

Digital Storytelling MMC 6936

Spring 2019 Semester — Jan. 7 to April 24

12:50-3:50 p.m. Wednesdays, Periods 6-8 | Room 3324, Weimer Hall
University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications

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Office Hours (Appointments Preferred):

Tuesdays 1-3 p.m. | Wednesdays 9 a.m.-noon | Thursdays 1-3 p.m.

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Course Objectives

Welcome to Digital Storytelling. This course will follow the tenets of journalism and introduce students to the fundamentals of news judgment, reporting and writing with a purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the art of multimedia storytelling. By using a combination of text, still photos, video, audio, graphics, mobile apps, social media and other emerging digital storytelling tools, students will build on this rich storytelling medium with research and analysis of current and evolving industry trends while producing multi-dimensional stories for a digital environment.

Course Outcomes

Students in this graduate-level course will learn and/or understand the basics of:

- Journalistic writing structure, and the transferring of these skills, to form objective stories based on facts for digital storytelling in the field of communications.
- The unique opportunities and challenges of digital storytelling and the multiple platforms available.
- Gathering, producing, publishing digital content using text, images, audio, video, data, social media.
- Why fairness, objectivity, credibility, diversity and other ethical considerations matter in storytelling.
- Key industry trends and technologies, and fundamental digital reporting and storytelling concepts.
- Working to produce stories and packages designed primarily for consumption on the internet.
- Using social media to distribute stories, build a following and “brand” oneself as a digital storyteller.

Noteworthy

Each student is responsible for:

- Reading, understanding and abiding by this syllabus and its contents and directives.
- Abiding by any announcements or directives the instructor or teaching assistant sends to the class via University of Florida email, or our course Canvas or other platforms such as social media. For example, expect to see Canvas postings and or emails concerning relevant matters that will be discussed at our next gathering.
- Completing all assigned readings, as related quizzes and class participation will affect grading.

Each student should know that:

- This is course will include many in- and outside-of-class assignments.
- Emails to the instructor are welcomed, but should be short, course related and necessary.
- Email responses from the instructor will be short and sweet and as soon as possible.

Required Texts

Required reading material will be made available via links to online stories and articles as well as handouts, including chapters from:

- “Telling the Story: The Convergence of Print, Broadcast and Online Media (3rd Ed.),” The Missouri Group, 2007 Bedford/St. Martin’s.
- “Aim for the Heart: Write, Shoot, Report, Produce for TV and Multimedia (3rd Ed.),” Al Tompkins © 2018 CQ Press.
- “Multimedia Storytelling: For Digital Communicators in a Multiplatform World,” Seth Gitner © 2016 Routledge.
- “Digital Storytelling Cookbook,” Joe Lambert © 2010 Digital Diner Press
- “The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law,” © 2018 (Buying the book is OK; using the app and subscribing to apstylebook.com recommended.)
- “On Writing Well,” William Zinsser, 2016, Harper Perennial.

Other Reading and Viewing

- Journalism websites, including those of national, regional, local, alternative and campus newspapers; national, regional, local and campus magazines and broadcast outlets (television/radio); and those created specifically to produce and present digital storytelling completely online.
- Other websites and materials referred by the instructor via Canvas, email, Facebook or otherwise.

Production Tools and Data Storage

Students in this course will need:

- A laptop (desktops are available during class and at other times when class is not in session).
- A capable camera (cellphones can take great still photography and video).
- Set of headphones (those equipped with microphones can double as a mic).
- You will be provided with a subscription to WeVideo, which allows cloud access to professional editing software and the ability to store your work, as this course requires use of

digital production equipment and editing software for graphics, audio, photography and videography.

