

## The Rules

Rule 1. Find a place you trust and then try trusting it for a while.

Rule 2. General duties of a student: pull everything out of your teacher, pull everything out of your fellow students.

Rule 3. General duties of a teacher: pull everything out of your students.

Rule 4. Consider everything an experiment.

Rule 5. Be self-disciplined. This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

Rule 6. Nothing is a mistake. There is no win and no fail. There is only make.

Rule 7. **The only rule is work.**

If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all the time who eventually catch on to things.

Rule 8. Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.

Rule 9. Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

Rule 10. "We're breaking all of the rules. Even our own rules. And how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities." - John Cage.

Helpful hints: Always be around. Come or go to everything always. Go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully often. Save everything, it might come in handy later.

# ADVANCED VIDEO STORYTELLING

combining vision, sound and voice to connect and communicate

“You wanna fly, you got to give up the shit that weighs you down.”

- TONI MORRISON

## Course Description

This course is designed to expand the tools and skills needed to engage in quality storytelling with audio and video in modern media environments. Emphasis is in mastering technical and aesthetic aspects of storytelling. 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. This is an advanced class. Be prepared.

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, voices of people personally affected by issues. We will focus on the concept of our video/film collaborators (historically referred to as “subjects”) telling their stories in their own voices.

Students will also learn the basics of proposal writing and pitching projects. We’ll be using HDSLR cameras to shoot HD video. If you do not have your own HDSLR, you can check out from the equipment room.

How can we innovatively use any camera to propel the viewer into the story? Through the skills learned in this course you will expand your visual vocabulary, learn and incorporate the core principles of audio and video storytelling, integrate your vision and style with multimedia tools and combine sound and video to create compelling narratives.

Topics will include:

- ◆ White privilege and the fallacy of empathy
- ◆ Representation of communities and ethics in documentary storytelling
- ◆ Report and research topic to strengthen the video capture, edit and presentation
- ◆ The interview process
- ◆ Grants and proposal writing
- ◆ Adobe Premiere Pro
- ◆ Sequencing and video editing techniques
- ◆ Produce tightly focused video pieces with compelling narratives arcs
- ◆ Finding the voice of the story and understanding structure

J582.1 MW 2:00-3:45 CA60  
 PROFESSOR: CHAD A STEVENS  
 OFFICE: CA 211  
[chadstevens@unc.edu](mailto:chadstevens@unc.edu)  
[Overburden Documentary](#)  
[Farmsteads Documentary](#)

◆ OFFICE HOURS:  
 W - 10:00-11:30

◆ Please try and meet with me during office hours, but if you cannot I will be happy to schedule an appointment.

◆ Required Readings:  
[In the Blink of an Eye](#)  
 by Walter Murch  
 Tutorials: LinkedIn Learning

◆ This syllabus and course schedule is flexible.

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

Final Doc Project =500  
 Proposal - 50  
 Storyboard - 50  
 Verite Scenes - 100  
 Rough Cut - 100  
 Final Turn In- 200  
 Mid-Term Project =200  
 True Lies = 150  
 Interpretations = 150

Grade scale:

A = 93-100% / A- = 90-92%  
 B+ = 87-89% / B = 83-86%  
 B- = 80-82% / C+ = 77-79%  
 C = 73-76% / C- = 70-72%  
 D+ = 67-69% / D = 60-66%  
 F = less than 60%

◆ Cell Phones: Please turn mute your cell phones for class. BE RESPECTFUL.

◆ IMPORTANT DATES:  
[LABOR DAY](#) - 09/02  
[FALL BREAK](#) - 10/17-20  
[T-DAY BREAK](#) - 10/27  
[LDOC](#) - 12/04

## Projects and Assignments

### *Project 1 – Interpretations*

An assignment to test your creativity, reveal your technical acuity and try new things. We will visually interpret a poem.

