JOUR71105 - Fundamentals of Multimedia Storytelling: Interactive Journalism

Wednesdays, 5:30 - 8:20 pm, Room 444

Fall 2019

Basic info

Elbert Wang

Email: elbert.wang@journalism.cuny.edu

Office hours: By appointment or email me. Please allow 2-3 days for me to reply.

Why is this course important?

Being a journalist is about more than just putting words on a page. This course will help you learn to think about your stories in ways that will make them come alive for you and your audience. You’ll also learn to be comfortable *not* knowing how to do something — and seeking out solutions on your own. This is a crucial skill when you’re coding, but it’s even more important to know how to do as a journalist.

Course Description:

This three-credit course will introduce you to conceptualizing and producing content across multiple platforms — from Web sites to tablets and mobile devices — by exploring essential concepts, tools and interactive story forms.   
  
You’ll learn how the news industry is adapting to new technologies and ways to map or illustrate data and news. You’ll also explore ways to add interactivity to audio and visual storytelling.   
  
More specifically, this course will introduce you to the basics of HTML/CSS. We'll explore all these tools and technologies within the journalistic context of pitching, reporting, producing data and interactive-rich news packages.  
  
The course covers fundamental technical skills that will serve as the foundation for your interactive work at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism.

By the end of this course, you’ll be able to:

* Produce journalism for the Internet
* Build basic HTML pages and layouts
* Manipulate web content design using CSS
* Learn how to use the command line
* Learn basic version control and publishing a website using Git/GitHub
* Find and use data responsibly and effectively
* Learn the math required to effectively analyze data
* Produce basic maps and charts that convey information clearly and at a glance
* Report and produce stories with data and interactivity
* Craft questions to ensure receive technical guidance from web programming communities

Business stuff

Attendance:

Because of the collaborative/workshop nature of this course, I encourage you to come to all class sessions. You do have one day available to you to use for sick days, mental health days, travel, etc. Email me if you want to use it, and work with your group members to catch up on any missed classwork. **Any additional sessions missed will result in the loss of a percentage point per day.**

Technology**:**

This is a technology-centered course that will require you to have your computers with you during class sessions. Keep your focus on the task at hand and PLEASE don’t open Facebook or Twitter or email or Slack or anything else that will be distracting.

That being said, keep your phones away unless they specifically pertain to an activity we’re doing.

Deadlines  
  
**Missing a deadline results in an automatic half-grade reduction.** Your grade will continue to drop by half a grade for each subsequent day after the deadline until you file your assignment.   
  
Plan ahead and remember that in journalism: done is better than perfect. It will always be better to hand in something than nothing. If you are having trouble with your assignment let me know immediately, do not wait until it is too late.

Story Guidelines

Your work for this class should be your own original reporting. However, if you've done reporting for another class that you'd like to expand on in an interactive project, I encourage you to return to stories you know well.

Every story you produce for our class should include clear source information for any data or images that you did not produce yourself.

Plagiarism and Copyright  
  
It is a serious ethical violation to take any material created by another person and represent it as your own original work. Any such plagiarism will result in serious disciplinary action, possibly including dismissal from the CUNY J-School. Plagiarism may involve copying text from a book or magazine without attributing the source, or lifting words, code, photographs, videos, or other materials from the Internet and attempting to pass them off as your own. Please ask me if you have any questions about how to distinguish between acceptable research and plagiarism.

In addition to being a serious academic issue, copyright is a serious legal issue.

Never "lift" or "borrow" or "appropriate" or "repurpose" graphics, audio, or code without both permission and attribution. This guidance applies to scripts, audio, video clips, programs, photos, drawings, and other images, and it includes images found online and in books.

Create your own graphics, seek out images that are in the public domain or shared via a creative commons license that allows derivative works, or use images from the AP Photo Bank or which the school has obtained licensing.

If you’re repurposing code, be sure to keep the original licensing intact. If you’re not sure how to credit code, ask.

