



Foundations of Interactive Media

MEJO 187.3 | Associate Professor Laura Ruel | Hussman School of Journalism and Media | UNC Chapel Hill | Spring 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Multimedia authoring tools provide communicators with some of the most powerful and effective storytelling options available. Understanding these tools is essential for anyone who plans a successful career in the media industry. However, the ability to resourcefully and proficiently use these tools is an even greater asset. The goal of this class, therefore, is to help you gain knowledge of both these aspects. You will examine and understand the value of interactive media in the journalism and media industries and begin to develop the skills to execute your ideas. This course teaches introductory web design and development, with a focus on interactive storytelling for the mass communication industry. Concepts include UI/UX design and prototyping, HTML, CSS, responsive design, JavaScript, jQuery, and data visualization.

CLASSROOM AND MEETING TIME

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7:45 pm, Carroll 60

INSTRUCTOR

Associate Professor Laura Ruel
212 Carroll Hall
lruel@unc.edu
919-448-8864

REQUIRED SUPPLIES

Web Domain and Hosting

You will need to purchase a website domain (approximately \$10) and website hosting (approximately \$7/month for one year). We will discuss this process in class. If you already have a domain name and hosting service, that's fine, but please let me know at the beginning of the semester so that I can get a tally of students with pre existing accounts.

Digital Access

LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com) is a software training and tutorial video library that is now offered free to UNC students. Follow the instructions at the link below to access **LinkedIn Learning** with your onyen:

<https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>

You will need access to these learning tools to complete readings/viewings and to learn additional skills not covered during class. In addition to LinkedIn Learning, YouTube videos and can be helpful resources to find out the specifics of markup and programming issues. To review and solidify your understanding of markup languages (HTML, CSS) and the programming language JavaScript you also will need access to the free [W3Schools tutorials](#). Additionally, we will use [JS Bin](#) for HTML, CSS and JavaScript exercises. It is free and provides a great way to experiment with your code before deployment, More about this will be discussed in class.

Software

Some software programs are required for this course, including Adobe Experience Design (XD). All of the programs you need will be available on the lab computers. If you wish to have Adobe XD on your personal computer, your best option is to sign up for an Adobe Creative Cloud (CC) account and install the XD app from the cloud. An Adobe CC account is free for UNC students at adobe.unc.edu. It includes a host of terrific programs that you may want to use in your projects (e.g., Photoshop, Illustrator). I highly recommend that you take advantage of this free resource.

Adobe software can also be purchased through the UNC Ram Shop online or in store. Contact: (919) 962-2422 or ramshop@email.unc.edu. Software programs are nonrefundable, so be sure you are buying what you want.

Textbooks

There are no required textbooks, but you may find the following resources helpful:

Don't Make Me Think! A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability
Steve Krug
New Riders Pub. (2006)
ISBN-13: 9780321965516

HTML & CSS: Design and Build Websites
Jon Duckett
John Wiley & Sons (2011)
ISBN-13: 978-1118008188

JavaScript & jQuery: Interactive Front-end Web Development
Jon Duckett
John Wiley & Sons (2014)
ISBN-13: 978-1118531648

ATTENDANCE

This course is demanding. Each session will teach skills that you will need to proceed with your assignments, and missing a class will leave you behind. Therefore, attendance is required, participation is expected and deadlines are absolute.

Similar to having personal time off (PTO) at work, you will be allotted ONE 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 2 percent deduction (e.g., a 91 average becomes an 88 average when there is a second unexcused 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 practice new skills. Students who choose to miss class are responsible for understanding the topics taught that day.

Additionally, you are expected to arrive to class on time. If you will be late or must leave early, please let me know as soon as possible. Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early without a valid reason will count as an absence.

INDEPENDENT ONLINE RESEARCH

To teach you the necessary text markup languages and programs to create your projects, 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 or every use of a markup language 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 about a technical or software-related question (like "how do I..." or "... isn't working"), it is expected that you will research your question online first. Invest some time looking at tutorials, forums, videos 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.**

COURSE FORMAT

This course will consist of four interactive media projects and a student presentation on an interactive document or product; quizzes, assignments, critiques and class discussions on interactive media concepts..

COURSE PROGRESSION

- **Part I:** User Experience: Content Strategy, Information Architecture, User Interface, Design
- **Part II:** HTML & CSS
- **Part III:** Content Management Systems
- **Part IV:** JavaScript

CLASS MEETINGS

Most class sessions will consist of two parts: 1) lecture/demonstration, and 2) lab time for working on your current assignment. Do not plan on finishing your assignments during our time in class; to meet expectations and produce good work, you should plan to spend a generous amount of time outside of class on readings, tutorials and projects. You will get out of this course what you put into it. You are expected to come to every class on time, interact with your classmates and the instructor, and work hard.

