

JOMC 580 **PICTURE**  
STORIES



Sophia Allison

*“As I have practiced it, photography produces pleasure by simplicity. I see something special and show it to the camera. A picture is produced. The moment is held until someone sees it. Then it is theirs.”*

-Sam Abell

Welcome to MJ 580 Picture Stories. The emphasis this semester is developing real world skills. Attitude is everything. I will critique and grade your work as if you are an entry-level professional. You will be expected to do your very best, take initiative, and solve problems without excuses.

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Office hours:  
by appointment

Required Texts:  
*Art and Fear*  
Bayles & Orland  
*Witness in our Time*  
Ken Light



Anna Spellman

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Refine your ability to tell stories with images.
- Refine reporting and journalistic skills by finding meaningful photo stories, often representing social issues.
- Develop skills in gaining access quickly and relating to story subjects.
- To use picture stories as a tool to develop all aspects of your photography.
- Develop your preparation, research and time management skills.
- Develop your writing, including proposal writing to promote your own story ideas for assignments and grants.

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#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- You will complete a set of weekly projects.
- You will complete three longer-term projects.
- You will keep an idea book for contacts and ideas.
- You will write a self-evaluation on every assignment.
- You will write a proposal and make a story “pitch”.
- You will have regular reading assignments and comment on readings.
- You will submit your work in two portfolios, including a final portfolio.

## GRADE DETERMINATION

Assignments and/or shoots are due at the minute class begins! Any assignment not turned in will, obviously, receive zero points. The critical elements that must be included: Are you pushing yourself? Are you spending the time? Does this communicate to the viewer?

- CONTENT: Idea, storyline and flow, focus, MOMENTS, connection to the viewer, editing, content variety, visual surprises.
- AESTHETIC: Composition, point of view, use of light and color, graphics, perspective, creativity, visual variety.
- TECHNICAL: Toning quality, presentation, workflow, keywording, metadata, captions and layout (if required)
- Grading scale is >92%=A; 90-92=A-; 88-89=B+; 83-87=B; 80-82=B-; 78-79=C+; 73-77=C; 70-72=C-; 68-69=D+; 60-67=D; <59=F



Michelle Lotker

## WEEKLY PROJECTS

The topic for your weekly project will be given to you with short notice and you will need to find a story, shoot, caption and image in time for the next critique. The following topics are possibilities but not guaranteed.

Aging, Single, teen or grandparent raising children, Pageant(ry), Tribe, Identity, Farm, 13, Cowboy-cowgirl, Teacher, Child in need, Immigrant, Disabled or elderly athlete, Recovery, Coach, Loss

These topics could contain struggle and transformation, the basic elements of narrative. Use this list to work on the idea process. Remember you are looking for GREAT CHARACTERS. Not simply someone, to fill a "type", but someone with a great life story that happens to fit into the assignment. You are not to start shooting until the week it is assigned.



Michelle Lotker

#### LONG-TERM PROJECTS

- Zip code/Place essay (a la National Geographic) Could also be a road or place.
- Sports team essay
- Final Project/Social Issue Story

Be prepared at all times for anything and everything. To clarify, bring your gear to class.

#### PORTFOLIO 1

Due: 10/17

All weekly projects to this point, 6-10 best singles from all your stories, eval

#### PORTFOLIO FINAL

Due: 12/7

All projects, proposal, 10-15 best singles from semester, eval

Your final grade will be determined out of a 1000 point scale:

WEEKLY PROJECTS	250 points
ZIPCODE PROJECT	100 points
TEAM ESSAY	200 points
FINAL PROJECT	350 Points
EFFORT, ATTENDANCE, READING, PARTICIPATION	100 POINTS
TOTAL	1000 POINTS

#### GRADING SCALE

>92%=A; 90-92=A-; 88-89=B+; 83-87=B; 80-82=B-; 78-79=C+; 73-77=C; 70-72=C-; 68-69=D+; 60-67=D; ; <59=F

#### CRITIQUES

- Our goal: to discover what makes a good picture, your strengths and weaknesses, and to prepare you to go out and make better images each time. Critiques are essential to growth.
- Involvement from everyone is essential and the critiques need to be constructive. You

can be tough without being destructive. Balance.

- When receiving a critique of your work, you need to maintain a similar balance. Defend your position **without making excuses**. Be teachable and listen with an open mind. If you already know everything, you might not need the class.



Sophia Allison

## EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to take risks. Risk-taking is relentless pushing of boundaries and exceeding expectations. Every time you pick up your camera is an opportunity. My goal is to create an opportunity for you to realize your potential. However, YOU must be proactive and make the most of the opportunities. It's easy to tell the difference between simply meeting requirements and taking initiative to get better. Take ownership of your growth.

- 1) I **expect your best effort** on all work, and I expect you to take the time necessary to do great work and build your portfolio. C effort is 1-2 shoots per week. A-B is 3-4.
- 2) I expect **images that are technically advanced**. I expect images to be properly focused, exposed, toned and presented. I also expect excellent, accurate captions.
- 3) I expect images to **communicate and connect beyond the literal**.
- 4) I expect you to be striving to make images that have exceptional **MOMENT, LIGHT, and COMPOSITION**.
- 5) I expect you to **think creatively and independently** when approaching any assignment/project, and I expect images to reflect this.
- 6) I expect **professionalism in all areas** including presentation, ethics and caption writing.

## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

All PJ students are expected to own an HD/SLR camera body. You will need an entire system. Although you can rent other gear through the school, you **MUST** start acquiring your own gear. You will need to buy your own CF cards - as large as possible. Also you need two hard drives for your personal archive. One is for is for backup. I suggest you get at least 1TB drives, 7200 rpm.



Anna Spelman

## EXCUSES

Here is the policy on excuses: They are unnecessary and we don't want them in class. Remember we are all going through the same trials here. These are a given; there is no need to state them. If you give me excuses my reply will be: "Tell me what you learned from this? How can you avoid this in the future?"

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The current state of our profession offers both unprecedented opportunity and challenge. To achieve your goals will require your commitment and very best effort. 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 an assignment on the server alone **does not count**. Part of your completion of the assignment is the critique. You will be allowed 2 excusable absences (sickness, death in the family, etc.); after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your **FINAL GRADE**. You may not use an absence on a due date. If your semester average is 91% and you miss 3 classes, your final average would be 89%.

## PHOTO NIGHT

As in all photo classes, PhotoNight attendance is required.

## HOW DO YOU SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS?

Number one: **SPEND THE TIME**. Number two: **ATTITUDE**. Treat every shooting opportunity as a chance to make portfolio images. Do not make excuses, take responsibility for your work. Admit errors. Bury your pride. Now is the time to learn, and learning often involves failure. Manage your time. Be on time. Participate and contribute honestly in critiques. Help each other!



Brittany Cole

“Your job is to learn how to work on your work.”

– David Bayles & Ted Orland, *Art & Fear*

**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. 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 Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.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.