Digital Storytelling

MEJO 782
Hussman School of Journalism and Media
UNC-Chapel Hill
Tamara Rice and Keith Barber
Fall 2023

Introduction

Telling stories is the basis of what we do as communicators. Learning how to do this well requires a thorough understanding of the tools available and knowing how to best use these tools to tell compelling stories to your desired audience. The objective of this course is to introduce you to the theories and practices of digital content creation. We read and view work that addresses each of these presentation methods. You will be expected to gain a critical understanding of the value of each.

Recognition of the benefits and drawbacks of the written word, photography, audio, video, graphics, and interactive applications, will be addressed in class discussions and assigned projects. You will acquire knowledge about how to choose presentation methods based on a project's audience and communication goals. You also will learn how to apply this knowledge by creating a digital storytelling final project.

The essentials

- **Class time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 to 3:15 p.m.
- **Class location:** Carroll Hall, Room 60
- **Instructors:** Tamara Rice tamarar@email.unc.edu and Keith Barber
- **Office hours:** via Zoom, by appointment

Required items

Smartphone: There are no textbooks for this course. Readings and viewings and other media will be provided through links on the Class Materials page. However, you **will** be using a smartphone to record audio and video. If this proposes a problem, please contact Stephanie Brown in the Hussman School's Park Library to discuss possible alternatives.

Required Digital Access

Adobe Premiere
Follow the instructions here to create an Adobe ID and install the required software for free. You will need to install Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and Premiere:
http://software.sites.unc.edu/software/adobe-creative-cloud/

Although you can download some of the required software to your own laptops for the projects required in this course, you may find that Adobe Premiere runs slowly on your laptop if your machine has less than 16GB of memory (RAM). Be sure to take this into account when planning your projects. To see how much RAM you have available on a Mac, click the Apple at the top left of your desktop > About this Mac > Overview > Memory.

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. Publishing your work on YouTube is easy and free, but Vimeo can have a more professional reputation.

LinkedIn Learning
Follow the instructions here to access LinkedIn Learning with your onyen.
https://software.sites.unc.edu/linkedin/

Website Hosting Account
Detailed instructions to come.

Other required* items

NOTE: It is important that you DO NOT purchase any of these supplies until a few weeks into the semester. More detail will be provided during the first weeks of class.

Equipment room link: https://equipmentroom.mj.unc.edu/
Equipment room manuals:
https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals

FiLMiCPro app: FiLMiC Pro that 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/

Smartphone adapter
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) to be able to use the lavalier microphone.

Headphones
Must have a standard mini jack (⅛''). Any **wired** (non-Bluetooth / not wireless) headphones you might use with your phone will work. Here is a recommended option, although standar earbuds with a mini jack also will work.

Wired lavalier microphone with headphone monitoring
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 approximately $25. Additional microphone option here.

Tripod with smartphone mount
You will need to purchase a tripod and mount for your phone. Cost: About $20. You may find one that comes with a phone mount, example here **Or** you can purchase a standard tripod similar to this one and a separate phone mount to use with it.

Domain name & hosting space.
You may need to purchase these products or demonstrate that you have a personal website. Cost for these items is approximately $20-$30 for your first year. More details will be provided in class.

Recommended Supplies

USB external hard drive / flash drive
Specs: Minimum 64GB flash drive, must be USB 3.0 for fastest file transfer speeds.

Recommended to invest in a larger external hard drive to backup 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).
Click here for a link to a recommended external hard drive (2TB).

Description

This course begins with an overview of the various media forms you may use for your project, e.g., text, photography, audio, video, graphics, data visualization, interactive web apps, and the pros and cons of each method. We also discuss the iterative process of brainstorming. During this time, you will need to explore topics for your final project and consider which media forms will best tell your stories.

After the introductory section of the course, we will spend 10 weeks focusing on each of the various media forms in detail and practicing the skills in a series of short exercises. Keith Barber will teach the classes on video and audio. Tamara Rice will teach the sections on graphics, data visualization and web design.

