

U of Maryland - Philip Merrill College of Journalism

JOURNALISM 203

Multimedia Storytelling

Fridays, 9:00 am - 11:45 am, Spring 2013

Room 2107, Knight Hall

Instructor:

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Mr. Young is a senior editor at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. He does a mix of writing, editing, podcasting, and occasional video reporting, and he previously served as the newspaper's Web Editor. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *New Scientist*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has taught the multimedia "slice" class at Maryland since 2009.

About the Course:

This course is designed to give journalism students a basic understanding of the multimedia skills necessary to survive in an evolving newsroom. The push towards digital formats -- the Web, tablets, smartphones -- and the tightening of newsroom budgets means all journalists must be able to do more than just write and report. This hands-on study of storytelling in several media platforms is divided into three main sections, or "slices": audio, photo, and video. Students will produce audio pieces, photo slideshows, audio slideshows, and video reports.

Each section will include instruction in proper field techniques, shooting, capturing and editing, and, finally, posting assignments online. Key software programs in each area will be introduced, including Final Cut Pro, Audacity, Soundslides, and Photoshop. Students will also learn the ethics and discuss the latest trends in each medium.

A final project will serve as the final exam for the course. Students will come up with proposals and storyboards for their final projects, which must be approved by the professor. Proposals may be revised throughout the course and students are encouraged to think through potential assignments and consult with the professor often. It is recommended that students choose topics that can be revisited instead of one-time events. Students will be expected to use their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of audio, photo, and video to make judicious decisions about the medium that best serves their story. The professor will consider such decisions, in addition to the reporting, technical execution, content and overall substance of the final projects.

A class blog will be the central hub of the class. All assignments will be turned in on the blog. Students will be invited as blog authors on the first day of class. A free Google account is required, but a Gmail address is not necessary to participate -- any e-mail address will suffice.

There is no textbook, but there are assigned readings, which will be available electronically through ELMS. In many weeks homework will also include watching multimedia productions from around the Web. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and viewings

Audio Slice:

This section will introduce students to the power of sound in storytelling and provide exposure to the skills necessary to collect and prepare audio for multiple platform distribution. There will be particular emphasis on developing your journalism skills for broadcast or online streaming. At the end of this section, you should have an understanding of the unique qualities of broadcast news production. Each class will have a lecture/discussion and a lab component. You will conduct multiple recorded interviews which will be incorporated into radio packages. You will also learn the basics of producing audio slide shows blending sound and photos.

Photojournalism Slice:

This slice will introduce students to the techniques and fundamentals of photography -- a powerful tool in documenting the world around us. Students will be encouraged to think visually and discover ways to approach newsworthy events and situations, creating provocative, storytelling images, learning to work within ethical boundaries, and grasping the all-important concept of "no photos please..." The question of "What makes a good image?" will also be discussed. Students will be required to caption every photograph in this slice and say why it has journalistic value -- and will critique each others' work.

Students are encouraged to bring their cameras with them during their time on/off campus and document situations they determine to have journalistic value. Document the political rally you went to, or the ski trip, the wedding last weekend, but not the night at the bar with your friends. Document the snowball fight or the press conference, but not the four hours you spent playing Playstation with your roommates. Get the picture.

Videojournalism Slice:

This section helps print journalists think visually and understand the layered elements that go into news video on the Web. The slice will incorporate hands-on shooting and editing to help students overcome inexperience or technology-related concerns. Students will build on material covered during the previous slices, learning to combine audio and video in ways that convey information and logic, while leveraging the power of this visual medium. By the end of the videojournalism slice, students will have a new appreciation for video from familiar and unfamiliar sources. They will learn the fundamentals of framing, lighting, composition, and sequencing, along with the ethical reporting, shooting, and editing practices. They will be able to approach stories in different ways and be familiar with technology and storytelling techniques that will allow them to do so.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- * Demonstrate an understanding of the techniques and fundamentals of photojournalism, video journalism and audio storytelling.
- * Demonstrate an awareness of the ethical boundaries of multimedia journalism, including what the requirements of truth and accuracy mean in the preparation and distribution of photojournalism, video journalism and audio news reporting.
- * Demonstrate an ability to think visually and understand the layered elements (sound, text, images, video) that go into multimedia news stories.
- * Demonstrate ability to critique current multimedia journalism practices in the news industry.

