

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL STORYTELLING

MEJO 121-4 | Tu–Th 9:30-10:45 am | 268 CA | UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media | Fall 2023

Welcome to this introductory media technology skills class at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Our simple goals are to introduce you to some of the tools and skills needed to engage in multimedia storytelling in online environments. We 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. We 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.

INSTRUCTOR

Naz Knudsen (She/Her) | nknudsen@email.unc.edu

Office: CA 389 | [Virtual Office Link](#)

Office Hours: By appointment on Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 pm and Wednesdays 11:00 am-12:00 pm

INSTRUCTION MODE

This course is in-person. Students will have access to recordings of the presentations. If the class cannot meet in person, the class will continue online via Zoom.

REQUIRED MATERIAL

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, you may be able to borrow some equipment from school. Your required supplies include:

Smartphone

For your video assignments, you will record with your smartphone. Please let the instructor know if you do not own a smartphone.

Headphone Adapter



NOTE: 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 and pictured at left) to be able to use the lavalier microphones

Wired Lavalier Microphone

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 less than \$25.

Tripod with smartphone mount

You will need to purchase a tripod and mount for your phone. Cost: About \$30. Here are a couple of examples: [60 inch Tripod with Phone Mount](#)(with pan/tilt handle), [64 inch Tripod and Selfie Stick with Phone Mount](#) (no handle) IF you have access to a regular camera tripod you can purchase a [Phone Mount](#) only.



Web Hosting & Domain Name

You will need to purchase these products for the Web portion of this class for approximately \$30-\$40 for your first year. More details will be provided in class. 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. (After this course, it is your responsibility to cancel this service.)

REQUIRED DIGITAL ACCESS

Adobe Premiere Pro

Follow the instructions here to create an Adobe ID with your UNC email and install the required software for free: <http://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/> - This process may take a few days; you may need to contact IT and since the campus IT is busy at the beginning of the semester, I strongly encourage you to get access to the software during the first week of classes.

YouTube or Vimeo Account

You must use an account to publish your videos for this course. (You will submit the video assignments as a link not as a file.) 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.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES & ACCESS

USB External Hard Drive / Flash Drive

Specs: Minimum 64GB, must be USB 3.0 or USB-C for fast file transfer speeds. It is recommended that you invest in a larger external hard drive to store your video files and projects. Additionally, you are encouraged to use an external drive to back up all files for this course and others. Editing directly from your laptop risks running into editing issues such as the app running slow and clunky. Hard Drive examples:

[Click here for a link to a recommended external hard drive \(1TB\).](#)

IF your laptop has only USB-C port, you will need an adaptor to use a USB external drive. Here is an option: [USB C to USB Adapter](#)

LinkedIn Learning

Use your onyen to access LinkedIn Learning: <https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/>

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. 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.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In particular, we focus on the last competency listed, regarding the application of tools and technologies.

- You will become familiar with the functions and limits of the equipment and software introduced in class.
- You will develop an understanding of how to evaluate technical quality and story flow.
- You will be able to plan and execute a short, clean, logically flowing video product.
- You will be able to understand the tools needed to create a graphic story
- You will be able to use a variety of strategies and tools to create a standards-based website.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

To teach you the necessary software tools to create your stories, 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 impossible to cover every detail of a tool through in-class demos. Projects will require learning new things independently, outside of direct instruction. This is especially important about coding and WordPress. Searching and finding specific codes and troubleshooting are part of the learning experience. Please review the presentation documents, recorded class videos, and invest some time researching your question online before asking for help. In addition to asking your question, share what you learned during your research, a description of your problem, and any relevant screenshots. On the other hand, after spending a couple of hours

on a technical problem, please take a break and ask for my help before investing more time on the issue.

ATTENDANCE

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).

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/>)

Class Policy

It is important to attend the class meetings to learn the weekly topics by asking questions, engaging in discussions, and participating in class activities. You are allowed TWO Unexcused absences.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICIES

Late Assignments

Each student receives **one no-penalty late submission pass**, up to one week late. Any other late assignments are subject to 20% deduction of the grade. Late assignments won't receive comprehensive feedback.

Assignments will not be accepted after three weeks past the due date. (This does not include University-excused absences and medical circumstances.)

Explanation Of Creative Work Assessment

Your grade will be based on objective and subjective criteria as it is in the industry where your delivered product, and not your efforts, are evaluated by supervisors and clients. Creative work is not math with hard and fast facts, many of its component cannot be simply checked off. Parts of the assessment process will always be subjective and learning to manage the results when it is not what we had hoped for is a necessary skill. I encourage you to **shift your focus from grades to learning**. The goal is not the grade but recognizing strengths and weaknesses and **working toward growing as a professional**.

No grade starts from 100. I do not award or deduct points. Your work earns credit for each requirement to the culmination of 100

Receiving Feedback

Class workshops, Critic sessions, lab times, and ungraded exercises offer opportunities to receive feedback and improve your work. This course's Graded assignments are similar to tests— **assignments will not be pre-graded or Re-graded**.

