J588 Storytelling with Emerging Technologies

Professor: Steven King, Assistant Professor of Interactive Media
UNC School of Media and Journalism
Reese Innovation Lab, 142 E. Franklin St.

Class: Online Monday from 2:00 - 3:15 pm
Office Hours: Wednesdays from 2-3 or by appointment.
Office: Reese Innovation Lab at 142 E. Franklin St.
Course Website: Sakai
Twitter: @steven_king | GitHub: steven-king
Phone: 919-360-8907

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to storytelling with emerging technologies used in storytelling in Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, 360 Video, robots, AI and other new technologies. Students will have the opportunity to learn and work with the latest VR hardware.

Student will learn

        Media Product Design Concepts (Human Centered Design)

        How Virtual Reality Works with the brain

        What makes a good VR and AR Experience

        Storytelling in both 360 video, AR and VR.

        Technical skills to produce storytelling including drones and robots

Producing effective interactive media projects requires extensive and detailed skill sets. This class will teach skills in shooting and editing drone video, 360 video, creating virtual environments in Unity, file generations for multiple platforms and build on critical, ethical and journalistic decision-making to generate quality interactive storytelling.

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 "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.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Assignments

Attendance is required, participation is expected and deadlines are absolute even during COVID.

University Policy:

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1.   Authorized University activities

2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the Office of the Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).

Class Policy:

Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments. Please provide your approach on the course syllabus.

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for a University approved absence.

(source: http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/)

To succeed in this class you must attend and participate in the discussion and hands-on, in-class assignments. Each in-class assignment or quiz is worth 20 points and can only be completed during class and will not be turned at a later date. You are allowed one un-excused absence. Any other missed class assignments with receive a 0 grade.

During COVID, you have the option of attending remotely via Zoom for the in-person sessions. You are required to wear a mask during class when in-person.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED unless special arrangements are made prior to the due date. Major projects will be due at 11:59 p.m. Deadlines are vital to success in this industry and you are expected to make deadline.

Honor Code and Plagiarism

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 C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

It is acceptable to use coding resources such as tutorials, libraries and **some** source code on sites like GitHub but the software license must allow for the usage and the **code should be credited**, linked and commented in your source code and credited visibly on the site either in the footer or a credits page.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at safe.unc.edu) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/.

Diversity

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions. More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on prohibiting harassment and discrimination. In summary, 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. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies.

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to contact me. 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.

Special Accommodations

The University of North Carolina at 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 barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.
Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: https://ars.unc.edu or email ars@unc.edu. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at https://accessibility.unc.edu/

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: https://caps.unc.edu/ or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Mask Use

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me – as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/.

Grading Policy and Scale

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager would have for a project undertaken by a multimedia designers, developer or product manager and you are expected to produce professional work. All of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards to be considered for a grade of Pass
The project must be:

- 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 interactive development standards and design concepts.

When appropriate your multimedia work also will be evaluated for:

- consumer value

- architecture of information presentation

- aesthetic design choices

- creativity and innovation

RESOURCES, SOFTWARE AND ASSETS

Text Book

The Signals are Talking by Amy Webb

Access to Netflix

We will be using some videos found on Netflix as required readings (watching)

There will be outside readings and tutorials as assigned.

Software

We will use many different applications and will try to use free or open source applications whenever possible. This includes:

Unity 3D and and other software.

3D Assets

During the VR development you can use free 3D Assets but many students in the past have choose to purchase assets for their projects through various stores. This will save you time and make your projects more professional. These are optional but I suggest budgeting $50-$75 for assets.

ASSIGNMENTS

This class follows a project-driven approach with several technology-driven project that build to one major project (Final) that demonstrate the skills taught in the class.

Assignments and Quizzes

Exercises will cover the reading assignments and issues pertaining to the particular day's lessons. You will be able to use your notes and textbook to complete the exercises, so be sure to bring them to class everyday.

Emerging Tech Research Presentation

Graduate students will complete a research assignment to finding a new and emerging technology that could have storytelling potential. Each graduate student will present a 15-20 minute presentation to the class along with an 8-10 page written research paper complete with images, links and videos of the technology. It should be sited properly.

Final Project

The final project should demonstrate a comprehensive menu interactive media production skills and VR or AR storytelling commensurate with what you learned during this course. The same grading criteria used for other assignments submitted during the semester will be used when evaluating your final project.Think of it as your final exam. Additional information about required elements will be provided during class.

Graduate Student Research Paper

Students receiving graduate level credit for this class will produce a research paper that discusses the application of an emerging technology in student's field or area of study. For example, graduate students in the past have written about the use and impacts of VR in middle school classrooms, the use of drones in emergency response situations and the potential of AR for journalist storytelling. This will be graded on the H,P,L,F scale.

Grading

Assignments	% of Grade
In Class Assignments and quizzes (~5)	20%
360 Video, VR and AR Projects	30%
Midterm Exam	10%
Emerging Tech Research Presentation	10%
Final Project	20%
Final Exam	10%
Total	**100%**

Under Graduate Grading	Grade
A	>=94%
A-	90-93%
B +	87-89%
B	85-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%
D-	60-63%
F	<=59%

Graduate Grading

H	High Pass - Clear Excellence
P	Pass - Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work
L	Low Pass - Inadequate Graduate Work
F	Fail

Schedule

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Intro, Human Centered Design, Pixar	Watch Pixar Documentary
2	Intro to AI and NLP (chatbots)	Build a Chatbot
3	AI, Computer Vision and Machine Learning	Design an AI app concept
4	Intro to Augmented and Mixed Reality	Build AR experience
5	Intro to VR	Experiment with VR
6	VR Scenes	VR Project: Scene
7	VR Character Development	VR Project: Character
8	VR Sound and Audio and Midterm Exam	VR Project Sound Design
9	Social VR	Experiment with Social VR Platforms
10	Alt Space Experience	
11	Business of Emerging Tech	VR Project 1 Finalize
12	Emerging Tech Projects	
13	Final Project Planning	Final Project Proposal and Storyboard
14	Final Project Development	Work on Final Project
15	Final Project Development	Work on Final Project
16	Presentation and Demo of Final Projects	Turn In Final Project
FE	Final Exam	**Dec 3 Friday 4:00pm**

*Schedule is a guid and a goal for the class but is subject to change based on how quickly the class understands the material, weather and other factors.