

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 Hussman School of Journalism and Media. My goal is to introduce you to some of the tools and skills needed to engage in multimedia storytelling in online environments. I 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**. I 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.

Classroom and meeting time

12:30 - 1:45 pm M/W | CA 268 - Class will be held via Zoom if necessary at the link provided on Sakai

Instructor

Walker Winslow | he/him

wwinslow@unc.edu

Virtual Office Hours By Appointment Only - Monday from 9:30 to 11:00 AM | Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:00 AM

Required Supplies

There are no textbooks for this class, but there are required purchases. Be aware that financial aid funds can be used for these items. If you believe you will have a challenge with these purchases, please contact Stephanie Brown (swbrown@unc.edu), the director of the Hussman School's Park Library.

You should not purchase these items until directed. NOTE: *If you already have these products, you may reuse them for this class. Please inform the instructor if this is the case.*

Your required supplies include:

Smartphone and Dongle

For your video assignments, you will record with your smartphone. Please let the instructor know if you do not own a smartphone. **NOTE:** If you will be using an iPhone 7 or higher, you also need a 3.5 mm headphone jack adapter 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

A lavalier will be needed for the best audio quality. Here is the link to an option on Amazon: [Lavalier microphone](#). [Additional microphone option here](#).

Another option for recording audio is with a Shotgun microphone one option is listed [here](#).

Tripod with smartphone mount

You will need to purchase a tripod and mount for your phone - about \$20. You may find one option linked [here](#) and another option [here](#).



Domain name & hosting space.

You will need to purchase this product for the web portion of this class for approximately \$20-\$30 for your first year. More details will be provided in class. **Also, note that it is your responsibility to cancel this service once the course is complete.**

Equipment guides

For more information and tutorials related to the 121 class equipment, please see these tutorials on the Park Library website: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/mejo-equipment-room/videos>

Recommended Supplies

USB external hard drive/flash drive

Specs: Minimum 64GB flash drive, must be USB 3.0 for fastest file transfer speeds. *Recommended* investing in a larger external hard drive to back up 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 \(128GB\).](#)

[External Solid State Drive 500 GB](#)

FiLMiCPro app: We recommend the purchase of the app FiLMiC Pro. FiLMiC Pro 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/>

Required Digital Access

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/>

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.

I will also ask you to create a free account with Flourish or Tableau for the section of the course on graphics and data visualizations. You do not need to create the account now and more instructions will be provided later on in the course.

Course Goals and Accreditation

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.

No single course could give you all 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.

Late Assignments

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

This course will combine in-class demonstrations with online tutorials and videos to teach you the necessary software tools to create your stories. As beginners, questions and technical problems will inevitably 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, a 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 and Homework (see description below)	15%
Video course work (includes exercises and video project)	35%
Web/Design course work (includes exercises and portfolio project)	25%
Final project (includes final web page design and story/package integration)	25%

In-class participation is your contribution within the scope of each class period, including arriving to live or online class meetings on time, asking questions, offering insights during class discussions, sharing feedback with peers, and general engagement with the 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.

Attendance - From the UNC Academic Catalog

Regular class attendance is a student obligation. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for University Approved Absences.

Homework will be small assignments given to strengthen knowledge of and familiarity with the material covered in the lecture. Homework will be grouped with the class participation grade.

Exercises are assigned to familiarize you with the materials and knowledge needed to complete the projects and are graded on completion and execution quality. Engagement with the exercises 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. The package must contain integrated elements (story text, video, graphics, 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 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.

Assignments:

This class plan has four assignments and three projects that are worth more. The final project can contain a re-edited version of the final video (optional).

- **Radio cut exercise - Due Feb. 3** (introduces a script and how to cut together a-roll audio) 10%
- **Truth, Lies, and Short Story exercise - Due Feb. 17** (introduces a-roll and b-roll) 5%
- **Data Visualization exercise - Due April 21** (students use graphs and charts to convey story) 10%

One proposal

Final project proposal - Due Feb. 24 (students brainstorm the story they would like to work on for the final project) 5%

Three projects

- **Final video project - Due March 10** (2-3 min story that follows a narrative arc) 20%
- **Portfolio project - Due April 7** (done in WordPress with custom CSS and DYI graphics) 15%
- **Final project package - Due Final Exam Date** (how well did the student use text, video, DYI graphics, and CSS to customize a story page): 20%

Date	Topic	Assignment
1/9	Introduction to Storytelling	
1/16	Example Audio Stories	
1/23	Audio Equipment and Technical Elements	
1/30	Video Storytelling	Radio Cut Due 2/3
2/6	Basic Framing	
2/15	Framing and Lighting	TLSS Due 2/17
2/20	Cuts/Lighting/B-roll	Project Proposal Due 2/24
2/27	Editing	
3/6	Review before Spring Break	Video Project Due 3/10
3/20	Storytelling through Web Design	
3/27	CSS and Basic Coding	
4/3	CSS Continued and Examples of Creative Portfolios	Portfolio Project Due 4/7
4/10	Telling Stories with Data	
4/17	Elements of good Data Viz.	Data Viz. Due 4/21
4/24	Review for final projects	