Investigative Reporting for Electronic Media
Southern Illinois University
RTD 477  Professor Eileen Waldron
Meets Tuesday-Thursday 9:35-10:50 am
COMM 9E New Media Center
Office Hours: M-T 2-5pm RT OFFICE 1050 E
(If I’m not in my office check the RREE newsroom)
Cell: 317 938 2905

“The reporter is the member of the Tribe who is sent to the back of the cave to find out what’s there.”

Pete Hamill, Shaking the Foundations

What is investigative journalism? It is simply excellent reporting, with the ability to spend more time doing it, resulting in more in depth stories. It goes beyond the “he said-she said” type of story to get the truth. It can expose wrongdoings of political leaders, as in the Watergate scandal, or expose a crooked used car dealer in your town. The focus is often what someone wants to hide or does not want revealed. And it often results in public good, brings about changes in laws or policies, and even saves lives.

Like the tribe relying on one of its members to alert them, our country relies on investigative journalism to play that role for its people. Freedom of the press is not something we should take for granted. In many other parts of the world reporters are killed for reporting the truth. The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of the press, and in a sense that is why SIUC is able to offer a class such as this.

Class Structure
This course is designed to expose students to the best investigative journalism today in all media: TV, Radio, Print and Online. We will have special presentations from award winning investigative reporters. I will also show some of my award winning investigative work from my 20 year career in TV news and discuss techniques and strategies in investigative reporting.

Student Story Production
This class will have the unique opportunity to produce their own investigative reports. The goal will be for the class to choose either one topic to investigate, or choose separate topics. Students will form “teams” and the class will produce a total of five stories. Each individual student will have research goals on the topic. After the teams are formed, each will focus on one angle of the overall topic or separate topics. There will be deadlines announced for scripts, rough cuts, and finished pieces. Stories could air* in a half hour show on WSIU produced by the class. Students will be chosen to line produce, produce graphics, anchor the special, post produce the show, write a press release and facilitate the show upload on WSIU’s website.
• *This can only be possible IF stories are complete by a deadline that will be announced next week.
• *If all stories and material are not ready by that deadline, then individual stories will be graded on the merits of the story alone

**Requirements**
There will be a midterm exam covering the history of investigative reporting, and legal and ethical topics. The midterm will be multiple choice and essay questions based on class lectures.

**Grading**

Class attendance, including research participation: 15%
Mid Term: 25%
Final Package: 50%
Show Live to tape: 5%
Post Production Week of: 5%

If a show is not produced, final package will count for 60% of grade.

**Grading Scale for Packages**
- A – Broadcast Quality! Excellent Content & Production. Not Late; Exceeds Expectations (20-25 points)
- B – Broadcast Quality! Good Content & Production. Not Late; Above Expectations (15-19 points)
- C – Broadcast Quality! Fair Content & Production. Meets Expectations (10-14 points)
- D – Poor Broadcast Quality. Has Potential. Does Not Meet ALL Expectations (5-9 points)
- F – Not worthy of Revision. Fails to Meet ANY/MOST Expectations (0-4 points)

**Selected Bibliography** (not required to buy, I will supply chapters)