The exception to this rule is fair use: if your story is about the image itself, it is often acceptable to reproduce the image. If you want to better understand fair use, the [Center for Media and Social Impact](http://cmsimpact.org/code/set-principles-fair-use-journalism/) is an excellent resource.

When in doubt: ask.

Diversity

It's critical that you learn to include a diverse set of voices in your stories — something that is often glossed over when finding stories in spreadsheets and online sources.

Look for stories about and voices from communities that are underrepresented.

Attitude

The phrases “I can’t do this” and “I’m not a numbers person” are hereby banned! This material can be challenging, but it’s crucial that we cultivate a positive attitude and a learner’s mindset in this class.

Grading Rubric:

#### For all assignments:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | F (0-70) | C (70-79) | B (80-89) | A (90-100) |
| Quality/Professionalism | Assignment is not complete or plagiarized. There is a significant number of spelling/grammar errors. Could not be published. | Assignment is completed but could use significant editing. There are multiple spelling/grammar errors. Format or focus of the project is unclear. Is a good start but needs more work to be published. | Assignment is executed with skill and subtlety, there are some spelling/grammar errors, and the project could be published with another round of editing. | Assignment is executed with skill and subtlety, there are no spelling/grammar errors, and is presented clearly and professionally.The project is ready to be published. |
| Effort/Application | Work is not complete, and there is no attempt to use the relevant tools assigned. | The work misuses the relevant tools. There are technical errors and the vision for the project isn’t quite aligned with the assignment. Work is on time. | The work attempts to take appropriate advantage of the relevant tools. There might be technical errors but the vision is right-on. Work is on time and it fulfills the assignment. | The work has been prepared with careful thought and attention to detail, and it takes appropriate advantage of the relevant tools. Work is on time and it fulfills the assignment. |
| Journalism | The work is plagiarized. DON’T DO THIS. | The work tells a true story that is reported originally by the student. Sources are appropriate but no clear effort has been made to seek out a diverse set of sources. | The work tells a true story that is reported originally by the student. Sources are appropriate and are somewhat diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, race, and political opinion. | The work tells a true, compelling story that is reported originally by the student. Sources are appropriate and diverse in age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, race, and political opinion. |
| Discussion | You have not completed the assigned reading/exercises to prepare for discussion. You do not participate in discussion (you’re on your computer or looking at your phone). You are disrespectful of me or your classmates. | You are often unprepared. You miss more than one class period without explanation. You are respectful of me and your classmates. | You come to class having completed some of the work necessary to participate in discussion. You are somewhat engaged in the discussion. You are respectful of me and your classmates. | You come to class having completed the work necessary to participate in discussion. You are engaged in the discussion by both paying attention and participating. You are respectful of me and your classmates. |

Assignment Values:

Grading for individual assignments is based on the level of professionalism of the finished work:

**A** being professional quality work with minimal editing required.

**B** being good quality student work.

**C** being unsatisfactory work.

**F** being atrocious, unacceptable work.

Grading for the class as a whole will be based on your overall performance, with the weights of assignment and other grades as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Percentage Value** |
| Attendance/participation | 15% |
| Interactive news presentation | 10% |
| HTML/CSS Web page | 25% |
| Data chart | 25% |
| Mapping assignment | 25% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

Projects & due dates

Interactive news presentation (10%)

Due: TBD

We’ll start each class period with a presentation evaluating the interactive techniques used in stories published by major media outlets. The project needs to have been published during the span of the semester (between August-December 2019). I’ll assign your presentation dates the first week of class.

These presentations should last about 10-15 minutes, and you should cover:

1. Identify the tools and techniques used in this story.
2. Compare use of this technique to other uses of a similar technique..
3. Propose another use of this technique. How else could you imagine using this to tell another story?
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of this technique. What does it bring to this story? How could it have been improved?

