

PHOTOJOURNALISM PROJECTS JOMC 681



I could look at this sweet face for a thousand years and it wouldn't be enough. Those cheeks - still so kissable even now that he's lost all his baby fat - that sweet birthmark on his nose, those lashes and the beautiful, ~~the~~ smiling blue eyes behind them. I was made to be this boy's mommy and I'm going to fight like hell to get as many years as I can ~~stay~~ staring at this beautiful boy.

Alex Korman

“There were two things I wanted to do.
I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected.
I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated.”
-Lewis Hine

Welcome to MJ 681 Photojournalism Projects! It is a privilege to share people's lives and tell their stories. With this privilege comes a responsibility for fairness, accuracy, commitment and hard work.

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Required Texts:
*An excellent
documentary photo or
video book of your
choice. Recommended:
Witness in our Time, Ken
Light.*

Office Hours:
TTH 2-3 or by
appointment

In MEJO 681 we will seek to strengthen your foundation of skills, and help you leverage the power of photojournalism to engage and affect your community.

Many photographs and videos simply state fact as the photographer recorded it. In this class we will seek to create visual *ideas* – that tell stories to educate and reach into the social conscience. Not every story uncovers social problems, however. Some reveal people and things that are societal gems.

Effective documentary storytelling is impossible without a commitment by the photographer to spend the time to get under the surface. Genuine life moments are KEY. The “quick-hit” approach, projecting an incomplete and stereotypical understanding of a given subject, is sadly prevalent in today’s media. The antidote is time and an unselfish commitment to truth – and this is what it will take to succeed in this class.



Steven Mitchell

LONG-TERM PHOTO ESSAY / SHORT DOCUMENTARY FILM

This will be an experience in [Slow Journalism](#). The heart and soul of this class will be a longterm photographic essay or documentary video. This project will involve: Research, Access, Storytelling and Final Presentation. Ask yourself: “What is the best media to tell the story?” The key is INTENTION.

To quote a recent Mother Jones article, *This Is What’s Missing From Journalism*

Right Now, “the most important ingredient in investigative reporting is not brilliance, writing flair, or deep familiarity with the subject (though those all help). It’s something much simpler—time.” And, unlike any other course you’ve had in our program, you have time. Make the most of it.

Weekly shoots: We will be turning in weekly shoots worth 50 points each. You will turn in a folder of your entire shoot that must total at least 500 frames each week or equivalent video footage - scenes, interviews, etc. We will critique your approach, style, visual variety and how well you worked each situation. You will be allowed one mulligan for the entire semester. After that, you need to bring work and show serious progress every week.

BEYOND THE BOX | Early in the semester, I may give you creative, conceptual short assignments or shoot outs. Take risks!

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EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to push beyond your comfort zone and exceed expectations. Every time you pick up your camera is an opportunity. Treat it as such. My goal is to create an environment in which you can realize your potential. You have to take action. Take ownership of your learning.

Expectations:

- 1) I expect images, video and audio that is technically advanced. By this point your technical skills should be solid. I expect images to be in focus (with rare exception), exposed well and toned correctly. I also expect excellent captions on stills.
- 2) I expect stories to communicate and connect beyond the literal.
- 3) I expect you to be striving to make images and video that have exceptional MOMENT, LIGHT, and COMPOSITION. I expect your stories to have strong NARRATIVE ARC, FLOW, TRANSITIONS and most importantly, excellent EDITING.
- 4) I expect you to think creatively and independently when approaching any assignment/project.
- 5) I expect professionalism in all areas including field work, ethics, respectful and courteous relationships with your characters and your classmates, deadlines, classwork and caption writing.
- 6) I expect your best effort on all work, and I expect you to **spend the time** to be excellent.



Carolyn Van Houten

GRADE DETERMINATION

Assignments and/or shoots are due at the very minute class begins!

Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.

The critical elements that must be included in any assignment: Are you pushing yourself? Are you spending the time? Does this communicate to the viewer?

-Content (story significance, access, character(s), concept/plan, execution, narrative/script, flow, storytelling, edit, captions)

-Aesthetic (creativity, motion, mood, composition, light, graphics, color)

-Technical (execution, sound, exposure, polish, presentation)

As noted, work will be due every week on Monday. You will be allowed one mulligan for the entire semester.

Grade Breakdown:

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

Final Doc Project - 300

Weekly shoots – 400 (worth 50 points each)

Proposal & Roadmap - 100

Beyond the Box Assigns – 200

Participation – 100

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 = 60-69%

F = less than 60%

FINAL EXAM – PATLUCK

The final project will count instead of a final exam, but the class will meet for a screening and pot luck with other classes on Thursday December 6, at 5:30pm.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students will lead one class in the semester. I will work with you to determine a topic that dovetails coursework and your interests.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

You will need a digital 35mm HD/SLR camera with manual controls and interchangeable lenses. Although you can rent through the school, you **MUST** start acquiring your own gear if you plan to survive out there.

You will need buy your own CF or SD cards - as large as possible.

You need two hard drives, one is for is for backup. I suggest you get at least 2TB drives.

EXCUSES

Be prepared for challenges, and plan your time well. You can expect cancellations. If you wait until the last minute and your story cancels, this is usually avoidable by starting early and building in time to re-schedule.

You will soon be a professional, and in the professional world, there are no excuses. Learning to take a proactive approach to planning and problem solving is an important part of this class, and your future career.

Because this class is being conducted during a pandemic, we will face even greater challenges. Prioritize your and others safety. We will all have to be flexible.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The current state of our profession offers both unprecedented opportunity and challenge. To achieve your goals will require more of your mind, body and spirit than you imagine at this point. 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. Critique is the completion of your assignment. You will be allowed 2 absences; after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE.

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, please 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

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.

PHOTO NIGHT

As in all photo classes, PhotoNight attendance is required.



Samkit Shah

“The only thing to do is to get it right.
The only way to get it right is to keep asking yourself if it is.”
– Kerry Tremain

HOW DO YOU SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS?

Attitude and communication is key. Do not make excuses, take responsibility for your work. Admit errors. Have a positive attitude, even when it is seemingly difficult or mundane. Bury your pride. Now is the time to learn, and much learning occurs in difficult times. Manage your resources - your money and your time. Be on time. Participate and contribute honestly in critiques. Help each other!

PHONE AND TEXTING POLICY: This is a respect issue. I respect you, and I expect respect in return. If I find what you are doing distracting, then it is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to ask you to leave class. Simply, disconnect from your phone and email and connect with your team!

Honor Code:

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 Charlie Tuggle, or you may 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's 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 illness.

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/>

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 last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

