

Digital Storytelling

53-6675

Course Description:

The Digital Storytelling course offers intensive hands-on training in multimedia news gathering and production, as well as distribution through digital channels, for a range of journalism story forms, including audio, video, photo essays, online writing and audio slideshows.

Learning Objectives:

- * Report, produce and edit multimedia packages on industry-standard software using audio, video and photos with text;
- * Examine best practices in the industry for producing multimedia;
- * Experiment with interview techniques for audio and video journalism;
- * Examine hypothetical and real case studies of ethical decision making in producing multimedia journalism, including use of digital media found on the Web;
- * Prepare and post projects to the Web and distribute through social media using multimedia mobile applications.

Required Equipment:

H1 Zoom

DSLR, iPod Touch or smartphone from approved Journalism Department list (**NO EXCEPTIONS**)

Tripod (and tripod clip if using a smartphone)

Lavalier microphone

Evaluation/Grading:

Assignments: 15 percent

Mid-Term: 20 percent

Final Project: 50 percent

Participation: 15 percent*

***Participation**

Your participation grade will be based on punctuality, adherence to the classroom policies, including staying off of smartphones unless instructed to use them, voluntarily participating in class discussion, meeting deadlines and demonstrating that you have read the assigned materials.

Assignments

Indicated on class schedule

Mid-term

Photo gallery, 10 to 12 photos with captions

Final Project

Multimedia package presented with 2- to 3-minute video main bar, 250- to 500- words of descriptive text and at least one photo. You may choose the platform to present your project.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1

- Introduction to digital storytelling. Learn to navigate Lynda.com. Set up accounts. Introduce New York Times and LA Times multimedia, Kobre guide and Knight Center sites. We will explore the question: What is multimedia journalism?
- We'll also discuss equipment and what you still need if you haven't already purchased.
- **In-class assignment/discussion:** Share examples of print stories. Which ones would be duds as visual/sound stories? Which ones would be great visual/sound stories? Which ones have a component that could be used as the visual/sound component, even if different from the print story?
- Discuss Digital Storytelling Worksheet.

A note about Lynda.com: Students should use Lynda tutorials to supplement in-class training on software, especially Final Cut Pro X. Although we will spend time in class to learn basics for using a program such as Final Cut X or Photoshop, students must work independently with the software and take online tutorials to master these programs.

Week 2

- Intro to Photojournalism. Then we will go out to document. Post three unedited photos as a set to Flickr and share the link to Moodle by the end of class.

Homework:

Start looking for visual stories with a good "character." Give me a list of three to five contenders on Moodle and show me that you've done some initial reporting on your ideas.

Week 3

- More on Photojournalism and ethics, DSLR camera basics, photo composition and photo captions.

Homework:

Using one of your ideas approved by me, take six photos of your main character for the photo gallery and his/her surroundings. Be prepared to discuss in class. You do not have to edit these photos in Photoshop (yet). Focus on composition and lighting when you document the image. Include wide, medium and tight/detail shots.

Week 4

- **Photoshop** – You will learn the very basics of editing/correcting your photos – what to do and, just as important, what NOT to do.
- Class time will include hands on training and practice with Photoshop. You'll also get feedback on your photos.

Homework:

1. Using the feedback you've gotten on your initial work, go back and shoot more on the same subject, this time correcting your best photos in Photoshop (these can include shots from the first shooting assignment). Think about visual elements that help tell the story. Include 2 to 3 detail shots. You'll need at least 10 to 12 shots in total, to be used in your photo gallery (more on that in the next class).

Week 5

More on multimedia. We will look specifically at public affairs reporting through photo and video.

Homework:

*Complete the Poynter News U. course, *Telling Stories with Sound*. Email the course report and follow the instructions on Moodle. <http://www.newsu.org/courses/telling-stories-sound>*

Week 6

We will talk about the importance of sound and look at examples of audio slideshows. We will look (and listen) on Cowbird and discuss ways in which multimedia journalists use sound to tell stories. We will also talk about how much sound you need for an audio slideshow and will discuss the art of cutting down interviews into soundbites. Note: your midterm project is a photo gallery, but after it's

finished, we will turn them into audio slideshow. So if you'd like to gather nat sound as you go along, you may. But you do not have to do that.

- Interview techniques for digital journalism and gathering quality sound.
- We will talk about everything from how to frame an interview and how to place a microphone on your subject to where you sit and how to ask questions.
- Audio editing in Audacity. Please supplement this classroom instruction with tutorials.
- **In-class assignment/discussion:** We will do “mock interviews” with each other, using our recording equipment – both to practice interviewing and work on collecting quality sound. Edit the interview in Audacity or GarageBand. Upload to Moodle (no more than 30 seconds). We will listen to them in class.

