

PHOTOJOURNALISM PROJECTS *JOMC 681*



Carolyn Van Houten

“There were two things I wanted to do.
I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected.
I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated.”
-Lewis Hine

Welcome to MJ 681 Photojournalism Projects! It is a privilege to share people's lives and tell their stories. With this privilege comes a responsibility for fairness, accuracy, commitment and hard work.

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Required Texts:
Witness in our Time
2n ed, by Ken Light
Recommended:
*Documentary photo book of
your choice*

Office Hours:
TTH 11-12 or by
appointment

In MEJO 681 we will seek to strengthen your foundation of skills, and help you leverage the power of photojournalism to engage and affect your community.

Many photographs and videos simply state fact as the photographer recorded it. In this class we will seek to create visual *ideas* – that tell stories to educate and reach into the social conscience. Not every story uncovers social problems, however. Some reveal people and things that are societal gems.

Effective documentary storytelling is impossible without a commitment by the photographer to spend the time to get under the surface. Genuine life moments are KEY. The “quick-hit” approach, projecting an incomplete and stereotypical understanding of a given subject, is sadly prevalent in today’s media. The antidote is time and an unselfish commitment to truth – and this is what it will take to succeed in this class.

The structure of this class is simple. You will have two major storytelling projects, a documentary photo story and a short-form documentary video. You also have the option to stick with one project, either photo or video for the entire semester. You will have work due every week, at the beginning of class on Wednesday. We will critique and/or edit during many class periods, and prepare each other to go out and be successful in the coming week.



Steven Mitchell

Much like the demands of J480, you need to be shooting a minimum of twice a week on your stories. One shoot per week will produce mediocre to poor stories- and grades. Two shoots per week will be good, to be excellent you should expect to shoot more. Editing will also take a lot of time and effort, so plan accordingly. You should seek to do the best stories of your college career in this class.

LONG-TERM PHOTO ESSAY / SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILM

The heart and soul of this class will be the documentary story. It can be told through photos or short film. Our theme for the class will be “What Matters To Us”. This project will involve: research, access, editing, storytelling and presentation. Your work may be published online. Ask yourself: “What is the best media to tell the story?” The key is INTENT.

Weekly shoots: We will be turning in weekly shoots. You will turn in images or a short scene, b-roll export or interview export. We will critique, not the single image, but your approach, style, visual variety and how well you worked each situation. You will be allowed one mulligan for the entire semester. After that, you need to bring work and show serious progress every week.

BEYOND THE BOX | Early in the semester, I may give you creative, conceptual short assignments or shoot outs. Take risks!

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EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to relentlessly push beyond your comfort zone and exceed expectations. Every time you pick up your camera is an opportunity. Treat it as such. My goal is to create an environment in which you can realize your potential. However, though I may help open doors, YOU must walk through them. Take ownership of your learning.

In this capstone course, I have some journalistic expectations.

- 1) I expect images, video and audio that is technically advanced. By this point your technical skills should be solid. I also expect excellent, accurate captions on stills.
- 2) I expect stories to communicate and connect beyond the literal.
- 3) I expect you to be striving to make images and video that have exceptional MOMENT, LIGHT, and COMPOSITION. I expect your stories to have strong NARRATIVE ARC, FLOW, TRANSITIONS and most importantly, excellent EDITING.
- 4) I expect you to think creatively and independently when approaching any assignment/project.
- 5) I expect professionalism in all areas including field work, ethics, respectful and courteous relationships with your characters and your classmates, deadlines, classwork and caption writing.
- 6) I expect your best effort on all work, and I expect you to **spend the time** to be excellent.



Justin Cook

GRADE DETERMINATION

1) Assignments and/or shoots are due at the very minute class begins!

2) Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.

The critical elements that must be included in any assignment: Are you pushing yourself? Are you spending the time? Does this communicate to the viewer?

Content (concept/plan, execution, narrative/script, flow, storytelling, edit, captions)

Aesthetic (creativity, mood, composition, graphics, color)

Technical (execution, light/sound, exposure, polish, presentation)

As noted, work will be due every week on Wednesday. You are allowed to miss ONE weekly deadline for the entire semester. After that, missed weekly deadlines will be a 25-point deduction. This will add up quick.

There will be three major, graded deadlines during the semester.

If you choose one long-term project, photo or video:

9/26 Deadline 1	Rough cut	150 points
11/7 Deadline 2	Fine cut	150 points
12/6 Deadline 3	Final cut	200 points
Participation, presentation, proactivity, attention to detail		100 points

If you choose one photo project and one doc film:

9/26 Deadline 1	Final photo	150 points
11/7 Deadline 2	Rough cut	150 points

12/6 Deadline 3	Final video	200 points
Participation, presentation, proactivity, attention to detail		100 points

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

FINAL EXAM

The final project will count instead of a final exam, but the class will meet for a screening and pot luck with other classes on Thursday December 6, at 5:30pm.

INCOMPLETE

A grade of incomplete will be assigned only in extreme cases and at my discretion

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

You will need a digital 35mm DSLR camera with manual controls and interchangeable lenses. Although you can rent through the school, you **MUST** start acquiring your own gear if you plan to survive out there.

You will need buy your own CF or SD cards - as large as possible.

You need two harddrives, one is for is for backup. I suggest you get at least 2TB drives.

EXCUSES

They are unnecessary and we don't want them in class. Argue valid points during critiques, but issues unrelated to improving your work are not vital. Everyone is going through the same challenges with time, money and access. Dealing with these is a major part of your education. If you give me excuses of why this or that did not work, my reply will be: "Okay, 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 more of your mind, body and spirit than you imagine at this point. 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 as a turn-in. You will be allowed 2 absences; after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. You may not use an absence on a due date unless you have serious documented health or family issues. 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.)

PHOTO NIGHT

As in all photo classes, PhotoNight attendance is required.



Samkit Shah

“The only thing to do is to get it right.
The only way to get it right is to keep asking yourself if it is.”
– Kerry Tremain

HOW DO YOU SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS?

Attitude and communication is key. Do not make excuses, take responsibility for your work. Admit errors. Have a positive attitude, even when it is seemingly difficult or mundane. Bury your pride. Now is the time to learn, and much learning occurs in difficult times. Manage your resources - your money and your time. Be on time. Participate and contribute honestly in critiques. Help each other!

PHONE AND TEXTING POLICY: This is a respect issue. I respect you, and I expect respect in return. If I find what you are doing distracting, then it is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to ask you to leave class. Simply, disconnect from your phone and email and connect with your team!

COLLEGE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

You can receive 10 -25 pts extra credit for your documented entry. Ten for a single category, five additional for each category up to 25.

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 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.

