Coding for Digital Storytelling

JRNL3305/6305

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Why are we doing this?

As a journalist, you will encounter a variety of digital tools and technologies for data-driven storytelling

Being able to talk about and engage with those tools intelligently will help you become
more critical storytellers and journalists

Course Objectives

1. Become proficient in several of the most common coding languages and tools used in data journalism and digital storytelling
2. Develop a systems-based understanding of coding skills in data journalism, demonstrating how multiple technologies and skills may be used independently and together
3. Become able to reverse-engineer real-world examples of data journalism and evaluate the variable approaches one might take to create a given digital project
4. Foster critical thinking about how to integrate coding skills into digital storytelling in ways that are intentional, reflective, self-aware, and grounded in journalistic practice

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What we will do

We'll take a tour through the landscape of data storytelling and design and its related technologies, picking up essential concepts in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, APIs, databases, and more

What we will not do

We won’t take a deep dive into these topics and become full-stack developers

We will be chasing after proficiency, not mastery

Things you should be able to do by the end of this course

- Intelligently search for solutions to common coding problems
- Fluently read and debug your code and code written by others
- Reverse-engineer real-world examples of digital storytelling
- Critically evaluate different pipelines for creating digital projects
- Construct a scrollytelling news article

Course components

10%	Class participation
20%	Homework assignments
30%	Final project assignments
40%	Final project

Vocabulary

We will work together to build a vocabulary list of key terms related to the topics we cover

That vocabulary will help us intelligently search for and find solutions to coding problems we encounter

Final project

In small teams, you'll create a scrollytelling piece on a topic of your choice

The piece will be written like a news article and feature modules of content built up over the course of the semester

More information coming soon

Course outline

Week 1	January 8, 2019	Introduction to HTML and CSS
Week 2	January 15, 2019	Introduction to HTML and CSS, continued
Week 3	January 22, 2019	Introduction to JavaScript and data structures
Week 4	January 29, 2019	Introduction to JavaScript, continued
Week 5	February 5, 2019	Introduction to D3.js
Week 6	February 12, 2019	Introduction to Python
Week 7	February 19, 2019	Introduction to APIs
Week 8	February 26, 2019	Introduction to databases

Course outline

Week 9	March 5, 2019	*No Classes -- Spring Break*
Week 10	March 12, 2019	Basic command line tasks
Week 11	March 19, 2019	Designing for multiple platforms -- responsive design, scrollytelling, and more
Week 12	March 26, 2019	Introduction to Git/GitHub
Week 13	April 2, 2019	Special Topics
Week 14	April 9, 2019	Project Work
Week 15	April 16, 2019	Project Work

Office hours and contact information

Weekly Office Hours

COURSE * Tuesdays, 4 PM – 5 PM

LIBRARY * Wednesdays, 10 AM – 12 PM

Snell Library Room 243

Also available by appointment

s.braun@northeastern.edu

(617) 373-5885

More resources at Snell Library

Brooke Williams

Research and Instruction Librarian

Subject specialist for Journalism

b.williams@northeastern.edu

Key course resources

Syllabus: Google Drive
Vocabulary list: Google Drive
Course materials: Blackboard
Course code files: GitHub