Homework:

1. *Collect sound that could be used a track for an audio slideshow with the photos you've already taken. What are the natural sounds that will help the story come alive – what are sounds that match your photos? If you need to take more photos, do so. **Bring your sound to class on your recorder.***
2. *For your mid-term project, you will now finish your photo gallery. This is your chance to gather more photos, if you need to. What is it missing? How could it be better? **Important to note: The mid-term project is 20 percent of your final grade.***

Week 7

MIDTERM IS DUE TODAY! We will look at your projects in class.

- Intro to Final Cut. We will talk about organizing files for Final Cut and creating a project.
- Adding visuals to sound
- **In-class assignment:** To practice using Final Cut Pro, create a simple audio slideshow using the sound you collected and photos from your midterm project.

Homework:

1. Using the Digital Storytelling Worksheet, please detail your proposals for a final video project. Research your ideas thoroughly. Make sure the subjects involved are willing to be on camera before you propose an idea. You will not get credit for ideas in which you have done no initial reporting. Bring me at least three ideas.

Final projects must be approved by me

2. *Start Final Cut Pro tutorial in Lynda.com.*

Week 8

- Introduction to video storytelling
- We'll view examples of video stories and discuss. What do you like? What works? What doesn't? We'll start talking about the visual elements of the video story – "sequences" made up of wide, medium and tight shots. We'll also talk about shot composition.
- We will discuss your final project ideas and choose one.

Homework:

1. *Shoot a five-shot "sequence" (no more than 5 minutes worth of footage) showing how someone does something. Could be a baker showing how a cake is made or a street vendor selling his/her wares. Only need raw footage _ but don't forget to find wide medium and tight shots with good sound. This is not related to your final project.*
2. *Begin pre-interviews and scouting scenes for your final project.*

Week 9

- The basics of video editing - Final Cut X
- We will use this class time to learn the basics of video editing. You will learn how to load your homework footage into Final Cut Pro X, choose clips and work with them. You will learn how to create a .mov file.

Homework:

1. *Completed the Poynter News U. course, Video Storytelling for the Web. Email the course report and follow instructions on Moodle.*
<http://www.newsu.org/courses/video-storytelling-web>
2. *Shoot a video interview with your main subject. Load it into FCP X on your external hard drive and choose your five best bites, thinking about your beginning/middle/end. Put those five sound bites in order on your story line. **Export that footage to a .mov. Please use a file name with your last name in it (ie: SmithInterview).***

Week 10

- More on video storytelling and Final Cut X
- We will look at couple video pieces and dissect them.
- We'll also talk about "B-roll," which is basically everything that isn't an interview (including the all-important sequences and even photos).
- We will look at your initial interview footage and discuss.

Homework: Choose two minutes worth of “B-roll” – with AT LEAST one sequence with wide, medium and tight shots – and add it to your FCP project file. (You can put the footage at the end of your project; it doesn’t have to be incorporated with your interview yet – though you can try to do that if you feel comfortable doing so).

Export the file to a new .mov file. Use a different file name with your last name in it.

Week 11

- More Final Cut X
- We will review your B-roll in class

Homework:

Shoot additional footage for your final project

NOTE: If you don’t use a tripod (or monopod) when shooting your footage you will FAIL the final project. You have been warned!

2. If you’re feeling like Final Cut Pro X is still a bit of a mystery, you need to go back to Lynda.com to do more FCP tutorials. There is always more you can learn.

Week 12

- Pacing, storyboarding and how to organize and structure your shots.
- How to package multimedia. We will look at platforms that you might choose for your final project presentation. Consider one of these:
<http://tech.journalism.cuny.edu/2013/10/24/web-tools-for-multimedia-storytelling/>
- You will have time to work on your projects in class.

Homework:

Continue work on final project. Export and create a draft as .mov file. We’ll view it as a class. You will still have time to fine-tune afterward but make it as good as you can.

Week 13

- In class lab to work on final projects

Week 14

- Presentation of draft projects, group feedback. Which platform did you choose to present your project? Start writing the text for the story. Review multimedia packages on Reuters, AP and UPI for examples.

Homework:

Make edits to final project. Upload to platform of your choice, with 250 to 500 words of text. Submit link on Moodle.

Week 15

- Presentation of final projects.