
Multi-Media Journalism
Communication 426
Autumn 2009
MW 1:30-3:18, 360 Journalism Building

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Course description

This course is designed to give students the knowledge and skills they need to become multi-media news professionals. Journalists and other professional communicators today must be familiar with creating news content in a variety of forms. This course will give students an overview of the theories, principles and practices of multi-media content suitable for a Web site. With barriers among print, audio, still photography and video disappearing, students need to be able to create stories in different formats to be competitive in media industries. Be prepared to work in teams, as media projects involve teamwork.

This course combines principles of multi-media storytelling with hands-on work. Before each technology is introduced, students will learn the principles and goals involved in creating interesting, professional stories. Students will learn the practical elements of how to use the technology and produce a newsworthy story. Although time will be spent in the classroom learning multi-media principles and technology, students should be prepared to do their own reporting and story editing outside of the regular class time.

Students are expected to already know what constitutes a newsworthy topic and how to create a print story. This class will expand upon that background to explore story development in different formats. Students will use traditional reporting skills, values and techniques, and develop their abilities in still photography, audio, video and Web design. The last few weeks will be spent on a project integrating multi-media content into a news-oriented Web site.

The course includes:

- An overview of multi-media journalism, explaining industry trends and how to write across media.
- Hands-on instruction to understand the basic principles of news using photography, audio, video and Web sites
- Development of your own Web-based multi-media news site.

Goals

In this course, the students will:

- Understand what is meant by multi-media journalism and understand current industry trends in media convergence
- Understand theories and practices involving multi-media journalism, including how to create stories for different formats
- Be aware of the legal and ethical issues involving multi-media news
- Understand principles of news stories using different types of technology
- Be able to create, edit and produce news stories using different types of technology
- Understand principles of Web site design and publishing
- Create an original news-oriented Web site
- Learn how techniques of multi-media journalism apply to your career goals

Professionalism and publishability

The primary goal of this class is to develop skills so that students can create multi-media content good enough to be published – that is, posted on a news-oriented Web site. Students are especially encouraged to produce material that their peers will find interesting and relevant. To reward those who produce publishable work, multi-media work created for this class that is included on the Web site of the student newspaper, the Lantern, will earn bonus points. The bonus points will be distributed as follows:

30 points total (to be distributed among authors) for each slideshow and podcast
30 points for each author for any video program

Students are required to make all contacts with editors at the Lantern for their material to be added to the Lantern's news site. Students are responsible for informing the instructor promptly when their material is posted on the Lantern site. To qualify for the bonus points, the story must be created for the class and appear on the Lantern site during the quarter.

Course readings

The primary textbook is available for free online:

Briggs, Mark (2007). Journalism 2.0: How to survive and thrive. Access at: http://www.jlab.org/Journalism_20.pdf

In addition, supplemental readings are included on several dates. Others may be added during the quarter. Consult the online version of the syllabus for updates.

Point distribution and summary of course assignments

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS		
Session	Assignment	Points (each) *
Session 3	Homework: Writing across media	80
Session 4	Homework: Taking digital photos (with partner)	20
Session 5	In-class: Create a slide show (with partner)	70
Session 7	Homework: Record audio for podcast (with partner)	25
Session 8:	In-class: Create a podcast, submit finished script (with partner)	70
Session 10:	Homework: Record video for story (with partners)	25
Session 11:	In-class: Create a video story, submit finished script (with partners)	70
Session 14:	Homework: Final project ideas	25
Finals:	Final project: > Video story = 200 >Choose 2 of 3: Print story = 100 Slide show = 100 Podcast = 100 > Overall quality of site, including coherent theme = 100	500
Finals:	Present your project to class	15
Attendance, participation		100
TOTAL		1000

* The team-oriented assignments require that students put in equal amounts of effort. Students working together get the same grade, but grades can be adjusted by the instructor to reflect the amount of effort put in by the contributors. After each group assignment, each member of the group must turn in a peer review that lists the estimated percent of effort put in by each group member. Based on the peer review and the informed knowledge of the instructor, the point total given to each student can be adjusted up or down.

