

AUDIO VIDEO INFORMATION GATHERING

combining vision, sound and voice to connect and communicate

221

"Great stories happen to those who can tell them." - Ira Glass

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce you to the tools and skills needed to engage in quality storytelling with audio and video in broadcast and multimedia journalism environments. Emphasis is in mastering technical and aesthetic aspects of audio and video information gathering. As this course is also intended to give you insight into what you may expect as entry-level employees in "the real world," attention to detail is key, as is timeliness, thoroughness and active participation in course activities.

How can we innovatively use the media at our hands to propel the viewer into the story? Through the skills learned in this course you will expand your visual vocabulary, learn the core principles of audio and video storytelling, and combine sound and video to create a compelling multimedia experience.

Topics will include:

- Video: Camera and Content
- Sequencing and video editing techniques
- Audio recording and editing techniques
- Sound essentials
- Essentials of Adobe Premiere Pro
- The Interview Process
- Finding the voice of the story
- And most importantly, defining an engaging story & finding the narrative

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES:

- Canon Vixia Kit (includes mic and tripod). This can be checked out with Matt Bachman in the Equipment Room on the second floor of Carroll. Due to limited quantities, students will have to pair up and share kits. Coordinating shooting schedules will be left up to the partners. Be considerate and plan ahead!
- Memory Card for video camera. A SDHC 8GB class 6 (or higher) will work. If you can find a deal, going up to a 16GB card will help you from running out of card space too quickly.
- External Hard Drive 500 GB or larger. Must be Thunderbolt or USB3 and 7200 rpm - Must be Mac Compatible so you can use the software in the classroom. If you plan on using a drive you already own, know that it will need to be formatted/reformatted for Mac OS.
- Headphones that are circumaural – which basically means the pads sit around the earlobe (earbuds are a no-go, lo siento)

Bring your headphones to every class. Be prepared.

JOMC 221.2
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- OFFICE HOURS:
Thursdays 1 - 2 pm
and by appointment
- This syllabus and course schedule is flexible.
Be prepared for change.
- You will receive a point grade based on a 1000 - point scale for assignments and projects.
- ATTENDANCE IS VITAL TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS.
- Cell Phones: Please turn off your cell phones for class. BE RESPECTFUL.
- IMPORTANT DATES:
SPRING BREAK - 3/14 - 3/18
FINAL PROJECT DUE - 04/26

RECOMMENDED READING:

- **Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling** by Kenneth Kobre
- In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing by Walter Murch
- Lynda.com subscription (~\$30 a month). Really helpful tutorials if you forget how to do something or want to learn some advanced techniques.

PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Project 1: Point A to Point B: Building Sequences (100 points)

Every great video story is built from scenes that are built from sequences. Together we will learn how to break down a scene into its smallest parts. Using your knowledge of the camera and of different filming techniques, you will create thoughtful sequences based on prompts given in class.

One of the challenges of visual journalism is having to illustrate complicated ideas – and being too literal can be boring. This assignment is great practice utilizing your new video and editing skills, AND get creative. Challenge yourself to think outside the box.

Project 2: Partner Interview: Making an Audio Story (150 points)

Every great character experiences challenge and change. Life! You will interview a classmate on one major moment of challenge in their life and how it changed them, then edit it into a piece that is between 1-3 minutes long. The final piece will be audio-only (so you can concentrate on just telling a good story).

A challenge in visual journalism is brevity. How do you tell a story that is not too long, but still makes an impact? This project will help you get to the core of storytelling – getting a good anecdote & reflection, then editing it succinctly. It will also help you to learn good interviewing techniques – getting what you need, but not taking three hours of interviewing to do so.

Project 3: Artist / Activist Profile Piece (250 Points)

There are many passionate people in this world! Find one who is an artist or an activist, then create a short (2-3 min) documentary-style piece that sums up what they are all about. This project is about asking WHY a person does what they do, and capturing their essence – what this person, thinks, believes, sees, feels, and the storytelling details of their environment. You will need to pay attention to details that give away hints of personality.

Doing a profile or a “day-in-the-life-of” is a common news feature assignment. This will help you learn to get the footage and interview material you need, while finding ways to add depth to an otherwise mundane assignment. Like a writer working on a feature, you will work to discover context clues that give a more complete picture of a person. Surprise the viewer, go beyond the surface, and look for universal themes to connect to.