- In addition, iMac desktops in our classroom, Room 3324, have access to other editing software (for example, Premiere, Photoshop, Lightroom and Final Cut Pro). However, do not save your work to these desktops as many students – undergraduate and graduate – use these computers. It's likely that your project may not be there the next day.
- As a backup plan for cloud storage, or if you plan to use editing software not available via the cloud such as Adobe Premiere, additional digital storage equipment is recommended.
 - SDHC cards should have a minimum 32 GB capacity and data speeds of 50 mbps and Class 10 UHS 3.
 - It's also a good investment to have your own external hard drive (minimum 500 GB; 1 TB recommended).
 - Flash or thumb drives, even if 200 GB capacity, are not a suitable alternative, as they are typically incompatible with many production tools, such as Adobe Pro Premiere.
- The college has HD SLR kits (video camera, tripod, lavalier and shotgun mics, etc.) available for checkout via the Equipment Room (G020) on the ground floor of Weimer Hall. We will go over the details in class and have you sign a waiver prior to accessing the kits. Each checkout gives you two full days to use the equipment, which must be returned by 9 a.m. the day it is due. Important: There are a limited amount of kits for this course. Deadlines won't be adjusted in the event that no kit is available for checkout. Plan accordingly.

Course Policies

Be Respectful.

- Please be on time and remain until class is dismissed. Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to creating a critical learning environment. Your participation in class benefits you AND your classmates. We need you there for the entirety to elevate the experience for everyone.
- Enhance the learning environment for everyone by:
 - Limiting any unnecessary distractions during lectures, critiques.
 - Refraining from cellphone and laptop use, unless it contributes to the discussion.
 - Not eating in class.* The smell of food is distracting. There will be breaks during class to provide you the opportunity to eat a snack.

* You may bring drinks to class, but please have a secure lid on the container or bottle. Do not set your drinks near laptops, computers or keyboards. The technology we will be using during the course is highly susceptible to damage from drinks (as well as food, which can become lodged in such equipment as keyboards). So please be mindful. And dispose of all food and drink containers, wrappers, bags, etc., outside the classroom).

Attendance.

- No unexcused absences are permitted. Each unexcused absence may reduce your final course grade by a half-letter grade. If you miss a quiz or an in-class exercise due to absence or tardiness, you will receive no points for those activities.

- Excused absences include family emergencies, illness, jury duty, military service and professional conferences where you are presenting work, speaking on a panel, or accepting an award.
- Absence is no excuse for not handing in work on time.
- Regardless of the reasons for being absent, a student who misses too many classes risks not mastering the coursework. In such a case, he or she may be withdrawn from the course per UF policy:

UF Attendance Policies — <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Mobile Devices.

- Mobile devices must be out of sight and unused during class – unless the instructor directs them to be used for class purposes.
- Give full and undivided attention to anyone speaking in class, including your classmates.
- Do not check text messages, social media, email, etc., during class, as this is rude.
- Anyone seen checking social media or any other sites unrelated to the immediate topics discussed in class may incur penalties ranging from a warning (first offense) to grade deduction.

Deadlines.

- Late assignments are not accepted unless an emergency can be documented. This means that an assignment submitted late is graded as a zero.
- If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation are required. If advance notice is not possible because of a true emergency, written documentation will be mandated ASAP.
- Generally speaking, we will function as if working in a professional workplace. In the real world, you don't show up for work (on time) or don't do your work (on time) – you risk losing your job. In other words, students who don't come to class and or miss deadlines will suffer consequences.

Accommodations for Special Needs

Students With Disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities and who have registered with the UF Dean of Students Office. This office will provide relative documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodations.

UF Disability Resource Center:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Counseling Center.

Personal or health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, career uncertainty and or relationships can interfere with your ability to function as a student. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) offers support for students in need. CWC is located at 3190 Radio Road and open each weekday from 8 to 5.

UF Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Plagiarism, Academic Honesty and Conflicts of Interest:

Academic Integrity.

- The College of Journalism and Communications is committed to upholding the university's academic honor code.
- Academic dishonesty of any kind shall not be tolerated in this course. To be certain, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to using any work done by another person and submitting it for a class assignment; submitting work done for another class; copying and pasting text written by another person without quotation marks and or without complete attribution, which usually includes a link to the original work; using images produced by someone else without explicit permission by the creator.
- Attribution is not the same as permission. Most images found online are not free to use.

