INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL STORYTELLING

UNC-Chapel Hill | Hussman School of Journalism and Media | MEJO 121.002 |

Welcome to this introductory media technology skills class at the UNC School of Media and Journalism. Our simple goals are to introduce you to some of the tools and skills needed to engage in multimedia storytelling in online environments. We aim to demystify the technical aspects of audiovisual information packaging by engaging in basic hands-on video and web exercises.

However, what distinguishes this class from a skills-only course is its focus on ***storytelling***. We ultimately intend to provide familiarity with the tools and an understanding of how to develop a narrative story with all these tools. These are the skill sets needed for various professions in media and journalism.

Everyone loves a great story. But what makes a story great? What makes a story compelling? What stories do you remember most and what made them memorable? What do all great stories have in common? What is the difference between "telling" the story and "showing" the story?

It is my hope that you will learn to use sound and video to produce stories that will help you land your dream internship or job. You will become skillful in gathering good audio that is clear, balanced, properly layered with appropriate sound and incorporates natural sound to help you "show" an audio only story. You will also learn to shoot video that is well focused, properly white balanced, properly framed, and properly lighted. You will also master editing skills so that you are able to match action with sound using a variety of shots that are appropriately paced with invisible cuts.

Classroom and meeting time
268 Carroll Hall, Mondays and Wednesday 5:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

Instructor
Professor: Trevy A. McDonald, Ph.D.
Office: 329 Carroll Hall
Phone: 919-843-5638
Office Hours: MW 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m., by appointment, or whenever my office door is open.
e-mail: trevy@email.unc.edu

Graduate Assistant: Giulia Heyward (giuliag@live.unc.edu)

Required Supplies

There are no textbooks for this course. However, video recording software, a domain name and server space are among the required purchases. These supplies include:

FiLMiCPro app: We require the purchase of the FiLMic the app. FiLMiC Pro that provides the features of professional video cameras for iPhone and Android. The cost of this app is $14.99.
More information here: https://www.filmicpro.com/

Domain name & hosting space.
You will need to purchase these products for the Web portion of this class for approximately $20-$30 for your first year. More details will be provided in class. *If you already have these products, you may reuse them for this class. Please inform instructor if this is the case.*

Headphones
Must have a standard mini jack (⅛''). Any **wired** (non-Bluetooth / not wireless) headphones you might use with your phone will work.

Smartphone
For your video assignments, you will record with your smartphone. Students who do not own a smartphone will be able to check out an iPod from the Hussman equipment room to record.

Wired lavalier microphone with headphone monitoring
Lavalier or stick microphones will be needed for the best audio quality. You will need to purchase a lavalier microphone with **headphone monitoring** (pictured below). Here is the link to an option on Amazon:
Lavalier microphone. The cost for this one is $24.99
NOTE: in some cases, to use these devices with an iPhone, an adapter is required. You may purchase the Lightning to 3.5mm Headphone Adapter from the UNC Bookstore or on Amazon.

Smartphone mount
Tripods will be available for checkout from the Hussman equipment room. However, you will need to purchase a mount for your phone. You may find an example here (pictured below).

Recommended Supplies

USB external hard drive / flash drive
Specs: Minimum 64GB flash drive, must be USB 3.0 for fastest file transfer speeds. *Recommended* to invest in a larger external hard drive to backup all files for this course and others.
Click here for a link to a recommended flash drive (64GB).
Click here for a link to a recommended flash drive (128GB).
Click here for a link to a recommended external hard drive (2TB).

Tripod
Tripods may be checked out of the Hussman equipment room, but you can use your own if you like. A smartphone mount will be required if you choose to use the tripods from the equipment room (see above).

Required Digital Access

Lynda.com
Follow the instructions here to access Lynda.com with your onyen. http://software.sites.unc.edu/lynda/

Adobe Premiere
Follow the instructions here to create an Adobe ID and install the required software for free:
http://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/

Vimeo account
You must use or create an account to publish your videos for this course. A Vimeo account is free to create, but free accounts have restrictions on the total GB you can upload each week, which should not be an issue for the size of the files you will create in this class.

Computer Labs

You can download some of the required software to your own laptops for the projects required in this course. You may find that Adobe Premiere runs slowly on your laptop, depending on its hardware. As a student in this course, you have access to the Hussman School's computer labs, which have all necessary required software tools installed. Find details about accessing those computer labs here: http://jomclabaccess.web.unc.edu/

Equipment Room

As a student in this course, you can check out equipment related to this course from the Hussman equipment room, located in the Park Library. It is your responsibility to keep track of all appointments and equipment room rules, and to treat your borrowed equipment professionally and respectfully. Failure to do so may result in revoked equipment room privileges.

