

MEJO 582

ADV DOCUMENTARY VIDEO STORYTELLING

Fall 2023 / MW 10:00 - 11:45 am / Carroll Hall Room 60

INSTRUCTOR

Chad Heartwood (he/him)
chadheartwood@unc.edu
Carroll Hall, 211

OFFICE HOURS

Monday: 1:00 - 2:00
Wednesday: 2:00 - 3:00

TEXT BOOK & TUTORIALS

[In the Blink of an Eye](#)
by Walter Murch

[LinkedIn Learning](#)

"You wanna fly, you got to give up the shit that weighs you down."

– TONI MORRISON

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to expand the tools and skills needed to engage in quality storytelling with audio and video in modern media environments. Emphasis is in mastering technical and aesthetic aspects of storytelling. This course is also intended to give you insight into what you may expect when you enter the, ahem, "real world." Attention to detail is key, as is timeliness, thoroughness, critical thinking, creative thought and active participation. This is an advanced class.

Because web viewers demand highly engaging material, with a fast start, sharp focus, tight narrative, and natural voices, students will focus on capturing stories with strong visuals, ambient audio, voices of

people personally affected by issues. We will focus on the concept of our video/film collaborators (historically referred to as “subjects”) telling their stories in their own voices.

Students will also learn the basics of proposal writing and pitching projects. We’ll be using HD/SLR and mirrorless cameras to film high quality video. If you do not have your own camera, you can check out from the equipment room. More details below.

COMMUNICATION

It is important to note that communication is key to in-person and online learning. You will be expected to maintain consistent communication with your classmates and the instructor throughout the duration of the course - as detailed in Canvas, Zoom or in-person meetings.

Canvas: On Canvas you will find Assignment details and assignment submission instructions. You will also access some Canvas lectures, including additional readings and other complementary content. When we have a “Canvas Day” you will need to complete all the content in the assigned module.

Email: My email at chadheartwood@unc.edu. My hours will be flexible, and I will respond as quickly as possible.

PROJECTS & ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1 – *Interpretations*

An assignment to engage your creativity and reveal your technical acuity. We will visually interpret a poem.

Assignment 2 – *Interview Technique*

For this assignment, you will be filming three different interview situations with the same person. The objective of the assignment is to learn interview technical issues - focusing on light and audio quality.

Midterm Project – *Interview and Working Script from your Final Project*

Your midterm project requires you to have interviewed your main character/collaborator in your final project story. You will submit the full transcript of that interview (with timecode), and a working script that will be the very beginning stage of developing your rough cut. Seize this moment. Your doc should be verité driven, but you may need the interview to strengthen and clarify the storyline. The benefits of completing an immersive interview are immeasurable. Your interview must be at least one hour in length.

Final Project

The final project is a verité-driven short documentary. The length to aim for is 5-10 minutes. But don't let the run time get in the way now. It doesn't really matter. What matters is the story. Get there first, then we'll figure out how long it should be.

A verité-driven short documentary is built on moments unfolding in real time in front of the camera. Show, don't tell. To get started in the right direction, you need to find a story that has the potential for present-tense storytelling. There must be something happening now! There will be space for backstory, for archival, for interview, if needed, but your goal at this point is to find a present tense story.

Your theme: Rebuilding.

This theme can be interpreted in many different ways. Think of someone who is trying to rebuild themselves/their own life after some kind of major life change. This could unfold on campus or in our community. This could touch on many topics important to the national conversation these days: immigration, abortion issues, gender-affirming care, new life after long-Covid, but can also be more tangible: a farmer starting over after a fire, a single parent doing their best, an environmental activist trying to rebuild their community, on and on.

It can be overwhelming to find a focus and a story to tell. I challenge you to look inward and ask yourself the following questions: What do you care about? What is the wrong you want to right in this world? What is a hope you want to bring to light? What is an issue you are curious about? What are you drawn to? What kinds of stories may you have a unique and personal ability to get access to? In what ways can

you make the world a better place through the work you do? Begin by answering these questions, and see where this takes you.

Important Note: No photographs or video footage (unless using archival content) taken before the class begins will be accepted. You cannot begin photographing or filming an assignment until I give out the assignment in class. This is a documentary videography class. That means - except for portraits and interviews - you may not “set up” or “stage” anything. No “posing” people.

ASSESSMENT

Your success in this course will be determined by participation as well as completion and effort on assignments. It is crucial that you take part in critiques and informal class discussions. Learning comes through communicating and teaching others. Attendance, of course, is critical to success in the course.