Unit 1 Project: HTML/CSS web page/graphic (25%)

Due: Oct. 15, 10:00 pm (night before class 6 – **10/1**)

[File here](https://forms.gle/rU9pjZTGiAyGeyp66)

Using edited text and images from your Craft of Reporting class, create a page using HTML and style it with CSS. You should have the following elements:

* Headline
* At least four images that represent some important facet of your story.
* Build the graphic using ONLY HTML and CSS.
* [Use pre-designed, royalty-free icons.](https://www.flaticon.com/)
* Include your name somewhere at the bottom of your graphic
* You MUST use the design principles we’ve discussed — pay attention to font, hierarchy and color.

Logistics

* Your project folder should be the name of your project slug (one or two words)
* Remember to use proper file names (index.html, all lowercase, etc)
* Have proper folder/file hierarchy
* Use github to publish your webpage
* Fill out [this form](https://forms.gle/rU9pjZTGiAyGeyp66) to file the piece.

Unit 2 Project: Data chart (25%)

Due dates:

* [Pitch here](https://forms.gle/aPEVxir1emfUcntQ6) by Nov. 3, 10:00 pm (night before class 9 – 11/5)
* [Submit final assignment here](https://forms.gle/PqcYy85XNnvW4kEx7) by Nov. 17, 10:00 pm (night before class 10 – 11/12)

Logistics:

* Find a topic you are interested in that involves data and datasets.
* Analyze it to find interesting, timely patterns or trends.
* By Oct. 27 at 10:00 pm, pitch me your idea (why is it interesting, timely and insightful. [Pitch here.](https://forms.gle/aPEVxir1emfUcntQ6)
* Once I approve the pitch, call an expert on that subject who can evaluate the relevance and accuracy of the concept/trend you found in the data.
* Write a maximum 150-word piece (including the quote) and create a chart.
* Build your own HTML/CSS responsive page with the following:
  + Headline
  + Byline
  + Your 150-word max text.
  + Chart with caption aligned left or right
  + Link to original data set
* A photograph that reflects the topic, centered above the headline, with a caption and credit
* You will FTP the content to your site.
* **The final assignment is due Nov. 17 by 10pm**. [Please enter URL to the web page here.](https://forms.gle/PqcYy85XNnvW4kEx7)

Unit 3 Project: Mapping assignment (25%)

Due dates:

* [Pitch here](https://forms.gle/LF6xjnKhQ4FuFo7z5) by Dec. 1 at 10:00 pm (night before class 12 – 11/26)
* [Submit final assignment here](https://forms.gle/9by835YYwrXYaea99) by December 15, 10:00 pm (night before class 14 – 12/10)

Logistics:

* This is a news short story — 150-250 words — that has a geographic component which you will illustrate using a map or maps.
* By Dec. 1 at 10pm, pitch me your idea (why is it interesting, timely and insightful).
* Once I approve the pitch, call an expert on that subject who can evaluate the relevance and accuracy of the concept/trends you found in the data.
* Write a 150-250 word piece (including quotes from the expert) and create a map to tell your story.
* Build your own HTML/CSS page with the following:
  + A meaningful headline that captures the story in a compelling way — not in a way that simply labels the map
  + Your byline
  + Your story text
  + An interactive map. Do not create a static graphic
  + Link to the original data set
  + Link to the final clean data you used to create the graphic
  + A photograph that reflects the topic as an illustration, centered
* The final assignment is due by Dec. 15 at 10:00 pm. [Please enter the URL to the web page here.](https://forms.gle/9by835YYwrXYaea99)

Coaches

If you are having technical issues, please don’t hesitate to reach out to these coaches! They’re here to help you.

Itameri, Kirsti

* Coaching Area(s): design, WordPress, Illustrator, Photoshop, social media
* Days/Hours: Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. – 7:30p.m., or by appointment
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: kirsti.itameri@journalism.cuny.edu

McCarthy, TC

* Coaching Area(s): coding
* Days/Hours: Thursdays 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: tc.mccarthy@journalism.cuny.edu

McKenna, Christine

* Coaching Area(s): multimedia production and packaging
* Days/Hours: By appointment
* Location: Room 432
* Email: christine.mckenna@journalism.cuny.edu

Singleton, Malik

* Coaching Area(s): data storytelling, WordPress, HTML, CSS
* Days/Hours: Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: malik.singleton@journalism.cuny.edu

