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Inside Journalism

Columbia College Chicago

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INSIDE JOURNALISM

A Newsletter Published by the Journalism Department of Columbia College

BROADCAST JOURNALISM

Writing For the Airwaves

The new broadcast journalism program has proved to be one of the most popular innovations at Columbia College. A large number of students have signed up for either the television or radio segment.

One of the most important and interesting courses in the TV segment is the News Practicum, a new class begun last Fall, that uses both writing and production skills to create an actual television news program.

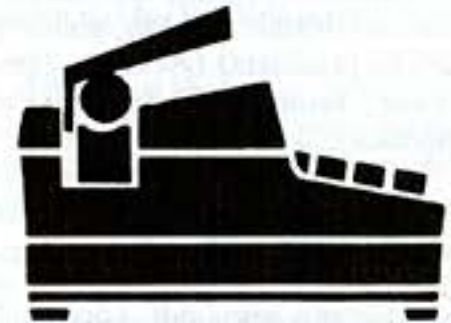
The Practicum, in conjunction with other broadcast journalism classes, produces "600 South," a half-hour news program that is aired on cable television. Students are responsible for coming up with story ideas and doing all of the researching, taping,

editing, writing and reporting for the show. Every fourth Saturday, students from the Practicum and Studio News Production class combine their efforts to create the show.

"Students learn how to go out and get a story and put the finished package together," says instructor John Gibbs, who recently retired from NBC as manager of Television News Operations.

"It's a hands-on operation. It gives students the reality of what it's like to put on a program. If they went to a television station, they'd do exactly the same thing," says John.

One student is chosen to be the producer and the others either write or handle field production. John advises his students to keep abreast of the news, and everyone is assigned to cover a particular school department as a part of his or her news beat,



which he checks regularly for possible story leads.

"I serve as a kind of executive producer or supervisor," John says, "except that I try not to run the show."

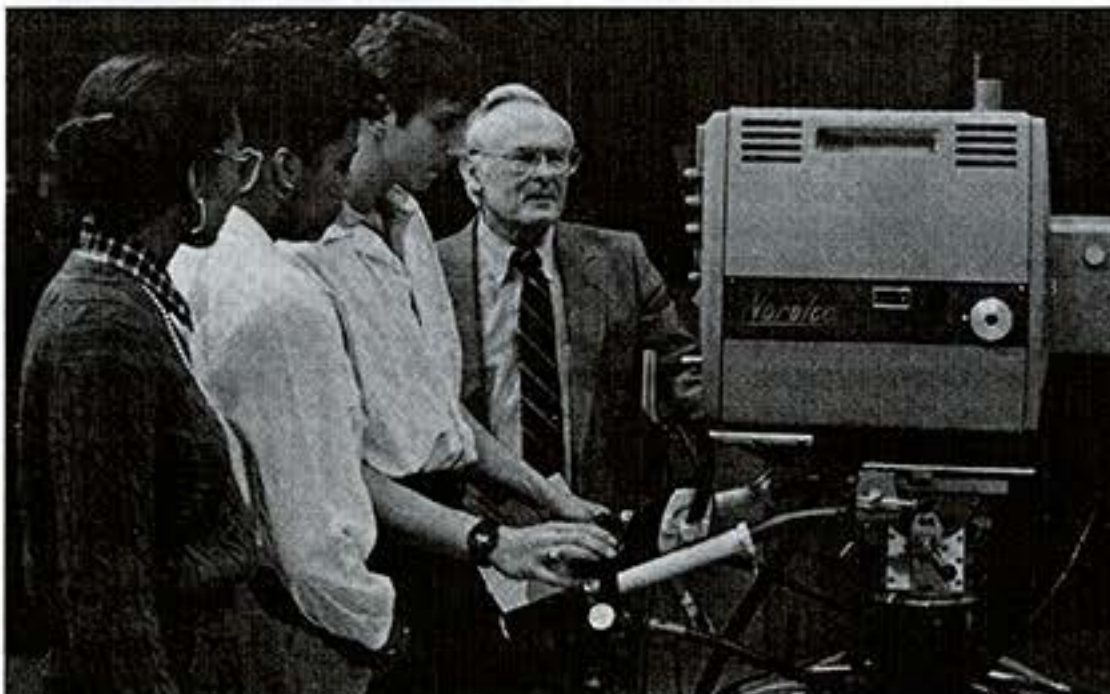
Subjects such as traffic problems around the school, student stress, the stock market crash's effect on colleges and the political arena are a few of the topics the students have covered.

John says he teaches the course the same way it's done at Channel 5. "There are no tests or textbooks," John says. "Students are graded on the quality of their news judgment and on their contributions to the show."

John started teaching the course last semester as an experiment. He was concerned at first that the class wouldn't have enough story ideas, but as it's turned out, there have always been plenty.

