Broadcast Meteorology Practicum

Course Syllabus

This document will be the foundation of the course. All items presented here explain how the course will be administered throughout the semester. It is the responsibility of the enrolled student to follow all requirements and restrictions presented here in this document. Once you have read through the entire document, you will be required to sign your name agreeing to all terms outlined. You will retain a copy of this document and submit the signed copy the first day of the course.

Contact Information

Instructor: Cameron Craig
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Office Hours: MWF 2:00-2:50PM, TTH 1:00-1:50PM
Course Web: www.*ux1.eiu.edu/~cdcraig/courses.html*, *www.TCPFilms.com*, and WebCT for grades

Course Requirements

Objective: Students will engage in preparing daily forecasts from meteorological models and then broadcast their results online. This course will enhance the students' future in broadcasting by merging science and communication. Students will have an opportunity to work with WEIU-TV after completing this course. This course will 1) increase students' knowledge of the day to day evolution of the atmosphere, 2) increase students' comprehension of the importance of a broadcast meteorologist to the public, 3) improve students' application and analysis of different meteorological model outputs and trends in the local climatological data, 4) improve students' analysis of severe weather events and how to communicate such situations to the general public, and 5) enhance the students' synthesis of scientific data in a manner that summarizes their conclusions to the general public while maintaining a strict scientific code.

Purpose: The course has been designed to merge the scientific process with the principles of communication into one single track allowing the student to focus on his/her methods of forecasting and delivery. Unlike other programs, the purpose is to provide the student daily practice in forecasting and broadcasting. Many students in this field do not have the experience when they graduate and look for a job. Since its conception in Fall 2006 as a Continuing Education course, several students have excelled in the field of broadcast meteorology. Currently, we have eight students that recently acquired positions at WWBT, WLFI, WCJB, WITI, WAND, and WCIA. The most important aspect of this course is that our students receive daily practice in both science and communication, which appeals to many professionals in this field seeking future employees. Once students complete this and the other required courses they will have the opportunity to work at WEIU for the rest of their college career.

Components: Students will study forecasting techniques, synoptic meteorology, and use scientific methods in determining a meteorological forecast. Broadcast students will complete 33 air-check broadcasts, 33 self-evaluations, and six written reviews of professional broadcast meteorologists. Non-broadcast students will complete a literature review totaling 16 pages and complete four academic journal summaries. All students enrolled will complete weekly exercises, a midterm exam, a final exam, and a 2:30 minute segment for the severe weather show. The documentary segment is worth 28 points.

Textbooks: Vasquez. Weather Map Handbook. ISBN: 097068407X
Vasquez. Weather Forecasting Red Book. ISBN: 0970684061
Craig. Explore the Skies: Concepts in Atmospheric Science. Online at ux1.eiu.edu/~cdcraig.

Documentary: Each enrolled student will complete a video segment for a magazine show that will air on WEIU in the Spring. This year's topic will focus on severe weather. Each student will complete a script, acquire video and interviews, and present the segment on camera with voice overs.

Assigned Topics (2:30 minutes each):

1. Difference between a Watch and Warning	Teagan Calahan
2. Flash Floods	Amie Hunt
3. Tornado Outbreak of 1974	Joseph Dames
4. Tornadoes	Emily Jestis
5. Lightning Safety	Jonathon Weisbacher
6. Heat Wave of 2011	Elijah Slifer
7. Heat Wave Safety	Melinda Burke
8. Droughts	Phillip Maro
9. Sunbathing	Lauren Jerkovitz

Optional Trip: Each year the instructor sponsors a group of students to travel to the National Weather Association conference to receive critical reviews of their air-checks. If you are interested in attending this year's conference in Birmingham, Alabama, visit www.nwas.org for more information. The trip is optional and travel costs are the responsibility of the student.

Grade Distrib: Broadcasts/Documentary and Term papers, 40%; Reviews and Summaries, 10%; Midterm and Final, 50%.

Grade Scale: Standard 10%.