GRADING SCALE

Work is graded according to the highest professional standards. Each major assignment has an assignment sheet/rubric. Grades in percentages are:

- A = 93—100
- A- = 90—92.9
- B+ = 87—89.9
- B = 83—86.9
- B- = 80—82.9
- C+ = 77—79.9
- C = 73—76.9
- C- = 70—72.9
- D = 63—69.9
- F = 62 and below

FINAL COURSE GRADES' DEFINITION

- A Nearly perfect in execution, quality of work is exceptional and exceeds expectations.
- A- Work is impressive in quality and exceeds expectations, 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, 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- As 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

	Engagement & Participation	5%
Exercises	E1, E2, E3, E4: P/LP/F Exercises	5%
Video	A1: Video Project – Radio Cut (15) A2: Video Project – Final Cut (30)	45%
Web	A3: Basic Coding (HTML & CSS) (10) A4: WordPress Portfolio (20)	30%
Final	A5: Final Project (Digital Story)	15%
	Final Course Grade	100%

Engagement & Participation: this grade consists of attending classes on time and prepared to ask questions and contribute to discussions and activities. This requires careful review of readings, slides, videos, and other material. This grade also reflects your willingness to learn and grow as a professional, as well as your overall involvement in the group projects. Please use your laptop and phone ONLY for class purposes. This will help you and your peer to stay

engaged. The sessions are designed for in-person, hands-on exercises, and collaborative learning. I will provide recording of the presentations and guest lectures, but workshops and lab session won't be recorded. None of the asynchronous material can replace your presence and participation in class. A detailed rubric of E&P grade is provided on Canvas. You will earn an E&P grade at the end of the semester.

Exercises(E1-E4): Low-stake exercises designed for students to receive feedback. On-time completion of these exercises receives full pass credit(P=100). Exercises submitted up to one week late receive Low Pass credit (LP: 75).

Assignments(A1-A5): All course work build upon each other toward the major projects. Homework and exercises are designed for practicing your skills and receiving feedback. The major graded assignments require a mastery of the techniques learned in class. Checking the requirement boxes is sufficient but not excellent. An excellent work shows high levels of engagement with the topic and exceeds expectations. Please review the definition grades for each assignment.

Final This course does not have a final exam. Instead, A5: Final Project (Digital Story) serves as such and is due on the scheduled Final Exam Day.

HONOR CODE

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 Associate Dean Julie Dixon-Green or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

ARS

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.

(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

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.

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 STATEMENT

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.

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.

TITLE IX

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at safe.unc.edu.

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.

FINAL EXAM DAY

Dec 12 Tuesday, 8:00 am

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE & WEEKLY TOPICS

Week One: Introduction and the Basics	
Tu. 08.22	Introduction
Th. 08.24	Film Language & Composition
Week Two: Nonlinear Editing Essentials in Premiere	
Tu. 08.29	Assignments Overview and examples Premiere Pro Essentials
Th. 08.31	Premiere Pro Essentials - Continued
Week Three: Conducting and Filming a Single-person Interview	
Tu. 09.05	Well-Being Day
Th. 09.07	<u>E1: Visual Composition Exercise Due by 11:55 pm</u> Interview Setup Techniques
Week Four: Storytelling with A-roll & B-roll	
Tu. 09.12	<u>E2: Semester Story (A1/A2/A5 Idea) Due by 11:55 pm</u> Interview Content (A-roll) Nonfiction Narrative and the 3-Act Structure + Ask better questions
Th. 09.14	Interview Content (B-roll) Storytelling Beyond Words: Visual and Audio Storytelling Visual Storytelling and Creative B-roll Discussion
Week Five: Continuity Editing and Sequencing	
Tu. 09.19	Shooting with Editing in Mind B-roll Coverage and Sequencing
Th. 09.21	Workshop: shooting and editing a b-roll sequence
Week Six: Polishing and Finishing	
Tu. 09.26	Premiere Pro Essentials Polishing audio transitions, leveling audio Basic Color Correction in Premiere Pro
Th. 09.28	Story Lab: Crafting your interview into a story with a solid narrative arc
Week Seven: Lab	
Tu. 10.03	Next Steps after Radio Edit (Cut): Shooting B-roll, Editing B-roll, drafting a Rough Cut Premiere Essentials 2 - Review

Th. 10.05	<u>A1: Radio Cut, Due by 11:55 pm</u> <i>Video Project Workday</i>
Week Eight: Final Thoughts on Editing	
Tu. 10.10	Pace & Rhythm
Th. 10.12 University Day	Editing Lab
Week Nine: Lab	
Tu. 10.17	<u>Rough Cut due by start of the class</u> Workshop: Small Groups, Peer Feedback on Rough Drafts Editing Lab
Th. 10.19	Fall Break
Week Ten: Final Video Week	
Tu. 10.24	<u>A2: Video Project-Final Cut, Due by 11:55 pm</u> Editing Lab
Th. 10.26	Video projects screening Introduction to the Web portion of the course
Week Eleven: Intro to Web	
Tu. 10.31	Graphics and Infographics + DIY Graphic Design sites How does the web work?
Th. 11.02	Basic Coding: HTML Purchasing Web hosting
Week Twelve: Basic Coding	
Tu. 11.07	Basic Coding: CSS
Th, 11.09	<u>A3: Basic Coding Assignment, Due by 11:55 pm</u> Publishing a page Installing WordPress
Week Thirteen: WordPress	
Tu. 11.14	WordPress: Introduction (Kale Theme + Plugins)

Th. 11.16	WordPress: The essentials (Blocks (adding content) + Customize Menu (Design)
Week Fourteen: WordPress	
Tu. 11.21	<u>E3: Graphics Rough Draft, Due at the start of the class</u> Design Feedback Session WordPress: Additional CSS & Wrap Up
Th. 11.23	Thanksgiving
Week Fifteen: WordPress	
Tu. 11.28	Web Design Essentials – Review Portfolio project and Final Project Q & A
Th. 11.30	WordPress Portfolio project Lab
Week Sixteen: Wrap Up	
Tu. 12.05 LDC	<u>A4: Portfolio Project, Due by 11:55 pm</u> Portfolio project and Final Project Lab
FINAL EXAM DAY	<u>A5: Final Project & Presentation</u>