The part of the semester will be spent working on your final project. Keith will be available to help those of you who choose to do a deeper dive into video; Tamara will assist with graphics, website development, and data visualization.

Schedule

The outline below provides a rough idea of class topics by week. Based on the availability of guest speakers, topics and exercises are subject to change.

CLASS 1 Provide an overview of the course and introduce the final project. **Homework:** Read/review articles in Sakai	Aug. 22 Both professors
CLASS 2 **Lecture topic — Media forms**: What are the best media to tell your story? **Guest speakers:** Leaders of three UNC student organizations will make brief presentations followed by Q&A, and class discussion about how to tell each of their stories visually. We will take a look at UNC's official web pages as an example of how stories of students, faculty and staff are being told by the institution.	Aug. 24 Both professors

Homework: Watch/read/review the materials for Media forms in Sakai. Write your final project pitch draft and be ready to present during Class 3.	
CLASS 3 **Lecture topic — Brainstorming & collaboration** **Activity:** Final project pitches. Feedback from instructors and classmates. **Homework:** Watch/read/review the materials for Ideation in Sakai.	Aug. 29 Both professors
CLASS 4 **Lecture topic — Ideation & pre-production** **GUEST SPEAKER:** A local documentary filmmaker and/or UNC professor with a documentary film background will discuss the importance of planning and preparation when undertaking a video shoot. **Homework:** Watch/read/review the materials for Film Language & Continuity Editing in Sakai.	Aug. 31 Keith Barber
CLASS 5 **Lecture topic: Shooting for Editing - Continuity Editing, Coverage, and Sequencing** **Screening:** We will cover three sub-genres of documentary film: Advocacy, social justice, and autobiographical or personal documentary. We will screen clips and/or short films that represent each sub-genre to help students narrow their focus on how best to approach their chosen subject.	Sept. 5 Keith Barber
CLASS 6 **Field Trip — Production exercise:** We will collaborate on a video shoot shot either on campus or just off campus. Students will learn the value of cooperation and collaboration on a video or film shoot.	Sept. 12 Keith Barber
CLASS 7 **Lecture topic:** Film language and shooting for editing — Students will focus on the importance of beginnings and endings, and be introduced to different approaches to storytelling, including utilizing techniques of dramatic narrative and experimental cinema to enhance their projects. The raw footage and audio captured during the field trip will be shared with students **Activity/screening:** Clips that illuminate different examples of film language **Exercise:** Students will be assigned with editing the raw footage into a story with a beginning, middle and an end. Edited videos will be due at the next class.	Sept. 14 Keith Barber
CLASS 8	Sept. 19

Lecture Topic: Storytelling Beyond Words: B-roll, Creative B-roll, and Audio Storytelling **Activity/screening:** Students will screen edited clips of the video exercise for feedback from members of their cohort. Students will focus on the importance of beginnings and endings, and be introduced to different approaches to storytelling. **Homework:** Read articles on how journalists can improve video stories with shot sequences in Sakai	Keith Barber
CLASS 9 **Lecture Topic:** Interview techniques, Questions and Narrative Arc **Activity/screening:** The advocacy documentary: We will screen clips and/or short films that represent the sub-genre followed by classroom discussion. **Homework:** Write a B-roll shot list, and begin shooting B-roll for final project	Sept. 21 Keith Barber
CLASS 10 **Lecture topic:** Premiere Pro Essentials **Activity/screening:** The autobiographical documentary: We will screen clips and/or short films that represent the sub-genre followed by classroom discussion. **Homework:** Create a rough cut of a B-roll sequence to present during the next class period. Watch/read/review the materials on editing techniques in Sakai.	Sept. 26 Keith Barber
CLASS 11 **Lecture Topic:** Pace & Rhythm — A Meditation on Editing **Activity/screening:** Screening of students' B-roll sequences, followed by feedback and discussion **Homework:** Watch/read/review the materials on narration theory in Sakai.	Sept. 28 Keith Barber