Grading and Grading Scale

920-1000: A	770-799: C+	below 600: E
900=919: A-	720-769: C	
870=899: B+	700-719: C-	
820-869: B	670-699: D+	
800-819: B-	600-669: D	

Grading on assignments includes the following criteria:

- Follow directions on the assignment
- Finished product must apply the principles covered in readings and class for that type of multi-media story

- Assignments should be good enough to be published. Unprofessional or sloppy work will be penalized.
- Meeting deadlines is crucial in journalism. Assignments submitted after deadlines will be penalized for each day that they are late.

Course Policy on Attendance

It is essential that you come to class each day and participate in our discussions. The professor will track attendance throughout the quarter and students will earn points for attending class and participating in discussion. Students who are unable to attend class must notify the professor in advance or soon after the class period and provide written documentation of the reason for missing class (e.g., medical note from a certified physician) in order to receive an excused absence. All other absences will be regarded as unexcused. Students are permitted two unexcused absences without penalty.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

Statement about Disability Services

“Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.”

Topics and Schedule

Session 1 (date) Introduction to multi-media journalism

Readings: None

Assignments: None

Course overview, which includes:

- Basic principles and purposes of multi-media journalism
- How course addresses these core principles and purposes
- Explanation of course syllabus, assignments
- Demonstration of software and hardware used in the class

Session 2 (date) Theories and practices of multi-media journalism

Readings: Briggs, "Introduction"; Briggs, Chapter 1, "FTP, MB, RSS oh My!"

Assignments: None

Course material today will cover a variety of issues related to the development, current practice and future of multi-media journalism. Topics include:

- What online journalism all about and the role of online journalism in society.
- Why traditional media like newspapers and television stations are on the Web.
- Overview of news and emerging technologies.
- Unique features of news Web sites – including personalization, multi-media, searchable databases, 24-hour updates, interactive chats and blogs and in-depth special reports.
- Search engines, wikis, RSS feeds.
- Learn how to set up an RSS feed.
- Hyperlocal news
- Audiences trends, usage, globalization.
- The rise of citizen journalism.
- Media convergence and the 24-hour news cycle
- Merging of newsroom operations

Session 3 (date) Writing across media

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 5, "How to blog;" Briggs, Chapter 6, "How to report news for the web."

Assignments: Homework (see below)

Overview of basic styles in writing for print, audio, video and Web, with emphasis on writing for the Web. Review good/bad examples. Topics include:

- Mechanics of writing in different media
- Storytelling techniques and structures that work on the Web, including photo galleries, surveys, quizzes, podcasts and chats.
- Learn to set up your own blog
- Writing and editing online.
- Understanding virtual community on the Net in social spaces (Myspace, Facebook), blogs, SecondLife, MUDs, web chat, AIM, IRC -- how to use them for interviews and research. Conducting online interviews.

Homework: Writing across media

Due: In Carmen dropbox before Session 4

Assignment: Use the principles presented in class and in readings about writing across media to take an existing print news story posted on Carmen and rewrite it for EACH of the following media:

++ Audio

++ Video

++ Web

Session 4 (date) Photography and slide shows

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 8, "Shooting and managing digital photos."

Assignments: Homework (see below)

Understand principles of digital news photography and production. Introduction to program for creating slide shows. Critique examples of published slide shows.

- Behind camera: Using technology, interacting with subjects
- Photo editing (basics): Downloading, storage, retrieval, preservation and captions

Homework: Digital photography

Due: Bring with you to Session 5

Assignment: Work with a partner to come up with a theme for your slide show and work together to take a series of photographs. Use principles discussed in class to take a series of photographs that can be used to tell a story in a slide show that you will create in Session 5. Your selection **MUST** include photos of (1) people and (2) objects/scenery and (3) consists of at least 20 separate shots. You may also want multiple shots of the same person or theme to choose from.

Session 5 (date) Photography and slide shows

Readings: None

Assignments: In class (see below)

Understand how to create a slide show. Work with your partner (from Session 4) to create a slide show that tells a compelling story, using photographs you took prior to class.

- Learn basics on how to create a slide show, using photos and sound
- Write a script with your partner that fits the theme of your photos
- Create the slide show with your partner, using your photos, voiceover and music

In-class assignment: Create a slide show

Due: At end of class

Assignment: Working with your partner, create a slide show that tells an interesting story. Use principles of a strong slide show in your finished product, including interesting photos, logical script and compelling story theme. Download finished slide show as instructed.