Class Assignments (400 points) and Participation (100 points)

There will be weekly in-class exercises and/or take-home assignments throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, your grades for each of these assignments will be averaged into an overall course assignments grade. Course assignments are likely to include (but are not limited to):

- Finding compelling characters
- Using the Adobe Premiere CC timeline
- Shooting visual variety
- Seeing light (and a little composition)
- File management
- Soundscapes exercise
- Content-provided audio editing
- Impromptu camera interview
- Video sequencing
- Editing motion
- Storytelling theory 101
- Planning a bigger project
- Discussion on mindful journalism and doc. storytelling

GRADE DETERMINATION

I will do my best to be fair and accurate, but to do this there must be some very specific guidelines and boundaries. Here they are:

- 1) Assignments are due at the minute class begins (or on the server at the designated time) on the due date!
- 2) Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.
- 3) Class participation is critical to success in this course. If you don't show up, you don't get the points.

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments (both Projects and Class Assignments) are always due before class starts. If a Project is turned in late – even by a few minutes – it will be dropped a letter grade (-10pts). Every day that it is late after that, it will drop another letter grade.

If a Class Assignment is turned in late, it will be given only half credit at the most. It will not be accepted the next day. I will drop your two lowest grades for In-Class Assignments.

WORK DAYS

This is flexible depending on our overall class needs, but expect the class before each big project is due to be an in-class work day. You must bring something to work on in class or I will automatically take 3 points off your project grade. The in-class work day is designed so that you have ample time to turn in a polished product. You are not allowed to use the work day to shoot.

CRITIQUES

Your participation grade will be heavily influenced by your participation in class discussions, critique sessions and your overall respectfulness of others in the classroom. Our goal: to discover what makes strong, innovative, communicative storytelling, to uncover the highs and lows, the good and the bad, and to prepare you to go out and make images and record sound that improve your storytelling ability. Critiques are essential to growth. Liken critiques to weight lifting. The act of lifting weights actually breaks muscles down. It hurts and it's not all that fun. But when the muscles heal they are stronger.

One reminder about critiques in class: I want involvement from everyone and the critiques need to be constructive. Be engaged, be thoughtful, and be constructive in your feedback. You can be tough without tearing each other apart. Find the balance, and, when in doubt take the higher road. When receiving a critique of your work, you need to maintain a similar balance. There is fine line between defending your position and making excuses. Don't be so connected to your work that you lose sight of how it could be better.

ATTENDANCE

Here's the deal folks, the field of journalism is going to require more of your mind, body and spirit than you can even fathom at this point. The rewards are great, but the demands are high. It is critical that you attend every class. You CANNOT miss a class in order to shoot an assignment. You must be in class to present your work for critique. Turning in a project assignment on the server does not count as a turn-in. Part of your completion of the project assignment is the critique. You will be allowed 2 un-excused absences; after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. If your semester average is 91% and you miss 3 classes, your final average would be 89%. Etcetera. Use your 2 wisely (save them for any unfortunate illnesses, not to watch Breaking Bad). The only exception to this will be a serious medical condition.

Be respectful of my time and your classmates' time. Coming in late is distracting to everyone else. If you make a habit of coming in late, I will count you as absent.

Above all, communicate with me. I am here to help you learn and succeed, and if something challenging is going on, talk to me.

UNIQUE WORK

All work must be created in this class - no double dipping if you are in another video class.

HOW DO YOU SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS?

- Be on time ... be prepared to learn, participate and contribute
- Listen and respect what I and your fellow students say
- Manage your resources - your money and your time
- Be honest. Admit your errors. No excuses
- Be positive
- Bury your pride. Now is the time to learn, and most learning occurs in difficult times
- Help each other
- Take risks, push the boundaries
- Be bold

“Stories make us more alive, more human, more courageous, more loving.”

- Madeleine L'Engle

HONOR CODE:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

SEEKING HELP:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

DIVERSITY:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

If you have any disability or other special situation that might make it difficult to meet the requirements described above, please discuss it with me as soon as possible. If you have not done so already, you should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service (AR&S) at 919-962-8300 or accessibility@unc.edu.

ACCREDITATION:

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

"The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories."

- Mary Catherine Bateson"