### *Project 2 – True Lies*

Have you heard of the game Two Truths and a Lie? Each of you will interview a partner in class. They will tell you/us three “facts” about themselves: two being true and one being the best darn yarn they can spin. The objective of the assignment is to learn interview technical issues - focusing on light.

*Midterm Project – Person With A Purpose.* This project can be interview-driven.

And event is not a story. A place is not a story. A person is not a story (that’s a profile).

A story is a person on a journey. Do your best to find a character who is doing something in the present tense (not past tense) that is interesting, that is worth telling others about. Some qualities you should look for: Find someone we can learn from, someone who may inspire us, someone who can reflect on her experience. If you are interested and excited and engaged by this person, then your audience will be too. If you’re bored, they will be bored. Let’s not do boring. A great example of a project like this would be *Slomo*. If you don’t know it, google it.

*Final Project – Implicated.* This project is verite-driven.

Discovery of your topic begins with self-reflection. Our lives are intrinsically connected to other beings (human and nonhuman). The way we move through society can both lift or oppress others. For example, through the dollars we spend at the grocery store we make a choice about a farmworker’s wage or the kind of life an animal experiences before being slaughtered for our food. Being white in America ties one to a structure of privilege and systemic racism. What actions do we take to fight this? If you are white, how are you complicit in benefiting from this system? How does our opportunity become a burden for others? By using electricity in Chapel Hill, NC, we are connected to ecologically-devastating mountaintop removal coal mining practices that destroy communities in Appalachia. Without us even realizing it and often at no direct fault of our own, we hurt our fellow humans, animals, and the environment. I want you to think about the implications of the way you live your life. From this internal search, you will form a list of potential story ideas exploring issues in which you are implicated - knowingly or not - and we will use the power of story to explore, learn and change.

The intention is NOT for this to be a first person story, although if it is the best way to tell a story, then we can discuss. The intention is for you to think about the impact you have on society and use your skills as a storyteller to explore that issue to which you are connected.

This project is CHARACTER-DRIVEN and VERITE-DRIVEN. We are moving beyond illustrating interviews. We tell present tense stories. Think scenes, not b-roll. Think moments, not interviews. ***Be prepared to spend an incredible amount of time*** to complete this project.

**“Once you know someone’s story it’s impossible to hate them.”**

**- GLYNN WASHINGTON, SNAP JUDGEMENT**

## Naming Conventions for Assignments

Naming conventions for your archive: YEARMODA\_lastname\_assignment\_001.mov

Naming conventions for Assignment Turn In: lastname\_assignmentname.mov

## Project Submission and Grade Determination

All assignments must be placed in the server by the beginning of class on due dates. Points will be deducted for every minute the project is late. Be prepared for upload delays. This will be one time to not procrastinate. I recommend uploading on campus.

Every project must be submitted with Title, Description and Keywords on Vimeo. And each student must write a self-evaluation for that project and turn this in with the video export on the server.

Your final project must be posted on the [Vimeo channel](#), [UNC Narratives](#).

The login for UNC Narratives Vimeo channel is:

username: chadstevens@unc.edu

password: G0tarheels!

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 (on the server) on the due date!
- 2) Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.
- 3) You must be present in class to receive credit (server-only Turn In does not count).
- 4) Class participation is critical to success in this course.

## PhotoNights

PhotoNight is a monthly speaker series that is held usually on the last Tuesday of every month. Presentations are from 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Attendance at PhotoNight is considered part of the class and is mandatory and will be recorded. Attendance will count according to the guidelines below.

## Equipment and Supplies

**Camera and Lenses:** This is a video storytelling class. So you will need a video camera. You will have access to Canon HD/SLR cameras from the checkout room, but there will be competition for these bodies from other courses. It would be ideal to have your own and to access the equipment check out for additional video and audio gear. Be prepared it may be *frustrating*. Plus, you'll need gear when you graduate, so maybe this is a good time to make that leap. If you plan to, I highly recommend the purchase of a Canon HD/SLR camera (5D Mark III or Sony cameras, for example) or if you're interested in other brands, we can talk that through as well. Sony and Nikon also have good cameras. Equipment checkout will be run through Park Library.