CLASS 12 **Lecture Topic:** Finishing: (Color & Sound) + Editing Lab **Activity/Screening:** Premiere Pro Essentials tutorial **Homework:** Watch/read/review materials on use of the dramatic reenactment in documentary film in Sakai.	Oct. 3 Keith Barber
CLASS 13 **Lecture Topic:** Narration Theory & the dramatic reenactment **Activity/screening:** The dramatic reenactment — Students will screen clips from various documentary films that utilize dramatic reenactments to tell the story. **Homework:** Propose a dramatic reenactment that would enhance their final project, present proposal at the next class meeting.	Oct 5 Keith Barber
CLASS 14 **Lecture Topic:** Editing Lab **Activity/screening:** Students will present their proposals for a dramatic reenactment that could enhance their final projects. Students who wish to share rough cuts of their final projects will do so to receive constructive feedback. **Homework:** Watch/read/review the materials on Graphic Design basics in Sakai.	Oct. 10 Keith Barber
CLASS 15 Graphic Design basics	Oct. 17 Tamara Rice
CLASS 16 Graphic Design basics	Oct. 24 Tamara Rice
CLASS 17 Branding and Packaging your assets	Oct. 26 Tamara Rice
CLASS 18 Infographics	Oct. 31 Tamara Rice
CLASS 19 Data Visualization	Nov. 2 Tamara Rice
CLASS 20 Data Visualization	Nov. 7 Tamara Rice

CLASS 21 Websites and Content Management Systems	Nov. 9 Tamara Rice
CLASS 22 Front End Development and Website Hosting	Nov. 14 Tamara Rice
CLASS 23 HTML and CSS	Nov. 16 Tamara Rice
CLASS 24 Interactive Content	Nov. 21 Tamara Rice
CLASS 25 Final Project Workshop	Nov. 28 Both professors
CLASS 26 Final Project Workshop	Nov. 30 Both professors
CLASS 27 Final Project Presentations	Dec. 5 Both professors

Grading

You are graded according to the highest professional standards. Your assignments will be evaluated according to the rubrics distributed with assignments. Grades are described below:
- **H** High Pass - clear excellence, nearly perfect in execution for a graduate-level student
- **P** Pass - entirely satisfactory graduate-level work
- **L** Low Pass - inadequate work, aspects of the assignment may be missing or incomplete
- **F** Fail

Grading components

Your overall grade for this course will be based on the following components. Specifics for each element will be distributed at the time of the assignment.
- **Participation:** 10% of the final grade (5% assessed by each instructor)
- **Exercises:** 50% of the final grade (25% for the video exercises; 25% for the graphic and web exercises)
- **Final project:** 40% of the final grade

During the semester, you will be assigned **multiple exercises** to develop your skills. Completion of each of these exercises to the best of your abilities will result in a passing grade. Your effort will be considered when grading exercises. Your final project will be graded to professional standards, and quality as well as effort will be considered.

Grading criteria

There are basic expectations that any supervisor or project manager would have for a project undertaken by a digital storyteller. Regardless of your skill level, all of your assignments must meet the following minimum basic standards:
- Completed according to the assignment specifications
- Completed on time
- Free of typographical, grammatical and technical errors
- Demonstrates a clear grasp of digital production standards

Syllabus Changes

The instructors 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.

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).

Attendance: Class Policy

This is a graduate-level class, so it is expected that students are available to attend all classes. Class time will be important for collaboration, peer interaction and project planning. Lack of attendance and engagement with the material will affect your course grade. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview), please communicate with me as early as possible. Be aware that you are bound by the Honor Code when making a request for an absence.
(source: Attendance, Grading, and Examination)

Accreditation

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media'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 ohe last six bullet points under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.

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.

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:)

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: UNC CAPS 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 Report an Incident - UNC-Chapel Hill Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office. 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 Report an Incident - UNC-Chapel Hill Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office.

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 harrassment 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.