Wells, Nicholas

* Coaching Area(s): data storytelling, HTML, CSS, R
* Days/Hours: Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: [nicholasbwells@gmail.com](mailto:nicholasbwells@gmail.com)

Wolfe, Julia

* Coaching Area(s): interactive data journalism, coding
* Days/Hours: Wednesday and Thursday evenings by appointment only
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: [juruwolfe@gmail.com](mailto:juruwolfe@gmail.com)

Saudi, Nour

* Coaching Area(s): HTML CSS, JavaScript, data analysis, Excel
* Days/Hours: Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
* Location: Newsroom
* Email: [nour.saudi@journalism.cuny.edu](mailto:nour.saudi@journalism.cuny.edu)

Lesson plans

*I reserve the right to switch readings/lesson plans around. I will always communicate this to you in advance.*

Week 1: Class overview - 9/5/2019

Get to know each other and the class! Also, syllabus review and icebreakers 😈

*To do this week:*

* Email me the answer to this question: Why are you a journalist? This is a tough, unstable industry — why aren’t you an accountant or a digital marketer or something else more normal? **Write me a short paragraph explaining why and email it to me by September 4, 10:00 pm.**
* Install:
  + [Cyberduck FTP](https://cyberduck.io/)
  + [Atom](https://atom.io/)
  + Microsoft Excel
* Purchase hosting and a domain name that you’ll use this semester — there are a handful of options, but I’ll be using [GoDaddy](https://www.godaddy.com/). *I have other options available if this is not financially feasible. Please reach out!*
* TKTK

**UNIT 1: CREATING FOR THE WEB**

Week 2: Intro to web architecture - 9/9/2019

Learn the building blocks of a web page – and how content gets from your computer to the internet.

*To do this week:*

* Tk
* Tk
* tk

Week 3: HTML - 9/16/2019

Learn how to build the skeleton of your web page in HTML.

*To do this week:*

* [Codecademy Introduction to HTML interactive lessons:](https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-html#course-landing-page)
  + “Introduction to HTML”
  + “HTML Document Standards”
* Read this:
  + [Design Principles for News Apps and Graphics](https://www.propublica.org/nerds/design-principles-for-news-apps-graphics)
  + [The Science Behind Fonts](https://thenextweb.com/dd/2017/03/31/science-behind-fonts-make-feel/#!s2ugn)

Week 4: Design principles & CSS - 9/23/2019

We talk about what makes things look good on the web and on mobile. Then we’ll learn about CSS: What it is, how it’s different from HTML, and how you can use them together to make your web pages sing!

*To do this week:*

* Refresh your CSS skills:
  + [Codecademy Learn CSS interactive lessons:](https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-css) 
    - “CSS Setup and Selectors”
    - “‘CSS Visual Rules”
    - “The Box Model”
    - “Changing the Box Model”
    - “CSS Display and Positioning”
    - “CSS Color”
    - “CSS Typography”
    - “CSS Grid Essentials”
* Finish the menu web page exercise and email me the link by TKTK at 10:00 pm.
* Bring a story to class that you’ve been working on in your craft class. You’ll be using this to work on your Unit 1 project next week!
* More reading if you’re interested:
  + [The Difference Between ID and Class](https://css-tricks.com/the-difference-between-id-and-class/)
  + [Coding for Journalists: 10 Programming Concepts It Helps to Understand](https://onlinejournalismblog.com/2014/05/09/coding-for-journalists-10-programming-concepts-it-helps-to-understand/)

Week 5: Finishing up CSS & workshop - 10/7/2019

We’ll continue reviewing CSS concepts and then have our first workshop of the semester, where you’ll work on your Unit 1 project.