Course Outline: Week 1: Introduction, Background & the Philosophy of a Broadcast Meteorologist.
Week 2: Mesoscale Meteorological Analysis.
Week 3: Synoptic Meteorological Analysis (Begin 2 Minutes Broadcasts).
Week 4: Jet Streak Circulations.
Week 5: Introduction to Meteorological Broadcasting Techniques
Week 6: Frontogenesis/Frontolysis Analysis and Interpretation
Week 7: Introduction to Isobaric Charts for Forecasting (Begin 3 Minutes Broadcasts)
Week 8: Midterm Broadcast (2 Minutes) and Midterm Examination
Week 9: Convective Weather Analysis
Week 10: Mesoscale Convective Systems Analysis
Week 11: Broadcasting Severe Weather Break-ins (Broadcast 1 Mock Severe Weather Break-ins)
Week 12: Introduction to WEIU-TVs WSI System (Begin 4 Minutes Broadcasts)
Week 13: Developing Forecast Techniques using Multiple Models
Week 14: Mastering Forecasting Techniques through Forensics and Observations (Practice Delivering 1 Minutes Broadcasts at WEIU-TV using WSI System)
Week 15: Final Broadcasts (4 minutes)
Week 16: Final Examination

Broadcast Students

Overview: The items listed below are detailed information concerning the specific components of the course. It is your responsibility to follow these guidelines for a satisfactory grade.

Reviews: You are to complete six (4) reviews of a professional broadcast meteorologist and two (2) reviews of a student broadcast meteorologist on WEIU or from the links provided on the course website (cdcraig). When writing your reviews introduce the person you are reviewing, discuss the broadcast as a whole (i.e. weather story, items presented, etc.), and analyze the meteorologist pointing out positive and negative aspects. Each review must be on one-page and single-spaced with title on the top line and your name on the second line. All reviews are due November 4, 2011. No late reviews will be accepted.

Broadcasts: Each broadcast student will complete 33 broadcasts for the semester. Three broadcasts with self-evaluations are to be completed each week for eleven weeks. The instructor will keep track of the number of broadcasts you complete each week. Each broadcast is worth four points, which adds up to 132 points. Each student will be put on a schedule based on their work/class schedule. This schedule is considered like a work schedule and you must complete your broadcast at that time. There will be no make-up broadcasts. Missed broadcasts receive zero credit. Each broadcast is rated by the instructor and follows this scheme: 4pts is Good, 3pts is Average, 2 pts is Passing, 1 pt is Failing, 0 pts is Unacceptable.

Saving Bcsts: Each student will save every broadcast to their jump drive and upload the broadcast to the EIUWC server.

2-M Broadcast: Each broadcast student will begin with a short broadcast of two minutes (weeks 3, 4, 5, 6). In this span of time, you are to deliver 4 slides that focus on any topic except the use of surface maps. For example, you may use current conditions at EIU, regional conditions, forecasted highs for tomorrow, expected overnight lows, precipitation expected, and a three-day forecast.

3-M Broadcast: (Weeks 7, 8, 9, 10) Add on a 2-day surface map with fronts and pressure cells, a 2-day precipitation forecast map, and a 5-day forecast.

4-M Broadcast: (Weeks 11, 12, 13) Add on an additional surface map that covers a total of 3 days, an additional precipitation forecast map, and the 7-day forecast.

Severe Wx Bcst: This is a one-minute mock break-in. You will be given a severe weather situation for which you will have to do a break-in. An outline of what to cover will be available later in the semester.

WSI Broadcast: The last four weeks of the broadcast portion of the course (weeks 12, 13, 14, 15), each student will be scheduled to work with a WEIU Skywatch Forecaster at WEIU and prepare/deliver a 1-minute broadcast.

Final Broadcast: Your final broadcast will be completed on the 15th week and submitted as a final broadcast.

Slides: You will be given a Power-Point slide set to use for the entire broadcast portion of this course.

Non-Broadcast Students

Overview: The items listed below are detailed information concerning the specific components of the course. It is your responsibility to follow these guidelines for a satisfactory grade.

Literature Rev: You are to complete a literature review concerning a topic of your choice. You are restricted to discussing topics of a meteorological subject (i.e. analysis of surface dew points in determining the influence of rainfall, analysis of recent daytime temperatures and patterns of heat waves, etc.). The literature review must be 20 pages in length and double-spaced. The paper (hard copy) is due December 2, 2011.

Summaries: Students participating in the non-broadcast portion of the course will complete six (6) summaries that discuss six (6) academic journal articles in the field of meteorology. All six summaries (hard copies) are due on November 4, 2011.

General Information

Etiquette: Disrespect on any level will not be tolerated at all. If you are disrespectful to any instructor or student, you will appear before Judicial Affairs. Disrespect includes inappropriate comments or actions, arguing with the instructor, and using technology that is not educational. You will be warned once.

WEIU Students: WEIU Students are especially warned about the course etiquette. Although you are broadcasting on a daily basis, you are NOT entitled. You will complete all that is required in order to receive a satisfactory grade. Any, I repeat, any lack of professionalism, you will be removed from your duties at WEIU.