Graduates of the course can get a tape of their productions to show potential employers. "Students from last semester are already using the shows as their resume to say, 'This is what I've done,'" John adds.

Some of the ideas he has for next semester's class are to hold live interviews on set or have movie reviews.



Instructor John Gibbs teaches broadcast journalism students how to convert their words into images for the television screen. The course is called Television News Practicum.

"But it'll be up to the students to decide," John says. --Lynda Horton

WHAT EDITORS LOOK FOR

The nation's newspaper editors assembled in Washington, D.C. April 12-15 and heard from a former president (Richard Nixon), the current President (Ronald Reagan) and four would-be presidents (Al Gore, Jesse Jackson, George Bush and Pat Robertson).

They heard from a Nobel Peace Prize winner (President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica), the Prime Minister of Singapore, three big-city mayors and such newsmakers as Walter Cronkite and the Rev. Jerry Falwell.

They heard from panels on the slow progress in minority hiring (watch for a full report in the next issue of *Inside Journalism*), the lack of women in high editorial positions, the coverage of minorities and the future of newspapers (conclusion: they're here to stay).

But most important they heard from each other, in conversations between meetings, in elevators and over

dinner. Frequently their talk was about staff needs. And for journalism students--for you--what they stressed is important:

Good writing. As they do each year the editors presented good writing awards and heard from the winners how they do it. You can read the stories in *Best Newspaper Writing*, published annually.

Knowledge of events. Editors want reporters who follow the news and know about economics, history, government, law, science and literature, in short, reporters who know about the world they will cover.

Professional training. Eighty-five percent of all new reporters hired are graduates of journalism programs. Editors like reporters with a background of English courses; they also like--and hire--reporters with professional training acquired in journalism schools. --Eric Lund

AIDS AND THE MEDIA

If you're a reporter covering the science beat, there is no more important -- and emotionally charged --

issue than Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Two science reporters point out some of the dos and don'ts in this critical area.

Ron Kotulac, science reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, says that the responsible reporter should know how the disease is transmitted and prevented, what treatments are available, as well as the changing attitudes towards AIDS.

He says, overall, the coverage of the AIDS crisis has been responsible. However, like anything else, "It swings like a pendulum."

Ron says that it is important for the media to report all angles because there is so much controversy.

"There is a lot not known about this disease," Ron says.

A recent article that appeared in *Cosmopolitan* states that there is "no risk to the heterosexual population." While Masters and Johnson, two renowned sex researchers, say in a controversial report, that there are lots of risks for heterosexuals. The able science reporter has to pick his way through these thickets of disagreement.

Roger Field, science editor for NBC Radio and Science Writing instructor at Columbia College, agrees that the media coverage of the AIDS crisis has gotten better, but says it could improve still more.

Roger says scientific knowledge on the disease has increased and reporters are "more astute and knowledgeable."

"Early coverage suffered because the stories were assigned to beat reporters," says Roger. "The complexity of the subject requires experience and knowledgeable science writers."

He adds that you must report all the facts so people can make responsible decisions. --Eric Peterson

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY

- 5/6---Application deadline for Fischetti Scholarship
- 5/13---Application deadline for Follett Fellowships for graduate study
- 5/23---Summer registration begins for returning students

JUNE

- 6/11---Last day for summer internship registration
- 6/13---Summer semester begins

JULY

- 7/4---Summer semester 4th of July holiday

AUGUST

- 8/6---Summer semester ends

COLUMBIA'S J-GRADUATE PROGRAM

With graduation rapidly approaching, many seniors are contemplating graduate school.

Some will go directly into a graduate program; others will decide to wait.

Whichever you choose, says Eric Lund, Director of the Graduate Program in Public Affairs Journalism, a student should consider Columbia.

This is the Graduate Program's third year. Eric, a former assistant managing editor for the *Chicago Daily News* and lifelong newspaper man, thinks that the program is fulfilling its goal in helping students get hands-on reporting experience.

In three semesters, students focus on public and political affairs in local, state and national government.

The fall semester concentrates on city politics and issues, and includes class lectures and seminars as well as on-the-spot reporting. Beats include City Hall, the City Council, various city agencies and the courts.

Jerry Bowman is a current graduate student who received his bachelor's degree in telecommunications from Michigan State. Jerry says that the Graduate Program has been a tremendous learning experience for him.

He also notes that covering local politics is really a necessity in order for students to become familiar with certain issues. He recalls his own experience inside City Hall covering Mayor Eugene Sawyer's controversial election.

"I was stuck inside on the second floor by the crowds near the balcony. The protest was like the 1960s demonstrations," says Jerry.

The Graduate Program's second semester focuses on state government and includes a trip to Springfield. The students travel to the Capitol where they are immersed in the legislative process. The Springfield trip involves a hectic schedule of reporting and interviewing with state legislative officials. Students also go on tours of the Capitol, attend rallies, legislative meetings and press conferences.