Avoid Conflicts Of Interest At All Times.

- Students in this course shall not be used as sources for your field assignments. The same applies to relatives, roommates, friends (from campus or back home), sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, or members of any other co-curricular or extracurricular organizations to which you belong.
- Interviewing UF faculty, staff or employees is allowed provided they and the student do not have a prior relationship – and only with prior approval from the instructor.

Source Protocol

In Nearly All Cases, Multiple Sourcing Is Required.

- By sources, we mean interacting with at least two real live human beings, and not simply relying on organizational statements, news releases or websites.
- This also involves contacting as many people or obtaining as much related documentation as possible. It is wise to interview as many sources as possible, so you have more than you need for your story.

Sources Must Be Interviewed Either In Person Or On The Phone.

- Email interviews are permitted only with the instructor's permission in advance of the particular interview.
- Sometimes a source will want you to let him read a story before it's submitted or published. Do not do so.
 - It is appropriate – sometimes, depending on the story, even ideal – to call the source back to confirm facts or context, or even to read the person's direct or direct quotes to him or her. Be wary, however, of allowing someone else to determine or undermine your reporting or story approach for nefarious reasons.

All Facts And Opinions In Your Story Must Be Attributed To Sources.

- Anonymous or off-the-record material is not acceptable any more than the use of fictional people.
- If there's a compelling reason to not use a source's full name in a story, it must be explained to the instructor in advance for approval.

Diversity, Fairness and Accuracy.

- Whenever possible during this course, students shall pursue storytelling that is fair, accurate and complete – and based on information gathered from a variety of sources.
- A greater understanding of the cultural and ethnic differences in our society will enhance the learning experience, and help students develop habits and sensitivities that will be of great value in their workplaces and communities.
- This emphasis on diversity of sources shall not focus just on race and ethnicity or sexual orientation, but also age, education, gender, geography, occupation, politics, religion, socioeconomics, etc.
- Submitted assignments not abiding these sourcing, diversity and interview mandates shall be penalized.

Course Grading

While we will do our best to be fair and balanced, grading for this course will be, at times, subjective. Each assignment will be judged through the lens of professional quality journalism and communications as it pertains to accuracy, craftsmanship, effort and enterprise.

Grading Scale.

The minimum score to pass this course is a C, or 72.5. Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.4 rounds down to 89 (B+), while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A-).

A	100-93
A-	93-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60

Assignments and Grading Rubric.

10%	<i>Adobe Spark Learning Journal</i> (weekly, due 11:59 p.m. Sundays)
10%	<i>Digital Storytelling Examples</i> (one over semester)
10%	<i>Class Participation</i> (weekly)
10%	<i>Quizzes on Readings and Prior Seminar</i> (weekly)
10%	<i>Writing Assignments</i> (Several deadlines over semester)
20%	<i>Midterm Project</i> – Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, 3/1
30%	<i>Final Project</i> – Due 11:59 p.m. Friday 4/19
100%	Final Grade

Assignments and Grading Rubric Explained.

10% *Adobe Spark Learning Journal.*

While your first Adobe Spark assignment will be assigned, you are expected to submit weekly Learning Journal entries over the semester; deadline 11:59 p.m. Sundays.

10% *Digital Storytelling Examples.*

To start seeing and exploring various methods of digital storytelling — and applying it to your work — you will be responsible for ***bringing to the class’ attention an example of a good/bad, effective/ineffective, or ethical/unethical digitally told communication*** strategy. For example, these could involve an online advertisement, political spots, health campaign, advocacy, a news publication story or opinion piece, etc. Keep the example as concrete as possible for your colleagues.

A sign-up sheet will be available for you to select the week in which you will present. When your presentation time arrives, you will ***email the instructors a link to your example and include your thoughts on how it connects to at least one concept/principle covered in the readings.***

The instructors will create a discussion on Canvas, and every class member is expected to comment on it. Any class member who doesn’t not provide feedback by the following class will receive 0% grade that week for Class Participation.