Grade Breakdown

100 - PARTICIPATION

Class, Zoom and Canvas participation / Fellow student feedback

Guest Speaker prep and interaction

RadioLab Yellow Rain Reflection

Filming Sequences Exercise

Final Project Ideas

Hotel 22 Reflection

Editing Exercise: Verité Scene

100 - Interview Lighting and Sound Exam

100 - INTERPRETATIONS ASSIGNMENT

100 - INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT

50 - Final Project Pitch

50 - Final Project Proposal

100 - MIDTERM - Full INTVW Transcript from Final Project + Working Script

25 - Final Project Scene #1

25 - Final Project Scene #2

25 - Final Project Storyboard

25 - Final Project Scene #3

100 - Final Project Rough Cut

200 - FINAL PROJECT - DUE: FINAL EXAM TIME (SEE SCHEDULE)

1000 - TOTAL

Grade Determination

In grading, I will do my best to be fair and accurate, but to do this there must be some very specific guidelines and boundaries. Here they are:

- 1) Assignments are due at the minute class begins on the due date!
- 2) Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.
- 3) You must be present (either in person or Zoom) to receive full credit.
- 4) Class participation is critical to success in this course.

The vital element that must be included in any assignment: Does this communicate to the viewer? Much of the feedback for your projects will occur during class critiques. If you want more feedback, be proactive during class and/or come see me for one-on-one feedback. This is a 500 level course; grading will be geared for a 500 level course. Expectations are high.

Assignment Submission

Since we will be submitting our projects via Canvas, you will need to upload any video assignment submissions to Vimeo or YouTube. You can find free versions of both. You will need to create an account with whichever platform you prefer. I recommend Vimeo because it is more common in our industry, and it does NOT have ads.

After uploading to one of these platforms, you will then need to post the link to your video submission on the Canvas assignment page.

Every project must be submitted with Title, Description and Keywords on Vimeo or YouTube. For some assignments, each student will write a self-evaluation for that project and turn this in via Canvas.

NAMING CONVENTIONS

Naming conventions for your archive: YEARMODA_lastname_assignment_001.mov

Naming conventions for Assignment Turn In: lastname_assignmentname.mov

DEADLINES

Please note that deadlines are absolute. Extensions will only be granted because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, etc.), and you must notify me as soon as you are aware of the problem. Your workload -- either in this class or in combination with others -- is not an extenuating circumstance.

GRADE SCALE

A = 95-100%

A- = 90-94.9%

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 = less than 60%

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

To check out equipment please visit <https://equipmentroom.mj.unc.edu/>

Here you will find instruction manuals for the gear we lend:
<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals>

Tripod: YES, YOU MUST USE A TRIPOD (when you need a tripod). Tripods are available from checkout, but they are rough around the edges. Let me know if you may be interested in purchasing your own, and I can direct you.

Suggested to purchase on your own (We have a few available for checkout):

DSLR Viewfinder: In times when you can't use a tripod, or when you've perfected handholding, you WILL DEFINITELY NEED a LCD loupe. I recommend the Zacuto. There are several models depending on your camera body and price range. I personally use the Zacuto Z-Finder Pro 3, which runs about \$170. This would be smart to buy used. Be sure it fits your camera.

Required to purchase on your own (if you don't already own):

You will need to purchase your own **SD cards**. They are NOT available from the library.

You will also need a **hard drive** for your archive. If you do not already have an archiving system for your work, I would recommend getting started with a 1 TB portable hard drive. The brand doesn't really matter as long as it can connect with your computer. Be sure to have a backup of all of your work. Hard drives fail, eventually.

Headphones (earbuds are a no-go). These are the best for the cash: Sony MDR-V6 Monitor Headphones.

ADDITIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT WORK

We really learn a skill or concept when we have to teach it. To that end, each graduate student will coach a team of 3-4 undergraduate students throughout the semester. Your responsibilities will include:

- 1) Being available for questions before assignment turn-ins. This could include coaching on filming and post production feedback and advising.
- 2) Writing feedback on each assignment submission for each undergrad on your team. This should be thorough, thought-provoking, critical and uplifting.
- 3) You will submit your feedback to me and I will compile with my feedback while grading and return to the students.

“We see that what lies beyond empathy is solidarity. The notion that our plight, and humanity, are intrinsically connected, and to create a better future I’ve got to get my hands dirty along with you.”

– SONYA CHILDRESS

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).

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.

The field of journalism requires that we give it everything we can. The rewards are great, but the demands are high. It is critical that you attend every class. You CANNOT miss a class in order to photograph/film an assignment. You must be in class to present your work for critique. You will be allowed 1 unexcused absences; after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. If your semester average is 91% and you miss 2 classes, your final average would be 89%. Please communicate with me if circumstances arise that require you to miss class.

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.

INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING SPACE

Everyone is welcome here. Bigotry and sexism are not welcome here. We may have difficult discussions in this class, and as that happens I want everyone to 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 individuals and topics dealing with 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. Both instructors prefer the pronouns he/him/his.

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.

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

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 Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

COUNSELING & 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.

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.

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.

AEJMC ACCREDITATION

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media accrediting body outlines several 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.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

SYLLABUS CHANGES

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

SCHEDULE - FALL 2023

CLASS #	DATE	TOPICS ASSIGNMENTS ACTIVITIES	PLATFORM
01	20230821	Review syllabus Topics: Story Pt 1 - Jad Abumrad TED Talk ASSIGN: Watch Farmsteads & Overburden DUE: SEP 06 RadioLab Yellow Rain Reflection DUE: AUG 23	In-Person
02	20230823	Topics: Yellow Rain Discussion, Filming Seq / 4-8-12 ASSIGN: In the Blink of an Eye DUE: SEP 06	In-Person
03	20230828	Topics: Paper Airplanes ASSIGN: Sequences Exercise DUE: SEP 06 ASSIGN: Interpretations DUE: SEP 13 / LinkedIn Learning Premiere Tutorials: Canvas for details DUE: AUG 30	In-Person
04	20230830	Topics: PPro Bootcamp	In-Person
05	20230904	Labor Day	No Class
06	20230906	DUE: Sequences Exercise + Crit Topic: Intro Final Project ASSIGN: Final Project Ideas DUE: SEP 18 on Canvas ASSIGN: Interview Lighting & Sound Tutorials + Exam on Canvas on SEP 18	In-Person
07	20230911	Topics: Interview Lighting & Sound ASSIGN: Interview Assignment DUE: SEP 20	In-Person
08	20230913	DUE: Interpretations Topics: Interview Process Final Project Inspiration	In-Person
09	20230918	DUE: FINAL PROJECT IDEAS on Canvas Exam: Interview Lighting & Sound Tutorials Midterm Project Intro: Full INTVW Transcript from Final	Canvas

		Project + Working Script DUE: OCT 25	
10	20230920	DUE: Interview Assignment DUE: CANVAS FEEDBACK for Final Project Ideas Topics: Story vs Profile Final Project Inspiration ASSIGN: Project Pitch DUE: OCT 02	In-Person
11	20230925	Well Being Day	No Class
12	20230927	CANVAS: Grants, Pitching, Work Samples - Sunkissed ASSIGN: Watch Hotel 22 Reflection DUE: OCT 09	Canvas
13	20231002	PITCH DAY: Final Project Pitch Day ASSIGN: Final Project Proposal DUE: OCT 18	In-Person
14	20231004	Topics: Editing Techniques - Verité scene Demo: Betty Cemetery Scene	In-Person
15	20231009	DUE: Hotel 22 Reflection Topics: Story v Profile More on Story Structure	In-Person
16	20231011	Topics: Editing Techniques - Montage scenes ASSIGN: Final Project Scene #1 DUE: NOV 01	In-Person
17	20231016	Topics: Editing Techniques - INTVW-driven scene Storyboarding ASSIGN: Final Project Storyboard DUE: NOV 06	In-Person
18	20231018	DUE: Final Project Proposal > SUBMIT GOOGLE FORM Verité Scene Ex.	In-Person
19	20231023	Working with Transcripts	Canvas
20	20231025	DUE: Midterm Project, Full INTVW Transcript from Final Project + Working Script	In-Person
21	20231030	Topics: Scene Construction + Color Correction + Demo Tutorials: LinkedIn Learning Premiere Pro 2022 Essential Training Ch. 6 Basic Audio Editing	In-Person
22	20231101	DUE ON CANVAS + FEEDBACK: Final Project Scene #1	Canvas
23	20231106	DUE: Final Project Storyboard - Submit PDF on Canvas and present to class	In-Person
24	20231108	Storyboard Day 2 DUE: Final Project Scene #2	In-Person
25	20231113	Topics: How to Build an Intro (How to Dance in Ohio) Audio Sync Demo Room Tone	In-Person
26	20231115	DUE: Final Project Scene #3 Topics: Music, How to Use it Effectively / Audio Mixing	In-Person
27	20231120	GOAL: ALL FILMING COMPLETE THIS WEEK Work in Class Day	In-Person
28	20231122	Thanksgiving Break	No Class
29	20231127	Work In Class Day	In-Person

30	20231129	DUE: ROUGH CUT V1 Feedback	In-Person
31	20231204	DUE: ROUGH CUT V2 - Color Grading	In-Person
32	20231206	LDOC ROUGH CUT V3 feedback	In-Person
FINAL	20231207	PATLUCK Final Projects DUE	In-Person