

Study broadcast journalism

The SA Writers' College broadcast journalism course teaches you how to write and package stories for electronic journalism, radio and TV.

Explore the option of an exciting career in radio or television journalism. Writing for radio, television and the Web needs to fold in moving pictures and sounds, which requires a specialised skill set and an awareness of the very latest technologies through which the journalism is processed. This is the subject matter of this course

Course Details:

"The best broadcasters are good communicators who work well under deadline. They work well with others because the job demands it. Nerves of steel don't hurt either. It helps to be cute and/or have a great voice, but that won't make or break you. Failure to write well and accurately will sink your career faster than a bad hair day or average pipes. No matter what kind of technology you must squeeze your story through, you will still have to conceive a story, write and execute it well. That's the definition of the job. We'll help you get there." Noel Cisneros, SAWC Tutor: Broadcast Journalism

Modules: 10 lessons

Cost: R4995.00

Length: Course can be completed at own pace: between 10 weeks and five months

Registration: Online at www.sawriterscollege.co.za

Students must complete...

- 10 writing exercises (10 for assessment and feedback)
- Short features, news reports and scripts, as required during the course

Admission Requirements:

- Basic writing skills are essential
- Computer skills, e-mail and Internet access required
- No previous tertiary qualification required

Tutor:

Ed Richardson started working as a freelance journalist while studying for his B.Journ at Rhodes University during the 1970s. His career has covered all forms of journalism and most subjects. He has worked as a field reporter and editor in the print, radio, television and online media.

His broadcast career started as a sub-editor for the national news bulletins on the SABC in 1983 (in the days when news was written on a typewriter). Ed spent the next nine years gaining extensive experience in both radio and television journalism. On the radio side, he edited and compiled bulletins for the SABC's Africa services, and then moved on to actuality reporting. When he left the SABC in 1992, he was executive producer of two flagship live news programmes, Radio Today and Audiomix.

Before being asked to head up the two programmes, he was manager of Global Television, an in-house company which produced news and documentaries for the international market. That was after working in the field as a reporter and producer for Global Television.

Since leaving the SABC, Ed has retained his interest in broadcasting and continues to write documentary scripts. He has also worked with community radio stations, advising them on their news and actuality content.

Ed is currently the head of Siyathetha Communications, a communications specialist company.

Course Curriculum:

Module One: Introduction

This module introduces the student to the wonderful and challenging world of broadcast journalism, radio and television and the Internet. A career in journalism is an adventure even though it can have its hazards.

- Background and rapid development of radio and TV
- The life, work and necessities of a journalist
- Five W's and an H plus George Orwell's advice
- A look at the SABC
- What a radio reporter needs plus introduction to TV reporting

Exercises:

Analyse a news report.

Module Two: Introduction to Radio

- Radio history and how it works as a news medium
- What a radio reporter does
- Working in a community radio station
- How the TV reporter's day differs from the radio job
- Some terms used - learning camera language

Exercises: Two assignments for learner reporters - find useful contacts and seek stories in the newspapers. Stretch your new muscles.

Module Three: Introduction to Television

- TV - the value of pictures - shooting a TV news story on location
- The reporter's task - fitting the words to the pix (pictures)
- Working with the crew
- After the shoot
- List of SA TV stations and times of news bulletins

Exercise:

Match the TV reporter's news script with the visual images

Module Four: Newsgathering - or getting the story

- News sources, establish contacts, collect phone numbers
- Essential ingredients of news
- The role of the news agencies
- The "first rough draft of history" - a reporter's opportunity
- A nose for news and the skeptical approach

Exercise: Doing it - contacting local police, hospitals, schools etc. Dig up stories on which to report for broadcast.

Module Five: Writing for Broadcast

- Writing news for a short attention span
- The basic structure of writing - brief, accurate and clear
- Read while you type - writing for the ear
- Use the Active verb rather than the Passive

- Beware libel, slander, plagiarism and bad language

Exercise: Editorial comparison. Listen to a news bulletin on each of two different radio or TV stations. Write a brief description of each. If there is a noticeable difference between the two bulletins, note why you think that was the case.

Module Six: Interviewing Skills

- The interview, one of the most important aspects of a reporter's work. Appropriate skill is to elicit information, try to get interviewee to make statements that are important for telling your story.
- Effective steps to get interviewee at ease, responsive
- How to handle interviewee accused of wrongdoing?
- Why don't you write down the questions?
- Listen carefully to professional interviewers at work

Exercise: Record two interviews on leading TV shows - Carte Blanche and Third Degree - make comparisons

Modules Seven and Eight: Radio Journalism 2 and 3

- These modules continue and expand ideas expressed in the introduction given in Module Two. What is a package?
- Advice from E.B. White - caution against using "stylish" language
- Never express your own opinions, either on air or in script
- Reading your script on air - voice-work; vox pops
- Factfile on podcasts
- A few useful voice exercises

Exercises: Find suitable story for a radio current affairs feature: research, arrange and do interviews and vox pops, record background sounds, edit, cue and script and record package.

Record a podcast.

Some additional voice exercises

Module Nine: Television Journalism 2

- Words, their meaning and structure in a TV script
- The visual side of the report & its impact on the written word
- Reporting serious violence - the tasteful, sensitive report
- Privacy - how much may you intrude?
- Vox pops - what are they?

Exercises: Find a story of public interest (or argument or controversy), plan, research, find location, shoot film with vox pops, edit, script and record final cut suitable for broadcast.

Module Ten: The Professional Broadcast Journalist

- How can I give up my job and still make a living?
- Who do I approach for work?
- How do I go about making good contacts?
- What would be my hours if I went freelance?
- A brief look at the future of the broadcast journalism industry

Exercise: Find story, plan, research, organise a radio package, record interview(s), edit, script, record and package.

How does the course work?

Detailed class notes covering the content of each module are e-mailed to students.

At the end of each module, students will be required to complete one or two writing exercises. In total, the course includes ten short writing assignments, all of which count towards the final result of the student. Students must also produce several short features and scripts for broadcast.

Once the writing assignment has been completed, and e-mailed to the lecturer, an assessment and feedback will be sent to the student, and the module will be considered complete.

Students can also participate in ongoing online discussions by posting comments about the materials covered in the course, as well as give feedback to students who have posted their pieces in the Discussion Forum.

Conditions of Certification:

Students will receive an SA Writers College Certificate upon successful completion of the course, provided they meet the following conditions:

- Students must have completed all assignments
- The course must have been completed within five months of registration.
- Students are expected to attain a minimum average of 50% for the course

Minimum Estimated Time Commitment:

- Reading time: 8 hours
- Writing time: up to 30 hours
- Research time: 5 - 10 hours, depending on the complexity of the selected topics for writing.

Date: 03 July 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

Date: 24 July 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

Date: 31 July 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

Date: 07 August 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

Date: 21 August 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

Date: 28 August 2015

Venue: Online correspondence course, Countrywide

Cost: R 4995.00

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