

Syllabus: Interactive Design and Development (JOUR 352)

Spring 2020; Wednesday 9-11:45 am, Office hours by appointment

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Prerequisites: For undergrads taking JOUR 352, it is JOUR 262 or 202. For master's students: JOUR 504 or 604 (for certificate students) is a pre- or co-requisite.

Course overview

In this course, students will use web design and development for visual storytelling. From graphic design fundamentals to basic data analysis and visualization, students will use the tools of the web for digital news production. By the end of the semester, students will build a digital resume/portfolio package and create a multimedia news feature story.

The core of the class will be learning HTML, CSS and data visualization to produce work for desktop and mobile experiences. The course will also briefly discuss photo editing, search engine optimization, web analytics and ethics. The class will include lectures, but will largely be hands-on in-class assignments and online, self-directed learning modules.

Learning Outcomes

- Conceptualize, design and build responsive web pages using HTML, CSS and common web frameworks.
- Utilize fundamental graphic design, web design and visual communications concepts.
- Utilize Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop to create web graphics, edit photos and wireframe digital projects.
- Exercise SEO best practices and consider web analytics when writing code, headlines and captions.

- Apply ethical journalistic guidelines to digital practices.
- Learn of resources to improve as a computational or data journalist after class ends.

Your professor

Brittany is a graphics reporter for The Washington Post. She works mainly on [politics](#), [breaking news](#) and [sports](#) stories using code and graphics to tell stories. Before joining The Post in June 2018, she worked at NPR on the Visuals team. She began her time there as an intern and was later hired as a news applications developer. Brittany graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2016 and attended the New York Times Student Journalism Institute in the same year. Currently, she mentors students through the ONA Student Newsroom and Press Pass.

Required materials

There is one textbook required for this course, listed below. Online readings will also be assigned. As in every Merrill journalism course, the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law is required. Written work is expected to adhere to AP guidelines.

Required textbook:

- [HTML & CSS: Design and Build Web Sites](#) by Jon Duckett

Required site registrations:

- [GitHub](#) for version control and web hosting
- [Codecademy](#) for coding tutorials
- [LinkedIn Learning](#) (formerly Lynda) for online learning videos

Required software:

- Atom (or similar text editor)
- Adobe Creative Cloud apps (available from [Terpware](#))
- Microsoft Excel (available from [Terpware](#))
- Google Chrome

Grading and assignments

Graded assignments are due at 11:59pm the night before class, unless otherwise noted. If the assignment is intended to be completed in-class, it is due by noon on the day of the assignment. It is expected that all assignments follow Associated Press style.

Grade breakdown

Class participation (5 percent): Students must complete assigned readings and participate meaningfully in class discussions to do well on the participation grade, which will be assigned at the end of the semester.

In-class assignments (10 percent): There will be a number of in-class graded assignments and quizzes throughout the semester. They will not always be announced in advance. Missed in-class assignments **cannot** be made up. At least one in-class assignment grade — your lowest — will be dropped to accommodate an illness or an emergency that arises during the semester.

Homework (10 percent): Most of the assigned homework will be Codecademy lessons though other homework may be given.

Portfolio (15 percent): Students will code visually compelling online portfolio. The site will include at least four pages: “About me”, “Resume”, “Work” and “Contact me.” The “About me” page should include a two-to-three paragraph biography and a headshot. The “Resume” page should use text style and type hierarchy, as well as links where appropriate. It should also include a link to download a PDF version of the resume. “Work” should include published work/clips, and “Contact me” should have relevant contact information and potentially a form for email submission.

Midterm (15 percent): The midterm will be the only test in the course. Everything taught in class or through homework assignments before the test date is fair game to appear on the midterm. The midterm will be open notes and taken in class.

News feature package: The news feature package is a semester-long effort with four distinct deadlines, each graded and weighted separately.

1. **Story pitches (5 percent):** The 2-3 story pitches should be no more than 250 words each. Each pitch should describe the proposed feature story, and should include a curated list of possible data sources, photos, charts, interactives,

multimedia and links to primary source documents. This will require extensive research and could include preliminary interviews. In the pitch, discuss how the story will be told (through text, video, audio, etc.) and why that medium is the best for the proposed story. Students will meet with the instructor to discuss and choose a pitch to pursue.

2. **Story text and wireframe (10 percent):** Based on the approved pitch, students will report and write the story. Text should be around 600-750 words and should not exceed 1000 words. The story should be accompanied by a wireframe of the page layout for the online presentation. The wireframe should include a rough placement for any other elements being included in the package.