Session 6 (date) Broadcasting principles

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 11, "Writing scripts, doing voice-overs."

Assignments: None

As a class, review and critique slide shows created in Session 5

Topics: Basics of writing, reporting, announcing, videography, editing, graphics and special effects for audio and video news stories.

Planning and telling stories in a broadcast form.

Practice writing scripts for audio and video.

Session 7 (date) Audio

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 7, "Digital audio and podcasting."

Assignments: Homework (see below)

Understand principles of digital audio news recording and production. Introduction to program for creating audio shows. Critique examples of published audio shows (podcasts).

Topics include:

- Behind microphone: Using technology, formulating questions in advance, interacting with subjects
- Audio editing (basics): Downloading, storage, retrieval
- Audio editing (intermediate): Practice editing with audio already provided

Homework: Audio

Due: Bring with you to Session 8

Assignment: Work with a partner to come up with a theme for your podcast and work together to write questions for interviews, record interviews and ambient sound. Use principles discussed in class in formulating your questions. Your selection **MUST** include interviews with at least three people and some ambient sound. Create a draft of a script for the podcast you will complete at Session 8.

Session 8 (date) Audio

Readings: None

Assignments: In class (see below)

Using principles of digital audio news recording and production, create a podcast using digital audio software.

- Audio editing (advanced): Download your audio, create podcast using your script and sound from interviews and ambient sound

In-class assignment: Podcast

Due: At end of class

Assignment: Work with year partner (from Session 7) to download your audio and create a podcast on a topic of interest. Write a script **BEFORE** you begin editing. Use principles discussed in class in creating your podcast. Download completed podcast as instructed. Submit written script to Carmen dropbox.

Session 9 (date) Video

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 10, "Basic video editing."

Assignments: None

Understand basics of digital editing. Introduction to video editing software. Take already created raw video and edit it into a basic story. Learn advanced techniques of video editing and production.



Session 10 (date) Video

Readings: Briggs, Chapter 9, "Shooting video for news and feature stories."

Assignments: Homework (see below)

Understand and apply basics of using video recording equipment, including how to shoot video, record sound and performance in front of camera.

Homework: Video story

Due: Bring with you to Session 11

Assignment: Work in teams of three to come up with a theme for your video story. Work together to write questions for interviews, record interviews and shoot B roll video. Use principles discussed in class in formulating your questions. You must also write a script for the video story you will create at Session 11.

Session 11 (date) Video

Readings: None

Assignments: In class (see below)

Working with your team (from Session 10), create a video story, using the video you shot and video editing software.

In-class assignment: Video story

Due: At end of class

Assignment: Work with your partners (from Session 10) to download your video and create a video story on a topic of interest. Write a script BEFORE you begin editing. Use principles discussed in class in creating your video story. Download completed video story as instructed. Submit written script to Carmen dropbox.

Session 12 (date) Advanced ideas and techniques in multimedia journalism

Readings: (1) Getting Smart About News Podcasts, *Poynter Online*, Jan. 23, 2008.

Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=31&aid=136334>

(2) Best Practices: How Online Video Improves Journalism, *Poynter Online*, May. 28, 2008. Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=2&aid=143996>

(3) The Video Explosion, *American Journalism Review*, [December/January 2008](#). Access at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4428>

Assignments: None

Class time will first focus on advanced ideas in podcasts and video stories, as covered in the day's readings. The remainder of the session will be devoted to reviewing and critiquing the podcasts and video stories created in class over the past few weeks.

Session 13 (date) Introduce final project

Readings: None

Assignments: Homework (see below)

Goals and purposes of the multi-media news site final project will be explained. Students will spend the remainder of the quarter working on the final projects. The goal is to create a multi-media news site on a Web platform devoted to a topic of interest.

