

DOCUMENTING THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Fall 2018 W 4:00 - 6:30 CA 60

“One place understood helps us understand all places better”

– EUDORA WELTY

This MEJO course is a unique collaboration with Morehead Planetarium & Science Center and Carolina’s Center for the Study of the American South.

Project Background

Morehead Planetarium is creating a “fulldome show” about the South that will be shown at the planetarium. In this show “audiences will find themselves immersed in the complicated story of the South’s past, present and future in a way that only full-dome shows can deliver.” But the project is larger than this one production.

Another goal of the larger project is to create an online portal/repository to connect researchers, academics, students and others to information about the South, ranging from the huge collection of images that UNC has in the library to content from academics, to other learning modules and resources.

Here’s where we come into the plan: Part of that collection will include 10 short-form documentaries/creative visual stories that explore the culture and character of the South. Our goal is to bring connection and understanding to online audiences about this part of the world.

We have the opportunity to be creative here. These videos could be traditional documentaries, more conceptual/creative/interpretive videos, 360 video, etc. Jay Heinz, our co-teacher and creative director at Morehead, wants ***your*** ideas. There are parameters, that we will review in class, but we want you to approach your work in this class like you have in no other journalism course. Play to your strengths, but also be willing to take risks.

→ We have a real world client for this project. Jay will attend each of our classes and will offer guidance and approval as we move forward on stories. It’s important that we stay in communication with our client along the way. His goal: “These stories need to be interesting, powerful, emotional, creative and really affect the viewer.”

Any 360 content could potentially end up in the fulldome show. Students may have the opportunity to shoot for their short AND the dome if Morehead needs footage from that part of the South.

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[Overburden Documentary](#)

[Farmsteads Documentary](#)

♦ OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday -2:00-3:30

Or by appointment on Mondays

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

♦ Required texts and films:

We will develop a reading and viewing list as a group.

♦ GRADE BREAKDOWN:

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

Two Video Projects - 400 each

MotionPoem Project - 100

Idea & Proposal Process - 50

Read/Watch Assignments - 50

♦ This syllabus is flexible.

Be prepared for change.

♦ ATTENDANCE is vital to the success of this class. There will be critiques and discussions that cannot be recreated.

BE ON TIME.

♦ IMPORTANT DATES:

LABOR DAY - 09/03

FALL BREAK - 10/18-22

THANKSGIVING BREAK - 11/21-25

LDOC - 12/05

FINAL EXAM - 12/08 4 PM

Course Objectives

We are presented with a tremendous opportunity. We will utilize all the skills you've gained in previous courses and experiences you've had so far in your storytelling career to explore, learn, empathize, create and share stories of the South. Along the way, this course will expand your tools and skills needed to engage in quality storytelling with audio and video in an online platform. Emphasis is on creativity and connection through story. Because web viewers demand highly engaging material, with a fast start, sharp focus, tight narrative, and natural voices, students will focus on capturing stories with strong visuals, ambient audio, and voices of the people.

Our ultimate goal is to bring “the American South to life for the public.”

This course is also intended to give you insight into what you may expect when you enter the, ahem, “real world.” Attention to detail is key, as is timeliness, thoroughness, critical thinking, creative thought and active participation.

Projects

Book and Film Assignments | *We will collectively choose our reading and viewing lists* | Throughout the semester (especially early in the semester) you will have assignments to read fiction, non-fiction and even poetry about the South. We will also view films with Southern-focused content. The goal of these assignments is to immerse yourself in a three-dimensional, multi-voice view of the South and to break away from your own preconceived ideas of what the South is. Be open to new perspectives and new ideas that may come to you as you read and watch.

Client Projects | *Morehead Planetarium* | Our core projects for the semester will be real-world client videos with Morehead Planetarium and the Center for the Study of the American South. We will be shooting and editing at least 10 videos for the online component of the American South project. This is a timely, deadline-based, live-action freelance project. The pace will be fast, and you will learn the frustrations and freedoms of contract work through this experience. Be prepared. Be flexible. Be professional.

We will work in teams of two. We will determine teams based on your choices but also your all's schedule. We need teams who have similar enough schedules that long distance travel together will be possible.

- 1) Each team makes a story in the state. When possible you will travel together. Since this story will be geographically closer you can work on this throughout the semester. More details to come.
- 2) And each team makes a story out of state. For this project you will travel together for one big shoot. We should plan to shoot sometime in October, hopefully planned around fall break to avoid missing too many classes. Planning will be essential for this story. Except in special cases, all content gathering must be complete by the end of October. November will be 100% post-production.
- 3) Motion Poem: Working in teams of 4, visually interpret a poem addressing a theme relevant to the South by an author from the South. More details to come.

Expectations

Professionalism.

You were chosen for this course for a reason – because you have the skills and attitude to make the National Geographic project successful. Your reputation and that of the School's are on the table. I have no doubt that you can do this, that's why you are here. This has the potential to allow you to build some connections at the NGS organization that could lead

“What lies beyond empathy is solidarity.”

– SONYA CHILDRESS, DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT, FIRELIGHT MEDIA

to work later in your careers. Look at every professional interaction as building a bridge, but don't let selfish desires of success override what is most important - being a good person that people want to collaborate with.

Grade Determination

Much of the grade determination in this course will be based on your professionalism (including quality of work), participation and ability to meet all deadlines.

Required Equipment and Supplies

We'll be using HD/SLR cameras to shoot HD video. If you do not have your own HD/SLR, you can check out from the equipment room.

You will need two hard drives for our class and client projects. One is for backup. I suggest you get at least 1TB drives. A reliable hard drive and backup is critical for this course. When working with a client we do not have an option to fail. Hard drive failure could mean not meeting our deadline, which would most likely mean not working with this client again.

Attendance

Since we will be meeting only 17 times (including the final exam meeting) this semester, it is critical that you attend every class. This course will involve travel for production of the video(s), and if that requires missing a class meeting, we must discuss beforehand. If you need to miss class for other reasons, be in communication with me. If you miss more than one class meeting there will be points deducted from your final grade. Please be in communication.

Inclusive and Accepting Space

First of all, everyone is welcome here. Bigotry and sexism are not welcome here. We may have difficult discussions in this class, and as that happens I want everyone to be mindful of the power of words and how they can impact others. Simply, be thoughtful of others and be aware of your own privilege.

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

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/>

Honor Code

Students will operate within the requirements of the Honor Code. All work must be your own, must be done specifically for this class, and 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.

ACEJMC

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. 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: *understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information; *demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity; *think critically, creatively and independently; *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 tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE ←————→ subject to change, I'll keep you updated as we go

Class	Topics
01 20180822 W	Review syllabus, intro project and begin idea discussion / What is the South?
02 20180829 W	Continued discussion on themes and ideas
03 20180905 W	Representation Lecture & Discussion
04 20180912 W	DUE: Proposals for Projects 1 and 2 / Film discussion
05 20180919 W	DUE: MotionPoem
06 20180926 W	Book presentation and discussion
07 20181003 W	TBD
08 20181010 W	Rough Cut Project 1 DUE
09 20181017 W	Project update / Fall break begins at 5 pm
10 20181024 W	Rough Cuts Project 1 DUE
11 20181031 W	All shooting complete
12 20181107 W	Rough Cuts Project 1 DUE
13 20181114 W	Rough Cuts Project 2 DUE
14 20181121 W	No Class - T-Day
15 20181128 W	Rough Cuts Project 2 DUE
16 20181205 LDOC	Review of Final Edits- Projects 1 and 2
Final 20181208 4 PM	FINAL EXAM MEETING: Final, color-corrected, versions DUE