Make sure you bring video that you have shot for your story and we’ll talk about constructing your stories.

Finding where to start your story. Looking for the beginning, middle and end.

Guest Speaker TBA

Homework: Continue to work on your story.

## **Week Twelve**

### **Monday, November 16**

News Quiz

Investigative reporting. Sources, examples of strong investigative reporting.

We'll look at what you have for your story so far.

Review of writing to video.

Story logic and organizing your report.

Create an outline for your story.

Homework: Continue to report your story and transcribe your video.

Your script is due November 20 at 5 p.m.

## **Week Thirteen**

### **Monday, November 23**

News Quiz

Review of your scripts and how you are doing with your story.

Business stories

Putting [data](#) in your stories.

How to make a graphic in Premiere.

Guest Speaker TBA

## **Week Fourteen**

### **Monday, November 30**

News Quiz

Review of how to use graphics and text in Premiere.

Script review. Is your script ready? Have you shot everything you need for your story?

Homework:

A good rough draft of your story to present to class on December 7.

Homework: Continue to work on your story.

## **Week Fifteen**

### **Monday, December 7**

News Quiz

Stories due.

We'll review your stories and suggest necessary edits and changes.

## **Week Sixteen**

### **Monday, December 14**

**Last day of class**

Final presentation of stories. Congratulations!!!