- * Demonstrate ability to collect, edit and produce audio, photos and videos for telling news stories.
- * Demonstrate ability to construct interviews for visual, sound and text storytelling platforms.
- * Demonstrate ability to use appropriate hardware (video camera, audio recorder, still camera and tripod) for collecting digital media for use in multimedia journalism.
- * Demonstrate ability to use editing software (Audacity, Photoshop and Final Cut Express) for multimedia news reporting and production.

Equipment:

You *must* provide:

- A digital still camera, preferably one with the ability to control settings manually.
- SD memory card or tapes for recording devices checked out from the school.
- AA batteries for borrowed recorders.

You might also want to get:

- A hard drive or other external/portable data storage device is suggested but not required.

Grading:

- The course has a total of 1,000 possible points, with each slice comprising roughly 200 points and the final project the final 400 points. That means the final project is worth more than a third of the final grade. An A will be 900 to 1,000 points, a B will be 800 to 899, etc... Point values of each assignment are marked on the syllabus, and where no points are mentioned, the assignment will be evaluated as part of class participation.
- Deadlines: Points will be deducted for late work.
- Photographs, videos, and interviews should portray people, scenes, and action as they are in real life. With the exception of basic editing and color correction, no photographs, videos, scenes or interviews may be staged, directed, falsified, coerced, or otherwise manipulated.
- Students will not focus on friends, roommates or family members for interviews for any assignment, including the final project, unless they get permission from the professor beforehand.
- Students will identify the subjects in their stories for assignments and for the final projects. No anonymous sources without prior permission from the professor.
- Students will not include music tracks in assignments unless music is an integral part of the story, and, unless the use of music has been approved by the professor.
- Students will receive point deductions if they do not come to class with the necessary equipment when requested.
- All homework will be turned in on the class blog.

Attendance:

If you have a legitimate excuse let the instructor know PRIOR to the class period to be missed. This is the only situation where makeup work is allowed.

Participation:

Class participation is a part of the final grade.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. The college has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy on academic dishonesty. Any abridgment of the university’s academic integrity standards in a College of Journalism course will be referred directly to the dean. The dean will send all confirmed cases to the university’s Office of Judicial Affairs with a recommendation of expulsion from the University. Please see [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and [Student Honor Council](#) for details.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning) needing special accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to discuss their situation.

SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is subject to change. The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule at any time to best fit the needs of the class. Check the class blog for the latest version and information about upcoming homework.

Audio Week 1 (Jan 25)

- Course overview
- Sign up for class blog
- Select name of class blog
- Intro to the unique qualities of radio and the power of sound in storytelling
- Basic interview techniques
- Interview demonstration
- Equipment check-out and introduction to digital audio recorders
- Demonstration of proper microphone use
- **In-class exercise:** After Word exercise
- Post audio assignment to class blog

HOMEWORK:

Audio Assignment #1: Interview with an expert on a topic of journalistic value (50 points)

Required Listening: [On the Media: Pulling Back the Curtain](#)

Audio Week 2 (Feb 1)

- Discuss On The Media assigned listening
- Review Audio Assignment #1
- Introduction to Audacity audio-editing software
- **In-class exercise:** Edit of After Word interviews from week 1
- Critique edited interviews
- Discuss writing for broadcast

HOMEWORK:

Audio Assignment #2: "Acts and Tracks" piece that mixes narration and sound bites (50 points)

Required Reading: *Sound Reporting*, "Chapter 3: Writing for Broadcast" pp. 25-38 (electronic reserve)

Audio Week 3 (Feb 8)

- Discuss reading and Produced Audio Pieces
- Finding ambient sound in reporting
- **In-class exercise:** Ambient/natural sound practice
- Critique in-class exercise