The story should be complete, worthy of publication at the point of submission. Stories must be original work written specifically for this class and must not have been previously published elsewhere. They cannot be stories you're turning in for grades in other classes. Stories with factual mistakes will lose a full letter grade for each mistake. Stories must be accurate, fair and fully reported with multiple sources, and include strong feature leads, nut graphs and transitions. They should include context and background. Students have the option of turning in the text of a video or audio script, if their main story is better told with video or audio and they have taken a previous class in video or audio editing (JOUR 203/504/262, for instance). The assignment should be double-spaced. It will be edited and returned the multimedia feature package.

3. **Beta version of final project (10 percent):** This is a web page — featuring the edited story text and all applicable multimedia elements — created using HTML and CSS. The page will include:
 - a. The edited story text or embedded video
 - b. At least two graphical or multimedia elements (photo gallery, map, chart, etc.)
 - c. At least two photos with proper permission and credit
 - d. An SEO-friendly headline
 - e. A copyright line that links back to the student's portfolio site
4. **Final presentation (20 percent):** Students will receive constructive feedback from the class and the instructor on the beta version of the project. With that, students may choose to revise their projects and turn it in for the final presentation. If the student earned an **A or A-minus** on your beta turn-in, you may opt against doing more work for the final turn in. In that case, you beta

grade would be repeated. If you do not plan to revise your project, you must let me know before the final deadline. This assignment takes the place of a traditional final exam; final projects turned in late will earn an F (55 percent).

Note: The final project will be used for assessment purposes. If the assignment is not completed, an "Incomplete" grade will be given. There will be no formal class meeting during Finals Week.

Grading considerations and deductions

Assignments will be graded for accuracy, fairness, meeting of deadlines, substance, quality of writing, presentation, usability and style. Associated Press print stylebook rules and rules of grammar should be followed on every assignment. Factual errors have serious consequences; for each instance, a letter grade will be deducted.

Letter-grade deductions also will be taken for broken links, including for photos, and for navigation that doesn't work. Letter-grade deductions will also be made for photos that are out-of-focus. All written and web assignments are due at the start of class, unless specifically instructed otherwise. A full letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late, except for the final project, which will receive an F (55 percent) if turned in after the deadline. Work not turned in at all receives a 0.

Minus and plus grading will be assessed as follows:

98-100 = A+

93-97 = A

90-92 = A-

88-89 = B+

83-87 = B

80-82 = B-

78-79 = C+

73-77 = C

70-72 = C-

68-69 = D+

63-67 = D

60-62 = D-

0-59 = F

Attendance and punctuality

It is important that you attend every class and show up on time. To do otherwise will negatively affect your grade, because you will be missing reporting and writing instruction, class discussions, quizzes and assignments. The dropped grade policy (as described in the grading section above) is designed to accommodate missed class assignments due to brief illness and emergencies. Please notify the instructor in advance, if possible, if you will be missing class due to illness or emergency, so that she or he can make arrangements to get notes to you.

Academic integrity

Along with certain rights, students have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Adhering to a high ethical standard is of special importance in journalism, where reliability and credibility are the cornerstones of the field. Therefore, the college has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy on academic dishonesty. Any abridgment of academic integrity standards in a College of Journalism course will be referred to the university’s [Office of Student Conduct](#) and the college’s associate deans. To ensure this is understood, all students are asked to sign an academic integrity pledge at the beginning of the semester that will cover all assignments in this course. Students found to have violated the university’s honor code may face sanctions, including a grade of XF for the course, suspension or expulsion from the university.

Religious holidays

There will be no tests or major assignments scheduled on religious holidays identified by the university. If you expect to miss a class during the semester due to a religious holiday, please notify the instructor in writing before the start of the second class.

Inclement weather

If the university closes due to foul weather (snow, ice, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes) or other emergencies and class must be canceled, students will be advised of assignment adjustments by the instructor. We will likely use our class ELMS site to make these notifications and/or conduct a virtual class. Please check the [university’s home page](#) if in doubt about whether or not classes have been canceled on campus.

Names and self-identification

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and disability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Students with disabilities

Students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning) needing accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to meet with the instructor as soon as possible after the first class. Students will be asked to provide the instructor with the accommodation letter developed for the student by the [Accessibility and Disability Service](#) on campus. To schedule an appointment with the ADS, call 301-314-7682 or stop by the Disability Support Service front desk in the Shoemaker Building, Room 0106. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Find more on the process here: <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/start/eligibility/>

Additional support

The [UMD Counseling Center](#) provides personal, social and academic support services for UMD students. This includes individual, group and couples counseling, for anxiety, depression, stress, relationship problems, eating concerns, traumatic events and more.

For more on university course-related policies, please refer to The University's Office of Undergraduate Studies: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>