*To do this week:*

* + Finish Unit 1 project upload it to your site via FTP by **10 pm on 10/15/2019.** Submit your published link here..
  + Read this:
  + [The ProPublica Guide to Bulletproofing Your Data](https://github.com/propublica/guides/blob/master/data-bulletproofing.md)
  + [Why data is never raw](https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/why-data-is-never-raw)
  + [The Quartz guide to bad data](https://github.com/Quartz/bad-data-guide)
  + [Data Journalism Isn’t Just a Technical Skill – It’s a Cultural One Too](https://onlinejournalismblog.com/2015/06/24/data-journalism-isnt-just-a-technical-skill-its-a-cultural-one-too/)

**UNIT 2: DATA**

Week 6: Intro to data journalism - 10/16/2019

We’re talkin’ data! We can \*all\* be numbers people. Why should we use data in our stories? Where can you find good data? What makes data good vs. bad?

*To do this week:*

* [NewsU: Math for Journalists](http://www.newsu.org/courses/math-for-journalists)
* [Cleaner, Smarter Spreadsheets Start with Structure](https://source.opennews.org/articles/building-cleaner-smarter-spreadsheets/)
* Additional reading if you’re interested:
  + - [A Beginner’s Guide to Data Journalism](http://www.interhacktives.com/2012/12/28/a-beginners-pre-guide-to-data-journalism/)
    - [5 Ways Statistics are Used to Lie to You Every Day](http://www.cracked.com/article_20318_the-5-most-popular-ways-statistics-are-used-to-lie-to-you.html)

Week 7: How to analyze data - 10/21/2019

We’ll get deeper into the things you can do with excel: Combining data sets, relative values, and indexing (lookup formulas). We’ll practice analyzing data numerically, and talk about the Unit 2 project.

*To do this week:*

* Read:
  + - [Which Chart or Graph is Right for You?](https://www.tableau.com/learn/whitepapers/which-chart-or-graph-is-right-for-you)
    - [NewsU: How to Use Housing Data on Your Beat](http://www.newsu.org/courses/how-use-housing-data-your-beat)
    - [How to plan your Data Driven Story with a set of useful templates](https://medium.com/notes-from-the-classroom/data-story-templates-whats-your-data-driven-story-project-about-816da7929453)
  + TK

Week 8: How to visualize data - 10/28/2018

We’ll walk through the different types of data visualizations you can use. Then we’ll learn about how to use Datawrapper and practice it individually and as a group.

*To do this week:*

* Your pitch for the Unit 2 project is due Nov. 3, 2019 at 10:00 pm. Submit your pitch here.

Week 9: Dataviz practice - 11/4/2019

We’ll spend most of the class workshopping datasets together. You should receive feedback on your Unit 2 project pitch by the end of this week.

*To do this week:*

* Get started on your Unit 2 project once you get the green light from me!

Week 10: Data workshop - 11/11/2019

This is your time to work on your Unit 2 project.

* Unit 2 project is due here by Nov. 17, at 10:00 pm.
* [Using Maps To Tell Your Story](http://www.esri.com/news/arcnews/summer12articles/using-web-maps-to-tell-your-story.html)
* [When Maps Shouldn’t Be Maps](http://www.ericson.net/content/2011/10/when-maps-shouldnt-be-maps/)

**UNIT 3: MAPS**

Week 11: Intro to maps & geospatial data - 11/18/2019

What is geospatial data? How do you find it? How can you use maps in your journalism?

*To do this week:*

* Create an account on Carto.

Week 12: Analyzing geospatial data- 11/25/2019

We’ll talk about when maps make the most sense for analyzing data, how to organize information spatially, and what tools are best for doing this work.

*To do this week:*

* Your pitch for the Unit 3 project is due here by Dec. 1 at 10:00 pm

Week 13: Visualizing geospatial data - 12/2/2019

Practicing building maps in Carto. You should get feedback on your pitch from me by the end of this week.

*To do this week:*

* Start working on Unit 3 project once you get the green light from me.

Week 14: Mapping workshop- 12/9/2019

This is your time to work on your Unit 3 project.

*To do this week:*

* Your Unit 3 project is due by Dec. 15 at 10:00 pm

Week 15: Career day - 12/16/2019

We’ll update resumes to include what we’ve learned this semester. We’ll also have a guest speaker come to talk about data journalism and reporting.