

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Syllabus: go.unc.edu/782Fall20 Materials: go.unc.edu/782materials Sakai: <https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site792fall20>



Introduction

Welcome to Fall 2020 semester! Telling stories is the basis of what we do as communicators. Learning how to do this well requires a thorough understanding of the tools available and the strengths and weaknesses of each one. The objective of this course is to introduce you to the theories and practices of digital content creation. We will read and view work that address each of these presentation methods. You will be expected to gain a critical understanding of the value of each one.

Recognition of the benefits and drawbacks of the written word, photography, audio, video, animated graphics, interactive applications, virtual reality and augmented reality will be addressed in class discussions and assigned projects. You will acquire knowledge about how to choose presentation methods based on a project's audience and communication goals. You also will learn how to apply this knowledge by creating a digital storytelling final project.

The essentials

- **Class time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:45 to 6:30 p.m.
- **Class location:** go.unc.edu/782class password for class: MEJO782
- **Instructor:** Associate Professor Laura Ruel, 919-448-8864, lruel@unc.edu
- **Office hours:** Wednesdays from 9:30-11 am and by appointment
- **Office location:** go.unc.edu/ruel password for office hours: UNC

Required items

Smartphone: There are no textbooks for this course. Readings and viewings and other media will be provided through links on the Class Materials page. However, you **will** be using a smartphone to record audio and video. If this proposes a problem, please contact Stephanie Brown in the Hussman School's Park Library to discuss possible alternatives.

Required Digital Access

LinkedIn Learning

Follow the instructions here to access LinkedIn Learning with your onyen. <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>

Adobe Premiere

Follow the instructions here to create an Adobe ID and install the required software for free. You will need to install Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and Premiere: <http://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/>

Although 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. Be sure to take this into account when planning your projects.

YouTube or Vimeo account

You must use or create an account to publish your videos for this course. A YouTube account is included with any Gmail account, and there is no storage limit on YouTube accounts. A Vimeo account is free to create, but free accounts have restrictions on the total GB you can upload each week. Publishing your work on YouTube is easy and free, but Vimeo can have a more professional reputation.

Other required* items

***NOTE: It is important that you DO NOT purchase any of these supplies until a few weeks into the semester. More detail will be provided during the first weeks of class.**

FILMiCPro 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 may need to purchase these products or demonstrate that you have a personal website. Cost for these items is approximately \$20-\$30 for your first year. More details will be provided in class.

Smartphone adapter

If you will be using an iPhone 7 or higher, you also need a 3.5 mm headphone jack adapter (usually included with your iPhone purchase) to be able to use the lavalier microphone.



Headphones

Must have a standard mini jack (1/8"). Any **wired** (non-Bluetooth / not wireless) headphones you might use with your phone will work. [Here is a recommended option](#), although standard earbuds with a mini jack also will work.

Wired lavalier microphone with headphone monitoring

A lavalier 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 approximately \$25. [Additional microphone option here](#).

Tripod with smartphone mount

You will need to purchase a tripod and mount for your phone. Cost: About \$20. 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 \(2TB\).](#)

Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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 points under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

Description

This course will introduce you to the basics of digital storytelling and help you develop some expertise in their application.

By reading, viewing and discussing the writings and works of media professionals, journalists, artists, developers, photographers, usability experts, graphic designers, new technology experts, educators and researchers you will deepen your appreciation for each distinct media form. You will learn how and when to utilize media and discern the best presentation options for storytelling to your intended audience.

Through simple exercises and peer reviews, you will acquire some hands-on knowledge about a number of these media forms. You will apply these skills to develop a professional, published group project on an important, relevant topic by the end of the semester.

Important policies

Simply put, deadlines are absolute. All assignments are due as stated on the course calendar (see Class Materials and Calendar). **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

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.

This is a graduate-level class, so it is also expected that students are available to attend all classes. As the semester progresses, it may be possible to present some relevant information in a recorded, asynchronous class format. However, as a graduate-level course, class time will be important for collaboration, peer interaction and project planning. Lack of attendance and engagement with the material will affect your course grade.

Grading

You are graded according to the highest professional standards. Your assignments will be evaluated according to the rubrics distributed with assignments. Grades are described below:

- **H** High Pass - clear excellence, nearly perfect in execution for a graduate-level student
- **P** Pass - entirely satisfactory graduate-level work
- **L** Low Pass - inadequate work, aspects of the assignment may be missing or incomplete
- **F** Fail

Grading components

Your overall grade for this course will be based on the following components. Specifics for each element will be distributed at the time of the assignment.

- **Participation:** 10% of the final grade
- **Exercises:** 40% of the final grade
- **Final project:** 50% of the final grade

During the semester, you will be assigned **multiple exercises** to develop your skills. Completion of each of these exercises to the best of your abilities will result in a passing grade. Your effort will be considered when grading exercises. Your final project will be graded to professional standards, and quality as well as effort will be considered.

Grading criteria

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager would have for a project undertaken by a digital storyteller. Regardless of your skill level, all of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards:

- completed according to the assignment specifications.
- completed on time.
- free of typographical, grammatical and mechanical errors.
- completed so as to evidence a clear grasp of digital production standards.

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 graduate 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 2017-2020 Undergraduate Bulletin at <http://catalog.unc.edu/about/introduction/>. In addition, the Hussman School of Journalism and Media also has its own policy that can be found here: <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.

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 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.

Semester topics

The outline below provides a rough idea of class topics by week. Based on the availability of guest speakers, topics and exercises are subject to change. For links to online readings, viewings, presentations, assignments and deadlines, see the **Materials and calendar** section of the class Sakai site.

Week of August 9

- Welcome
- Ideation, design thinking
- Developing themes for digital stories
- Understanding the value of media forms

Week of August 16

- The future of storytelling
- How advancements in technologies affect storytelling
- Exercise: Interactive photograph

Week of August 23

- How we understand visual stories.
- The basics of graphic design
- Exercise: Storytelling graphic

Week of August 30

- Data visualization
- How to create interactive stories with numbers
- Guest speaker: Ryan Thornburg, data journalist
- Exercise: Data visualization

Week of September 6

- Video and audio storytelling
- Guest speaker: Chad Stevens, documentary filmmaker

Week of September 13

- Audio storytelling
- Exercise: developing a narrative audio story

Week of September 20

- Shooting video and working with photographs
- Exercise: record and edit a photo/video story.

Week of September 27

- Packaging story elements to unfold in a single narrative
- Web design trends to facilitate the narrative.
- Exercise: build a website

Week of October 4

- Deciding on final project story
- Creating final project package teams
- Deciding your strengths
- Development of roles, division of labor

Week of October 11

- Setting team deadlines
- Creating a backout schedule for final package
- Determining ways to collaborate with your team

Week of October 18

- Team final project work

Week of October 25

- Team final project work

Week of November 1

- Team final project work

Week of November 8

- Team final project work

Week of November 15

- Team final project work

Final project presentations: Saturday, November 21 at 4 pm