

INTRODUCTION TO

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

MEJO121.6 | TU-TH 9:30-10:45 am | 268 CA | UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media | FA 2024

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

[Virtual Office Link](#)

Office Hours: By appointment

INSTRUCTION MODE

In person

REQUIRED MATERIAL

There are no textbooks for this class, but there are required purchases. Financial aid funds can be used for these items. If you have a challenge with these purchases, you may be able to borrow some equipment from school. The 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 or if your camera phone has an issue.

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). Using a wired or wireless mic is up to you. Wireless mics need to be fully charged. Here are a couple of options: [Wired Lav Mic](#), [Wireless Lav Mic](#). **For wired mics** you will also need a 3.5 mm headphone jack adapter. Please purchase the Apple brand ONLY. The off-brand adaptors usually **don't** work.



Tripod with smartphone mount

You will need to purchase a tripod and mount for your phone. Examples: [67 inch Camera & Phone Tripod](#), [54 inch Tripod with Phone Mount](#). If you have access to a regular camera tripod you can purchase a [Phone Mount](#) only.

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 will submit all the video assignments **as a link** not as a file. To do so, you must use an account to publish your videos. You can choose a free youtube or Vimeo account.

Web Hosting

Access to Tar Heels Live: <https://tarheels.live/> for the Web portion of this class.

REQUIRED COMPUTER SPECS FOR VIDEO EDITING

Students must have a laptop that meets or exceeds [Carolina Computing Initiative](#) minimum specification. The Hussman School's laptop recommendations are available on [MEJO Major Admissions FAQ](#). **Tablets are not suitable for video editing.** Students must be familiar with basics of computer literacy and be comfortable using their laptop's operating systems.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES & ACCESS

USB External Hard Drive / Flash Drive

I highly recommend using an external drive for video editing. Editing directly from your laptop risks running into performance and storage issues. I also encourage using a second external drive to backup all your files consistently. **Specs: Minimum 64GB, must be USB 3.0 or USB-C for fast file transfer speeds.** Examples: [External hard drive \(1TB\)](#). (For laptop with only USB-C ports, you will need a [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.

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

Attending classes and participating in a collaborative learning environment is critical. Students must attend classes on time to be counted as present. Students are expected to complete the Asynchronous material diligently.

Illness or emergencies are legitimate reason to miss class, other than such circumstances, you are allowed TWO Unexcused absences. If you miss a session, please check the course schedule, watch the class recording, and review the asynchronous material.

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

GENERATIVE AI

Students are expected to follow the University's [guidelines for the use of Generative AI](#).

Generative AI tools are widely available. **Be honest** about using them for any of your assignments. Keep in mind that **AI has limitations**: AI generated results lacks context, can also be inaccurate or non-existent even though it may appear otherwise. The AI output may contain biases, AI raises a wide range of intellectual property concerns.

Usage Philosophy:

1. AI should help you think. Not think for you. Use AI to generate ideas or troubleshoot.
2. Use AI responsibly and ethically.
3. You are responsible for your final product.
4. The use of AI must be open and documented. When submitting the assignment acknowledge the use of AI.
Example: "I used ChatGPT to trouble shoot my CSS code for this assignment."
5. Do not enter confidential or personal Data into AI tools.
6. These guidelines are in effect unless I give you specific guidelines for an assignment.

It is your responsibility to review the full Student Generative AI Usage guidelines, [available here](#), carefully and follow them correctly.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICIES

Submission Format

Unless stated otherwise, all video assignments must be **uploaded to YouTube/Vimeo and turned in as a link**. Please do not attempt to upload video files to the assignment folders, email them, or share them using file-transfer services.

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 components cannot be simply checked off. Parts of the assessment process will always be subjective, and learning to accept the outcome 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.

In my classes, no assessment or 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 are opportunities to receive feedback and improve your work. Please attend these sessions to ask questions. I give improvement suggestions **up to 24 hours before the original due date**. After that, I will only help with technical issues. Please Do not ask for your work to be reviewed for last-minute feedback before submission. **The graded assignments are similar to exams— assignments will not be pre-graded or re-graded.**

Late Assignments

All assignments have a 12-hour grace period unless stated otherwise. If the assignment is due by 11:59 pm, you may turn it in before noon on the following day without penalty. After the grace period, late assignments are subject **to an automatic 10% deduction per week. Assignments turned in later than a week won't receive comprehensive feedback.**

Assignments and drafts due at the start of the class do not have a grace period and must be on time.

