

# Foundations of Interactive Media

MEJO 187.001 | 2018 | Summer Session 1 | Online

Instructor: Sarah Riazati

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Office hours: Google Hangout by appointment, email to schedule

## Course Description

Interactive media tools provide communicators with some of the most powerful and effective storytelling options available. Understanding these tools is essential for anyone who plans a successful career in the media industry. However, the ability to resourcefully and proficiently use these tools is an even greater asset. The goal of this class, therefore, is to help you gain knowledge of both these aspects. You will examine and understand the value of interactive media in the journalism industry and begin to develop the skills to execute your own ideas.

## Course Site

We will use a course site to manage the daily schedule of the course. Refer daily to this site for lesson plans, discussion prompts, etc:

<https://github.com/smriazati/interactivemedia-summer18/wiki> (bookmark this site!)

## Course Expectations

This is a self-directed online course that requires independent learning and daily participation. The course organizes topics by day, and the expectation is that you will complete each day in real-time. The lessons are designed sequentially, so each builds on the next. Avoid the temptation to rush through everything, as some topics are deep and may require you to re-watch videos or experiment with applying new topics on your own. Alternatively, do not procrastinate or fall behind on the lessons. You should plan to spend 3-4 hours watching videos and writing code every weekday throughout this course, and you should allocate additional work time for working on assignments over the weekends.

## Independent learning

It would be impossible to cover every piece of information you need to know to complete your projects in our class lessons. Most of the time spent coding is spent fixing bugs and troubleshooting errors. Part of your success in this course depends on your ability to “figure things out”. See the Troubleshooting section of the syllabus for a suggested guide on how to work through through these inevitable bugs. While the first step of troubleshooting is always

to look it up yourself, this course will also ask you to practice reaching out for assistance. You should make use of the Piazza forum to ask for help or feedback from your peers and instructor. Posting your code questions and troubleshooting solutions on the public forum will help all students “figure things out” together.

### **Feedback & remote office hours**

I am invested in your success in this course, and I am eager to provide feedback on your exercises and projects, or to help you work through the inevitable questions and bugs that will arise as you work. Requests for feedback on project work must be delivered via email at least 48 hours in advance of the project deadlines. Requests for feedback should be delivered via email and should include questions about specific items you would like feedback on. You may also request an appointment for remote office hours via Google Hangouts or Skype at any time.

### **Troubleshooting guide**

Most of the time that you spend coding will be spent fixing bugs. Learning how to identify problems, research them and troubleshoot solutions is a core foundational skill for any designer / developer. This course will require you to learn how to learn. It is not possible to cover every detail in our daily instructional material, nor should it be! You will inevitably encounter bugs, or want to build things that we haven't discussed in class. When this happens, it is your responsibility to first research answers to your own questions. [See this guide for troubleshooting code bugs.](#) You should follow the steps outlined here before posting questions to Piazza.

### **Class Materials**

There is no assigned textbook for this course. You will need to purchase one year's worth of web domain and web hosting to complete the course assignments. See below for an overview of accounts, products and software we will use for the course.

You should refer to the FDOC presentation for specific next steps on registering / downloading / purchasing instructions..

### **Accounts**

- **Piazza.com:** See Piazza section of the syllabus for details.
- **Sakai:** We will use Sakai to manage assignment submissions, manage the gradebook, and manage links to resources that are private and should not be posted publicly on the course site.
- **Lynda.com:** We will rely very heavily on Lynda.com video lessons to introduce new concepts in programming and design. You can access Lynda.com using your UNC onyen following instructions available here: <http://software.sites.unc.edu/lynda/>

## Products to purchase

- **Web Domain + Hosting:** You will need to purchase a domain (your URL for this course) and hosting space to host your project files. This usually costs around \$20, and a credit card is required for purchasing. Information about how to purchase will be provided.

## Software to download

- **Adobe Creative Suite:** Available for free for UNC students. We will be using Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, and Acrobat. Install all of these tools on your working computer. Follow instructions here to install:  
<http://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/>
- **FTP Client:** You will use an FTP client to place your website files onto your hosting space. See the first day presentation for further details. For Mac users, [you can download Fetch here](#). PC users can use Cyberduck, [available for free here](#).
- **Integrated Development Environments (IDEs) & Code Editors:** The IDE you choose to use to write your code is your personal preference. In class demonstrations, I will be using Sublime Text 3, [available here](#). Other popular text editors include Dreamweaver, Komodo, Coda and Atom. See the first day presentation for further details.
- **Browser:** We will be using Google Chrome, available here <https://www.google.com/chrome/browser/desktop/index.html>

Refer to the FDOC presentation (see the course site) for specific instructions on installing / purchasing / registering for class materials.

## Class Outline

This class is broken into four sequential parts. Each part builds on the previous. See the course site for details on the daily schedule, and see Sakai for project descriptions. All projects and assignments must be submitted through Sakai.

### Part 1: Designing websites in Adobe Illustrator

Project 1 due 5/24 at 8:00 a.m.

### Part 2 - Developing web sites from scratch using HTML/CSS

Project 2 due 6/5 at 8:00 a.m.

*\*Monday 5/28 is Memorial Day, and there is no class that day\**

### Part 3 - Developing responsive web sites using Bootstrap

Project 3 due 6/11 at 8:00 a.m.

### Part 4 - Managing content with Wordpress

Project 4 & Web Critique due 6/18 at 11:55 p.m.

## Piazza

We will use Piazza to manage course communications. I will add you to the class roster, and you will receive a registration link in your UNC email account. Use this email to register for your account - instructors can see who has / hasn't registered.