Once class has started, please do NOT check your cell phone or browse non-course related websites. This distracts your fellow students and your instructor. Failure to adhere to the "no phone" policy will lower a student's participation grade.

Also, please be aware that you will be working in a computer lab filled with expensive equipment. Therefore drinks and food are not allowed on desks next to computers.

ASSIGNMENTS

Projects

There will be four main projects during this course:

Project 1 - create a website mockup using Adobe XD

Project 2 - design and develop your first web app, using HTML and CSS.

Project 3 - create your own personal portfolio website using WordPress.

Project 4 - create an interactive dashboard using HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

Additional information about all of these projects will be provided during class.

in-class Exercises and Quizzes

In-class exercises will cover the reading/viewing assignments and material pertaining to the particular week's lessons. There may also be a couple unannounced quizzes on reading assignments and class discussion. If you keep up with the reading assignments and pay attention in class, the quizzes should be easy to complete.

Website Critique

You will be asked to critique and lead a discussion about a professional multimedia project of your choosing for the class. More specifics about the requirements of this presentation and the accompanying paper will be provided during class.

Assessment

Your success in this course will be determined by participation as well as completion and effort on assignments. There will be smaller exercises, quizzes and four main projects throughout the semester.

Finally, it is crucial that you take part in critiques and informal class discussions. Learning comes through communicating and teaching others. To facilitate this process, each class will begin with a brief, student-led review of the material we discussed in the previous session. Each student will lead at least one review during the course of the semester, and slots will be assigned at random. This will be part of your

participation grade. Attendance, of course, plays into this; if you are absent without excuse and your number comes up for leading the next class review, you'll be unable to contribute.

Deadlines

Please note that deadlines are absolute. Extensions will only be granted because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, etc.), and you must notify me as soon as you are aware of the problem. Your workload -- either in this class or in combination with others -- is not an extenuating circumstance.

Unexcused failure to submit your work by the deadline will result in a five-point (5) deduction for the first 24-hour period, followed by 10-point deductions for each day thereafter.

Feedback

Your projects will be graded and feedback will be provided in two ways. When each project is complete, we will have a peer review session during that day's class. Come prepared to present your project to your classmates. More details about peer feedback will be provided in class.

In addition, you will receive either written or video assessment of your projects by me. I will focus my feedback on how you work can improve for your next project.

Final Exam Period

Please note that while there is no final exam in this class, per se, we are required to meet during the scheduled final exam period. We will use that time to view the final projects, offer feedback, and discuss what we've learned over the course of the semester. Consider it your exit interview.

GRADE TALLY

ITEM	% OF GRADE
Project 1	15
Project 2	15
Project 3	15
Project 4	20
Website critique	15
Exercises, quizzes	10
Engagement, Participation, Peer reviews	10

LETTER GRADE CONVERSION

GRADE	PERCENT
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM

It is expected that each student in this course will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the UNC honor code. All academic work should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity 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 talk with me or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle. You may also speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

In this course, it is acceptable to use coding resources (such as tutorials and libraries) and some source code from sites like GitHub. But the software license must allow for the usage, and the source should be credited, linked and commented in your code and credited visibly on the site, either in the footer or a credits page. The source code should merely serve as a launch pad for your own, original work; it should not be copied wholesale. Information about software licensing is readily available in most sites that provide coding resources.

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, ask for help as soon as you realize you need it – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness. Don't be afraid to admit that you need extra guidance. Web design and

development can be daunting, and some of the core concepts can be difficult to grasp at first glance. Before long they will be second nature to you.

DIVERSITY

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media adopted Diversity and Inclusion Mission and Vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals - <http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

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 ACCOMODATIONS

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 Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.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 "Professional values and competencies" listed below.

- 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.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE - SPRING 2020

NOTE: Schedule is subject to change. For most up-to-date readings, assignments, calendar and deadlines see: tinyurl.com/ruel187

WEEK 1 - Introduction and UI/UX Basics

WEEK 2 - Web Design

WEEK 3 - Layout and Grid Basics

WEEK 4 - Usability

PROJECT 1 - UI/UX Design - DUE

WEEK 5 - HTML

WEEK 6 - HTML and CSS

WEEK 7 - CSS Grid and FlexBox

WEEK 8 - More HTML, CSS Grid

PROJECT 2 - Website - DUE

WEEK 9 - WordPress

WEEK 10 - Plugins and Themes

PROJECT 3 - Portfolio - DUE

WEEK 11 - JavaScript Parts 1 & 2

WEEK 12 - JavaScript Parts 3 & 4

WEEK 13 - jQuery, Google Charts and Interactive Infographics

WEEK 14 - Final Project Development

WEEK 15 - Publish

PROJECT 4 - Interactive Dashboard - DUE LAST DAY OF CLASS

FINAL EXAM - Friday, December 1 at 7:00 pm