You are always welcome to discuss legitimate circumnstances. However, **receiving an extension doesn't mean the work will be graded with no penalty.** That wouldn't be fair to other students.

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 bello

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

E&P: Engagement & Professionalism	5%
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Exercises (Video + Web)	10%
A1: Video Project – Radio Cut	20%
A2: Video Project – Final Cut	30%
A3: Portfolio Project (WordPress)	15%
A4: Final Project (Digital Story Package)	20%
	100%

E&P: Attendance, engagement, participation, work ethics, ungraded exercises, and completing the course evaluations affect the E&P grade.

Exercises: Low-stake exercises designed for students to practice, receive feedback, and improve their work before moving on to major assignments.

Assignments(A1-A4): 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 grade definitions for each assignment.

A note on Final Exam: This course does not have a final exam. Instead, **Final Project (Digital Story Package)** serves as such and is due on the scheduled Final Exam Day.
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THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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.

The Student Code of Conduct of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<https://policies.unc.edu/TDCClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=152440>

Student Conduct Procedures of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

<https://policies.unc.edu/TDCClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=152518>

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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Weekly course schedule will be available on the **Canvas** site.

The following schedule is to give you an overview at the start of the term. For a current class schedule check the Schedule page on Canvas.

FINAL EXAM DAY

Dec 10, Tuesday 12:00 p.m.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE & WEEKLY TOPICS

Week One: Introduction	
	Introduction
	Digital Storytelling
Week Two: Nonlinear Editing Essentials in Premiere	
	Assignments Overview and examples Premiere Pro Essentials
	Premiere Pro Essentials - Continued
Week Three: Film Language	
	Film Language and Composition
Week Four: Interview Techniques	
	Interview Setup Techniques
	Interview Content (A-roll) Nonfiction Narrative and the 3-Act Structure
Week Five: B-roll Storytelling	
	Visual Storytelling(B-roll) Audio Storytelling: NAT + Music
	Workshop: B-roll without subject scavenger hunt
Week Six: Continuity Editing and Sequencing	
	Shooting with Editing in Mind Filming Better B-roll: Coverage and Sequencing
	Workshop: shooting and editing a b-roll sequence
Week Seven: Radio Cut	
	Story Lab: Crafting your interview into a story with a solid narrative arc

	Next Steps after Radio Cut: Filming B-roll, Editing B-roll, drafting a Rough Cut Radio Cut Editing Lab and Q & A
Week Eight: Pacing, Emotion, & Impact	
	Video Project Workday: Film b-roll, find a suitable music
	Final thoughts on editing: Pacing, Emotion, and Final Impact
Week Nine: Rough Cut	
	Workshop: Small Groups, Peer Feedback on Rough Drafts Editing Lab
Week Ten: Final Cut	
	Editing Lab
	Editing Lab
Week Eleven: Intro to Web	
	Video projects screening Introduction to the Web portion of the course
	Essentials of Graphic and Web Design Discuss: Graphics and Infographics + DIY Graphic Design sites
Week Twelve: Basic Coding	
	How does the web work? Basic Coding: HTML
	Basic Coding: CSS
Week Thirteen: WordPress	
	Intro to WordPress + Start working with Tarheels Live
	WordPress Essentials + Creating a WordPress portfolio website (Blocks (adding content) + Customize Menu & Additional CSS (Design)
Week Fourteen: Web Design	
	WordPress Workshop: Additional CSS. Dynamic elements. Trouble-shooting your code.
	Design Feedback Session Lab: Portfolio project and Final Project Q & A
Week Fifteen: Portfolio & Digital Story Package	
	Lab
Week Sixteen: Wrap Up	

LDC	Lab: Portfolio project and Final Project Q & A
FINAL EXAM DAY	Final Project: Digital Story Package and Presentation