- Bookmark our course site: <https://piazza.com/unc/summer2018/mejo187/home>
- [Download the mobile app for iPhone & Android here](#)

### When should I post to Piazza?

Questions relating to code / class work / questions about assignments / etc. must be posted publicly in Piazza. Other students may share the same question, so don't be shy to post on the forum! If a Piazza question is sent to me by email, I will reply and ask you to post it to Piazza for me to answer publicly there. You will also post to Piazza for your daily participation grade. See the *Class Participation* section for details.

### When can I email the instructor?

You should only email questions that are private in nature, i.e. related to participation, grades or other personal matters, may be sent via email to your instructor. Additionally, you should use email to reach out to schedule office hour appointments, or to request feedback on your work.

## Class participation

Learning to code is like learning a language. Your daily participation is crucial. In our online class, we will use Piazza to create an environment where you and your remote-learning peers can converse about the daily instructional content, and your progress on your projects.

**You must post to Piazza everyday that class is scheduled before 11:59 p.m.**

Find our Piazza page at: <https://piazza.com/unc/summer2018/mejo187/home>

### How do I post?

Check the class schedule for the day's class number, and find the appropriate item in Piazza. For example, for class #1, submit your response inside the "part1" Piazza folder.

Make sure to double-check that you have posted in the correct folder, else risk losing points for participating that day.

### What should I post about?

There are daily suggested prompts in the course site. Otherwise, you might:

- make a comment about the daily instructional material
- ask for feedback on an assignment / project

- tell a troubleshooting story (make sure to include code snippets, links or screenshots)
  - describe a bug in code or software that you encountered and resolved
  - describe a bug you encountered and couldn't resolve, and ask for help
  - ask a question
- reply to a peer's question
- make a critique of the class's material or theme
- share a relevant idea or article
- make a critique of an external site / project
- something else entirely!

**How will participation be evaluated?**

Aside from submitted your daily posts, I will evaluate the overall quality of your participation over the course of the class. The overall quality of participation will be evaluated by the following parameters:

- Engagement with peers in conversation (!)
- Sharing of work-in-progress for instructor & peer review (!)
- Synthesis of previous topics
- Engagement with daily material
- Demonstration of critical thinking & reflection
- Submitted on time, usually well in advance of deadline so peers have time to respond

**What happens if I miss a day? Can I submit late?**

It's better to submit late than not at all, but repeated late submissions will impact the overall quality of your participation. You can miss only day before penalties to your grade. There are 23 classes, and I will count 22 of your participation items toward your grade. Each participation item missing after 22 will result in 5% deduction to your final grade.

**Grading Breakdown**

Project 1	20%
Project 2	20%
Project 3	15%
Project 4	20%
Web critique	5%
Participation & homework	20%

## Grading Scale

A	94% and higher	C	74 - 76
A -	90 - 93	C -	70 - 73
B +	87 - 89	D +	67 - 69
B	84 - 86	D	60 - 66
B -	80 - 83	F	59% or below
C +	77 - 79		

Below is a guideline for how grades are described within this course:

- A, nearly perfect in execution, quality of work is exceptional
- A-, work is impressive in quality, very few problems in any area
- B+, very good performance, did more than required, might struggle in one area only
- B, solid effort, met all requirements, fair application of skill
- B-, needs a bit more polish, pretty good handle on things overall
- C+, good in one area of work, but consistent problems with another area
- C, followed instructions, seems to understand basics but did the minimum to pass
- C-, has glimpses of potential in a limited range
- D+, did not demonstrate understanding of the basics but tried
- D or F, did not demonstrate effort or understanding of basics, incomplete

**Important:** Although grades are not negotiable, I will give every consideration to any concerns you have about an assignment grade, as long as the concern is identified promptly. If you have questions about or dispute a particular grade, you must raise your question within one week of receiving that particular grade. Questions about assignments or requests for extra credits raised at the end of the semester will not be considered, unless the assignment falls within the one week range.

## Submitting assignments

All assignments must be submitted on Sakai in advance of the posted project deadline. Assignments submitted by email will not be accepted for evaluation. I will use the gradebook on Sakai to manage your grade in the course. I will notify you by email when project grades & feedback are released. **It is your responsibility to make sure that your assignment is submitted properly on Sakai, and that your submission is in fact “submitted”, in advance of the deadline.** I recommend that you double check this, or even make a screenshot of your submission screen, to make sure that you have really submitted the project.

## Late Assignments

Accepting late assignments is unfair to the students who have sacrificed to turn theirs in on time. An automatic 10% deduction will be applied to each assignment turned in after the class period it is due, provided the assignment is turned in on the same day it is due. An additional 10% deduction will be applied for each subsequent 24 hours that pass after the due date/time (i.e., 10% is taken off for each day). **Assignments submitted more than 48 hours after the deadline will not be accepted.**

## Honor Code

It is expected that each student in this class will conduct him/herself within the guidelines of the Honor System (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity that this University demands. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please feel able to see the course instructor, speak with the senior associate dean of undergraduate studies in this school, and/or 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 is 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. Please feel able to contact the course instructor as soon as you perceive any warning signs of things that might adversely affect your class performance or final grade.

## Diversity

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin at <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.

In this course, you are encouraged to represent diverse populations, diverse viewpoints, and diversity of perspective in your own work. You are also asked to be sensitive to the various backgrounds, perspectives, origins, and situations represented by the students in the course, the students, faculty, and staff at this university, and the residents of this state.

## Special Needs

The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) Office. In the first instance please visit their website at <http://accessibility.unc.edu>, call the office at 919-962-8300, or email [accessibility@unc.edu](mailto:accessibility@unc.edu). A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time. However, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester.

Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

## Accreditation

The School of Media and Journalism'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](#). 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 with these six bullet points under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above:

- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work;