Nicholas Shuman, Associate Director of the Journalism Graduate Program, escorts students to Washington, D.C., for the final summer semester.

Nick is a former national/foreign editor of the *Chicago Daily News* and former editorial writer for the *Sun-Times*.

The Washington trip lasts four weeks, during which time students cover the Pentagon, Supreme Court, State Department, Congress and the White House.

Nick says that the Washington trip is designed to broaden students' knowledge of national government. They have the opportunity to interview various federal government departments, agencies and officials. They are also given beats and story assignments.

Other features of the Graduate Program include a computerized newsroom donated by the Field Foundation. Each student has his own computer and access to a reference library complete with magazines, newspapers and clipping files, which add to the newsroom environment.

The Program also

invites guest speakers to lecture. Mary Fran Gleason, a graduate student who came to Chicago from Long Island, N.Y., says that the guest speakers have motivated her a great deal.

She mentions such notables as Adrienne Drell, federal court reporter for the *Sun-Times*; Charles Nicodemus, investigative reporter for the *Sun-Times*, and Clarence Page, editorial writer and syndicated columnist for the *Tribune*.

"Eric and Nick treat us as professionals. We are all given beats to cover, as if we were really reporters," says Mary Fran.

Students who are interested in the Graduate Program should apply before July 1988.

Students applying for financial aid should note that the Follett Tuition Waiver Scholarship is also available to graduate students. Its application deadline is May 13, 1988. --Shirley Henderson

SPECIAL TUTORING FOR J-STUDENTS

As journalism students we sometimes think our major courses should be a breeze. This is often true, but every once in a while we run into a



Tutor Bonnie Decker, at left, helps journalism students improve their skills.

course that is more difficult than we imagined.

For students who find a course difficult, it's not too late to get help. Bonnie Decker, a journalism major, has joined the Writing Center, on the 7th floor of the Wabash building, as a special tutor for journalism students. Bonnie, who transferred from Elgin Community College, says that she has always excelled in English. She considers herself to be a focused journalism major who understands the basics.

Bonnie is also a stringer for the *Columbia Chronicle* and was an editor and reporter for the *Elgin College Observer* before coming to Columbia.

She says that she joined the tutoring staff in the writing center because she wanted to help students and get more involved in campus activities. In addition to carrying 16 credit hours, she also has a full-time job.

Lynn Miller, who teaches copy editing, says, "Bonnie is an outstanding student in copy editing and appears to have the essential qualities needed to assist students in language skills."

Lynn encourages students to seek Bonnie's help. Lynn adds that there's no magic about learning how to write. It takes practice, practice, practice.

"Sometimes the major problem students have is expecting material to be handed to them on a silver platter," says Lynn.

Rose Blouin, Director of the Writing Center, says it's important that the writing center be able to address the needs of all students and, she adds, the center has qualified tutors who offer assistance in all forms of writing. --Larry DuBose

CENSORSHIP DEBATES STILL RAGE

Once again, people are debating the issue of whether a government

may manipulate the media for purposes it deems desirable. Most recently, the Israeli government restricted press coverage during the West Bank riots, in which the army used deadly force to combat stone-throwing protesters.

We asked a number of Chicago media experts if they thought this was proper.

Moses Fox, press attache for the Israeli Consul General in Chicago, says that disorders were anticipated during the Day of Land ceremonies and the authorities felt that television crews would heighten the emotions of the demonstrators.

The government barred journalists from going to the occupied areas unless they had a military escort.

In spite of this, the Israeli spokesman maintained that the press could still do its job.

Holly Garland, Media Law and Ethics instructor at Columbia, says she is against the blocking of the press in most situations, but that sometimes it may be necessary.

Holly says that the Arabs who fight Israeli forces are people "whose sworn objective is to deny Israel's right to exist."

"Israel had to take whatever means necessary to get the job done without the whole world watching," adds Holly.

Max Limanowski, telegraph editor for the *Chicago Sun-Times* who handles stories from Israel, opposes the government's action.

He says the news must get out in spite of the government's view that it may undercut the military occupation.

"The flow of information is the underpinning of a free Democratic society," says Max.

Dan Swanson, who teaches News Reporting II and Introduction to

Mass Media II, also opposes the restrictions placed by the Israelis.

He says because massive demonstrations are breaking out, and because over 100 civilians have died violently, the events in the region are newsworthy.

"It is the duty of journalists to report these occurrences," says Dan, a freelance reporter who has written for *The New Republic* and *The Nation*.

He scoffs at the notion that television cameras are intensifying the rioting. He says the riots will occur regardless of whether the media are there or not.

"The government is not saying that the reports are not true. They just don't want them reported," says Dan. --Eric Peterson

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