HOMEWORK:

Audio Assignment #3: Audio postcard (50 points)

Audio Week 4 (Feb 15)

- Listen to and discuss audio postcard pieces
- Discuss structure in audio stories, reviewing how to find a good "hook" and craft a story arc
- **In-class exercise:** Pitch story ideas for profile assignments

HOMEWORK:

Audio Assignment #4: Profile piece (50 points)

Audio Wrap-Up / Photo Week 1 (Feb 22)

- Critique Audio Profiles
- Audio ethics
- Introduction to photojournalism
- Where photojournalists find story ideas, how they get to the breaking news first, what tools they need to be prepared for the job.
- Ethical Does and don'ts.
- Writing captions in AP style.
- **In-class exercise:** Practice photo shoot and posting photos to blog.

HOMEWORK:

Photo Assignment #1: Attend a campus/local event and document it visually (50 points)

Photo Week 2 (March 1)

- Critique Photo Assignment #1
- How to give your image more visual punch. Depth, composition, perspective, angle of attack, visual stop signs, framing, lighting. How these ideas and concepts play into the visual impact of a photograph.
- Photoshop Basics -- cropping, resolution, color correction options.
- **In-class exercise:** Practice editing photos.
- Discuss final project expectations and view examples

HOMEWORK:

Photo Assignment #2: "Portraits" Find a subject who you do not know well and take three distinctly different portraits that say something about the subject's life, profession, major, personality, background, etc. Post your best three images to blog. (50 points)

Photo Week 3 (virtual class session) (March 8)

- Discuss photo assignment #2 in discussion board
- Watch video lecture on photo story: Telling a story visually. Number of images vs. type of placement.
- Basics of final project.

HOMEWORK:

Photo Assignment #3: Write a reflection on the War Photographer documentary.

Photo Week 4 (March 15)

- Audio slideshows.
- Photo story: Telling a story visually. Number of images vs. type of placement. The three types of images photographers look for when covering an assignment. How and why each type is important to a balanced photo story. Lots of examples.
- Blending images with sound: some basic dos and don'ts
- Watch award-winning examples
- Introduction to SoundSlides
- **In-class exercise:** Sound Slides exercise

HOMEWORK:

Redo Portrait assignment

Required Reading: *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach*. Visual Variety, pp. 14-24.
(electronic reserve)

<<<< Spring Break - No class on March 22 >>>>

Video Week 1 (March 29)

- Introduction to video journalism (when video works best)
- Examples of successful and unsuccessful online videos.
- Shooting basics
- **In-class exercise:** practice shoot for man-on-the-street interviews

HOMEWORK:

Video Assignment #1: Man-On-The-Street Interviews. (50 points)

Video Week 2 (Apr 5)

- Video editing
- **In-class exercise:** Edit man-on-the-street interviews
- Introduction to the concept of sequences.

HOMEWORK:

Video Assignment #2: Sequence shoot (50 points)

Video Week 3 (Apr 12)

- Review sequences
- **In-class exercise:** edit sequence homework and post to blog (edited version will be graded as Video Assignment #2.)
- Taking your videos to the next level: more video storytelling tips.

HOMEWORK:

Video Assignment #3: Final project shoot (50 points)

Video Week 4 (Apr 19)

- Review final project shoots.
- How to Storyboard
- **In-class exercise:** Storyboard your final project
- This class will also include an overview of the videojournalist as a one-person-band, highlighting equipment needs, challenges, advantages and disadvantages.

Course Overview (Apr 26)

- Review major points from the semester
- **In-class exercise:** Class group project

Final Project Workshop (May 3)

* Bring a draft of your final project to class, or some footage you would like help on. Or use this time to work on your final project.

Bonus Class (May 10)

* Optional session to give feedback on final project drafts

***** final project deadline (May 15, at 11:59 pm)**

*** Meet to watch final projects and give informal feedback**

((NOTE: Class participation is worth 50 points))