**Tripod:** YES, YOU MUST USE A TRIPOD (when you need a tripod). Tripods are available from checkout, but they are rough around the edges. Let me know if you may be interested in purchasing your own, and I can direct you.

*Required to purchase on your own:*

**DSLR Viewfinder:** In times when you can't use a tripod, or when you've perfected handholding, you WILL DEFINITELY NEED a LCD loupe. I recommend the [Zacuto](#). There are several models depending on your camera

body and price range. I personally use the Zacuto Z-Finder Pro 3, which runs about \$170. This would be smart to buy used. Be sure it fits your camera.

TWO Harddrives: at least 1TB, more if you can afford it. (one is to be a mirror of the original... **Backups are CRITICAL!!!**). 7200 rpm and **USB 3.0** or **Thunderbolt**. Headphones (earbuds are a no-go). These are the best for the cash: [Sony MDR-V6 Monitor Headphones](#).

## Critiques

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 and video 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. Remember, you are not your work. You are a full, holistic being, and the work you create is only one facet of who you are, so by separating your self worth from your work can lead to productive feedback sessions. 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.

## 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.

## Attendance

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. Part of your completion of the assignment is the critique. You will be allowed 2 un-excused absences; after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. Use your 2 wisely. But please communicate with me if issues arise that require your absence from class.

## 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. My preferred pronouns are he/him/his.

## 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/>

## 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. Learn more 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:

- \*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.

“We see that what lies beyond empathy is solidarity. The notion that our plight, and humanity, are intrinsically connected, and to create a better future I’ve got to get my hands dirty along with you.”

- SONYA CHILDRESS

Class	Topics
01 AUG 21 W	Review syllabus   ASSIGN: Textbook/Interpretations/Tutorials/Project Ideas
02 AUG 26 M	Story + PPro Bootcamp
03 AUG 28 W	Topics: Shooting Sequences 4-8-12 / Ethics
04 SEPT 02 M	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY
05 SEPT 04 W	DUE: Interpretations   Topics: Interview Lighting   ASSIGN: True Lies
06 SEPT 09 M	DUE: Final Project deas   Topics: Interview Process
07 SEPT 11 W	DUE: True Lies (NOTE: Farmsteads screening 9/12 at Planetarium)
08 SEPT 16 M	DUE:Final Project Pitch Day
09 SEPT 18 W	Topics: Story versus Profile/3-Act Structure
10 SEPT 23 M	Topics: Trailers/Sample Cuts - How and Why
11 SEPT 25 W	DUE: Final Project Story Proposal / ASSIGN: Midterm Project
12 SEPT 30 M	Topics: More on interview-driven shorts + Midterm Project
13 OCT 02 W	Topics: Transcripts to Script / More on shooting sequences/editing sequences
14 OCT 07 M	DUE: Verite Scene #1
15 OCT 09 W	Topics: Color Correction and Audio Mlxing / Work in Class
16 OCT 14 M	DUE: Midterm Project
17 OCT 16 W	TBD
18 OCT 21 M	Topics: Representation, Privilege and Empathy
19 OCT 23 W	DUE: Verite Scene #2
20 OCT 28 M	Topics: More on color
21 OCT 30 W	DUE: Final Project Storyboard
22 NOV 04 M	DUE: Verite Scene #3
23 NOV 06 W	Topics: Music
24 NOV 11 M	DUE: Verite Scene #4
25 NOV 13 W	Critique continued
26 NOV 18 M	DUE: Rough Cut of Final Project
27 NOV 20 W	Rough Cut Reviews
28 NOV 25 M	Work in Class
29 NOV 27 W	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break
30 DEC 02 M	DUE: Final Project - feedback
31 DEC 04 W	DUE: Fine Cut
32 Final Exam	4 PM FRIDAY DEC 06: Final Turn In + Self Evaluation