The finished product shall demonstrate mastery of the concepts explored throughout the quarter. The news site shall consist of:

- 1) One video story
- 2) Two of the following
 - One print story (750 words minimum, 3+ live sources, in a format and style that fits a Web site)
 - One slide show
 - One podcast
- 3) Housed on a Web platform

Homework: Final project ideas

Due: Bring with you to Session 14

Assignment: Come up with three potential topics for your final project. Put your ideas on paper and submit them in class on Session 14. For each idea, explain what makes it interesting. Propose story lines for each multi-media assignment. Be prepared to discuss your ideas at the next class.

Session 14 (date) Select idea for group project

Readings: None

Assignments: None

Each student will be prepared to discuss three ideas for the final project. The rest of the class will offer advice, ideas and feedback on those ideas. After each student has presented his or her ideas, be prepared to:

- Select the theme
- Develop specific stories on that theme

Several incremental assignments will make sure that you stay on track to get your project completed by the end of the quarter. Failure to meet deadlines for those incremental assignments will result in penalties.

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Session 15 (date) Basic Web design and graphics

Readings: (1) [Understanding copyrights](#); (2) [10 Big Myths about Copyright Explained](#), by Brad Templeton

Assignments: None

Understand principles of Web design, architecture and navigation. This is not a course in Web design, so we will just cover the basics. We will use templates already created for any use of Web platforms in this class. Topics include:

- Use of Web design program

- Complete tutorial or turn prepared material into working Web site with basic elements including fonts, horizontal/vertical rules, headlines, colors, creating links, building tables.

Session 16 (date) Working on final project

Readings: None

Assignments: Submit draft list of stories for the final project for review by the instructor. Story ideas must be approved by the instructor.

Use class time to:

- Finalize list of stories,
- Develop themes and refine ideas for each story.
- Identify sources and subjects for each story.
- Schedule interviews and outline questions for interviews

Session 17 (date) Advanced ideas and techniques in multimedia journalism

Readings: (1) Figuring Out When, and How, Journalists Should Use Audio Slideshows, *Poynter Online*, Jan. 26, 2009, access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=2&aid=157229>

(2) Multimedia Database Collects Interactive Narratives, *Poynter Online*, July 9, 2008. Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=47&aid=146471>

(3) Linking to Life with Multimedia Obits, *Poynter Online*, Jan. 28, 2008. Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=101&aid=135617>

Assignments: Submit detailed descriptions of the focus for each story and plans for gathering information.

Class time will be devoted to discussing and suggesting how to implement the advanced ideas and techniques covered in the readings. Each student should meet with the instructor and receive feedback on the detailed story descriptions and strategies for gathering information. Use class time to further plan and organize your stories.

Session 18 (date) Interactive journalism

Readings: (1) Consumer Revolution on the Web: Overview, *Columbia Journalism Review*, December 23, 2008. Access at

http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/consumer_revolution_on_the_web_1.php?page=8

(2) Live Blogging: How It Makes Us Better Journalists, *Poynter Online*, April 10, 2008. Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=101&aid=140459>

Assignments: Submit draft script for audio and slide show stories.

Use of technology for interactive journalism will be discussed. Review with the instructor the draft scripts of audio and slide show stories. Spend class time working on the script for video story and other work on the project.

Session 19 (date) Future directions in multimedia journalism

Readings: (1) Journalism 3G - The Future of Technology in the Field. Access at http://www.cc.gatech.edu/events/cnj-symposium/CJ_Symposium_Report.pdf

(2) JournoTweeting, *Poynter Online*, Nov. 14, 2008. Access at <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=31&aid=154238>

(3) Handheld Headlines, *American Journalism Review*, [August/September 2008](http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4582). Access at <http://www.ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4582>

Assignments: Submit draft script for video stories.

Class time will cover trends in the future of multimedia journalism. Class will explore current trends such as Twitter and using handheld devices in journalism. Remaining time will include reviewing draft scripts of video stories with the instructor and other work on the project.

Session 20 (date) Working on final project

Readings: None

Assignments: None

Class time will be spent working on the final project and getting feedback from the instructor. Students should have the majority of their stories finished by this date.

Finals (date) Complete final project

Readings: None

Assignments: In class (see below)

All work on final projects must be completed BEFORE the start of class.

In-class assignment: Presentation

Due: During class

Assignment: Each student will have about 5 minutes to present his or her project, explaining the overall theme and giving an example of one story that was of particularly high quality.