We will spend a good part of class time highlighting and discussing digital storytelling examples after our quizzes — this is simply one of the best ways to bring this work into memory and start activating it in your lives.

Once you train your mind to identify and apply these strategies, you’ll start seeing them everywhere, so trust that there’s plenty to work with. As Oliver Holmes said: “Once a mind has been stretched by a new idea, it never returns to its original shape.”

10% *Class Participation:*

You are expected to be mindful and present your point of view in each class and the weekly Canvas discussion. Giving and receiving valuable feedback is necessary for personal and professional growth. Be prepared to accept – and give – constructive advice to grow and learn from the experience, without getting down or defensive. You’re not alone — we’re in this together.

10% *Quizzes on Reading and Prior Seminar.*

These weekly, very straightforward-questions quizzes ***will always cover the readings due for that day, and the in-class notes/discussions/guest lectures we have covered since the previous quiz.*** Doing a close reading of the chapters and reviewing the previous week’s material for the quizzes allows for better discussions and quick revision, reinforcement and internalization of concepts.

10% Writing Assignments.

For a typical story, we are looking for nicely focused, organized and confident writing that leaves the reader wanting more. Each assignment needs to adhere to inverted pyramid instruction or use of an anecdotal lede that summarizes why THIS person, activity, agency, etc., matters NOW, and otherwise helps the reader know why this is a story worth reading. Writing should exhibit proper, efficient use of background (research) information that doesn't slow the story down; transitions/quotes/attribution that helps move a story along and includes a diversity of sourcing; avoids errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation or AP Style, wordiness, prepositional traps, run-on sentences and demonstrates quality proofreading.

We may deduct up to 50 points for FACTUAL ERRORS. Factual errors are embarrassing and intolerable. They can range from an inaccurate street address or time element to a misspelled name of a person, business, agency or institution (on any reference), to a misquote; or just plain inaccuracy.

20% Midterm Project.

The midterm project will be a digitally produced WeVideo story that focuses on a personal topic of your choosing. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Friday, March 1.

30 % Final Project.

The final project will be comprised of a 400-word written story that is complemented with a digitally produced WeVideo story that focuses on a professional topic. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Friday, April 19.

Course Management and Story Publishing

We will be utilizing Canvas, WeVideo and Vimeo, among others in this course.

**** COURSE SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE****

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Week 1	Jan 9	Course Introduction and Housekeeping; Adobe Spark; The Interview
Week 2	Jan 16	What's the Story? Shaping the Story; Inverted Pyramid and Beyond; Ledes; Headlines, Photos and Captions; AP Style
Week 3	Jan 23	Researching Tools; Finding the Story; Grammar and Punctuation
Week 4	Jan 30	WeVideo; Accuracy and Fairness; Sharing the Story Do's and Don'ts of Audio Journalism
Week 5	Feb 6	Introducing Digital Storytelling Cookbook; Storytelling Paradigms

Week 6	Feb 13	Seven Steps of Digital Storytelling; Approaches to Scriptwriting; Storyboarding
Week 7	Feb 20	Pitching; Story Cycle; Listening; Art of Organizing: Scanning, Visuals, Editing
Week 8	Feb 27	Stories/Images That Transform and Empower; Project Assembly
Week 9	Mar 6	Spring Break (No Class)
Week 10	Mar 13	Writing for the Client; Strategic Communications Pitching the Story
Week 11	Mar 20	Explore Special Effects, Pans, Superimpositions, Titles
Week 12	Mar 27	Ethics; Surviving in the Workplace
Week 13	Apr 3	Review, Re-write Scripts; Finish Recording Voice Overs
Week 14	Apr 10	Begin Final Project Rough Edits
Week 15	Apr 17	Final Project Assembly
Week 16	Apr 24	Sharing - Final Project Presentation

Finals Grades Are Due May 6

2018-2019 Academic Calendar:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/dates-deadlines/pdfs/calendar1819.pdf>