Course Goals

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media 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 place our emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

In particular, we focus on the last competency listed, regarding the application of tools and technologies.
- You will become familiar with the functions and limits of the equipment and software introduced in class.
- You will develop an understanding of how to evaluate technical quality and story flow.
- You will be able to plan and execute a short, clean, logically-flowing video product.
- You will be able to understand the tools needed to create a graphic story
- You will be able to use a variety of strategies and tools to create a standards-based website .

Attendance Policy

Similar to having personal time off (PTO) at work, you are allotted TWO absence without need to justify or explain your reasons for the missed class. Similar to extending beyond one's allotted PTO, any additional absence past the two allotted days will result in a half-grade deduction (e.g., a B becomes a B- after two absences) for each additional day of absence. As this course is project-based and cumulative in its delivery of technical information, it is important to attend each scheduled course day to receive new information and to practice new skills. Students who choose to miss class are responsible for understanding the topics taught that day.

Late Assignments

Accepting late assignments is unfair to the students who have sacrificed to turn their work in on time. An automatic 10 percent deduction will be applied to each assignment turned in after the time 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 percent is taken off for each day).

Independent Online Research

To teach you the necessary software tools to create your stories, this course will combine in-class demonstrations with online tutorials and videos. As beginners, it is inevitable that questions and technical problems will arise as you work with these tools. It is also not possible to cover every detail of a tool through in-class demos or assigned videos. The assignments will require you to learn how to learn new things independently, outside of direct instruction. While your instructor is always available to answer your questions and clarify any topic, this course will challenge you to troubleshoot your technical problems and figure out answers to your questions through independent online research. Before asking your question a technical or software-related question like "how do I…" or " … isn't working", it is expected that you will research your question online. Invest some time looking at manuals, forums and documentation sites to see if someone else has addressed your question or problem before. If you have conducted independent research online and still can't find your answer, reach out to your instructor through email, in class, or during office hours. In addition to asking your question, share what you learned during your research, a description of your problem, and any relevant screenshots.

Grading

Work is graded according to the highest professional standards. Grades in percentages are:
- **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** = 59% or below

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, solid 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 an understanding of the basics but tried
- **F:** did not demonstrate effort or understanding of basics, incomplete

Grading Criteria

In-class participation (see description below)	**5%**
Video course work (includes exercises, quizzes, and video project)	**60%**
Web/Design course work (includes exercises, quizzes and portfolio project)	**20%**
Final project (includes final web page design and story/package integration)	**15%**

In-class participation is your contribution within the scope of each class period, including arriving to class on time, asking questions, offering insights during class discussions, sharing feedback with peers, and general engagement with the daily material. The quality of your participation will be assigned a letter grade based on the guidelines above at the end of the course. You may check in with your instructor at any time during the course for individual feedback about the quality of your participation.

Exercises and quizzes are assigned to familiarize you with skills needed to complete the projects and are graded on completion and execution quality. Engagement with the exercises and quizzes will prepare you to achieve better work on your projects.

The video & web projects are assigned for you to demonstrate a mastery of the skills and storytelling techniques learned in class and with the exercises.

The **final project** is an integrated package delivered via text, design and video and housed on your portfolio website. The package must contain integrated elements (story text, video and any additional elements you may choose).

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. 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.

Coursework

Exercises:
- **Music video exercise**
- **Interview exercises**
- **Scavenger hunt exercise**
- **HTML and CSS exercises**
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One proposal
- **Final project proposal**

Three projects
- **Final video project**
- **Portfolio project**
- **Final project package**

Class Schedule

Week 1
orientation to the course, tools, final project overview
(assign final project idea sheet)

Week 2 and Week 3
basic understanding of FiLMiC Pro and practice shooting
(assignment: Music video exercise)

Weeks 4 and 5
A-roll shooting and editing
(assignment: Interview exercises – video & audio)

Weeks 5 and 6
B-roll shooting and editing
(assignment: Scavenger hunt exercise)

Weeks 7 through 10
putting together final video and related editing techniques
(assignment: Final Video assignment)

Week 11
design basics and DIY design programs

Week 12
HTML and CSS
(assignment: basic coding exercises)

Week 13
Wordpress
(assignment: portfolio project)

Week 14
WordPress

Weeks 15 and 16
Final project lab work
(assignment: final project)

Final Presentations—Monday, April 27 at 4:00 p.m. (during the final exam time).