

Multimedia Journalism

Syllabus

COM 450 (TT 10:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.)

Multimedia Journalism

Fall 2017

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Office hours: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 - 2 p.m., or, preferably, by appointment

DESCRIPTION

Students gather and present news and information in a converged media environment that combines text, graphics, photojournalism, audio and video. Students work as individuals and in teams to write, report and produce online multimedia products. Capstone course in the Journalism major.

GOAL

Sharpen the skills of critical thinking, reporting, writing and multimedia production under deadline.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- plan multimedia projects, conduct audience analysis, select resources, gather information, and create content in appropriate forms (text, audio, graphics, animation, video, interactivity).
- write clearly and effectively using appropriate content styles.
- employ the tools of technology to produce multimedia projects.
- determine appropriate manners of technical dissemination with consideration of file size, speed of delivery, linking and search-engine optimization to maximize effects.
- use computer-assisted reporting to gather data, apply numerical concepts and present information.
- engage in ethical ways of reasoning and apply professional standards, such as truth, accuracy, fairness and attention to the diversity of domestic and global audiences.

ACCESSORIES

This class meets in a computer lab, but you may wish to bring a thumb drive to save any files you create.

Take notes during each of your interviews, and keep those notes in case there are questions regarding the accuracy of your quotes or information. Some students find it helpful to purchase separate notebooks for each of their assignments.

You might also consider purchasing a voice recorder or voice recorder app for your interviews.

You will make heavy use of equipment from the School of Communications' Gear Room. However, the Gear Room does not supply memory cards for cameras, so you will need to have your own. A 16 GB SDHC, Class 6 or better flash memory card with a compatible compact card reader is recommended.

For video editing, a 1TB external hard drive is recommended.

To upload your content to your website, you will need an FTP program. Cyberduck is free and available on both Macs and PCs.

Writing projects should adhere to AP Style. If you don't already have one, an AP Stylebook will be a good investment.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will complete three major, publishable multimedia assignments: One assignment will be done individually, one assignment can be done either individually or with a classmate of your choosing, and the final assignment will be a group project.

All multimedia projects should be uploaded as webpages to your student.elon.edu using Cyberduck, with the resulting URL being submitted via Moodle. Please do not email assignments or bring files to class. All multimedia projects will be sent along to producers at the student-run Elon News Network for their publishing consideration.

The multimedia assignments include both a draft and final version, in between which you receive feedback from both the instructor. For the first two assignments, you will also receive feedback from (and give feedback to) your classmates.

EXERCISES

Students will complete several exercises: a research paper into a professional multimedia journalism project, and two embeddable interactive graphics created to complement an existing story on Elon News Network.

DEADLINES

Deadlines are considered as important as in a newsroom. Late assignments will receive 0 percent.

Please remember that all assignments other than quizzes and the in-class assignments can be turned in early. If it helps to give yourself deadlines earlier than those listed, you are strongly encouraged to do so.

GRADING

Assignments will be evaluated on factors that include quality of the completeness, structure and organization, style, accuracy, spelling, grammar and adherence to AP style rules. Misspelled names and major errors in fact will result in significant reductions in the assignment's grade, so double-check everything. Projects do not have length requirements (quite the opposite, actually — brevity is a trademark of good journalism). Yet a variety of sources and comprehensive reporting are paramount for successful stories.

Your three major multimedia projects will have a draft version and a final version. If you elect to not turn in a final version of your project, the graded percentage you received on your draft will apply to your final.

Multimedia Projects (700 points)

- Investigative Story 1 Pitch (30 points)
- Investigative Story 1 Draft (100 points)
- Investigative Story 1 Assessment (20 points)
- Investigative Story 1 Final (100 points)
- Investigative Story 2 Pitch (30 points)
- Investigative Story 2 Draft (100 points)
- Investigative Story 2 Assessment (20 points)
- Investigative Story 2 Final (100 points)
- Investigative Story 3 Draft (100 points)
- Investigative Story 3 Final (100 points)

Exercises (105 points)

- Multimedia Journalism Research (25 points)
- Embeddable 1 (40 points)
- Embeddable 2 (40 points)

To determine your final grade, the following grading scale is used:

A: 93 percent (748 out of 805 points)
A-: 90 percent (724 out of 805 points)
B+: 87 percent (700 out of 805 points)
B: 83 percent (668 out of 805 points)
B-: 80 percent (644 out of 805 points)
C+: 77 percent (619 out of 805 points)
C: 73 percent (587 out of 805 points)
C-: 70 percent (563 out of 805 points)
D+: 67 percent (539 out of 805 points)
D: 63 percent (507 out of 805 points)
D-: 60 percent (483 out of 805 points)
F: below 60 percent

REQUIRED STATEMENTS

The following statements are required for inclusion — either by the university, school or department — on all course syllabuses.

Attendance Policy

Students in the Department of Communications are expected to attend all classes. Just as professionals go to work each day, we expect students in a professional school to come to class on time and be prepared to work.

A student who misses more than 20 percent of scheduled classes in a term (more than eight absences for classes meeting three times a week) automatically receives an F because the student has missed too much content and participation to pass a course in a professional school.

Teachers will lower the final grade in a class for each absence beyond the equivalent of one week of class (three absences for classes meeting three times a week).

Exceptions exist for individual class absences for observance of a recognized religious holiday and for absences for participating in sanctioned university activities. Students participating in such events must follow policy as stated in the student handbook.

Honor Code

Elon's honor pledge calls for a commitment to Elon's shared values of honesty, integrity, respect and responsibility. To be clear about what constitutes violations of these values, students should be familiar with code of conduct policies described in the student handbook.

Students with questions about the specific interpretation of these values and violations as they relate to this course should contact this instructor immediately. Violations in academic-related areas will be documented in an incident report which will be maintained in the Office of Student Conduct, and may result in a lowering of the course grade and/or failure of the course with an Honor Code F.

Violations specifically covered by academic honor code policies include: plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing, and the facilitation of another's dishonesty. Multiple violations may result in a student's suspension from the university.

Academic Honesty

The School of Communications takes plagiarism seriously, just as businesses and other media organizations and scholars do.

All forms of dishonesty mentioned above may result in an F in a course and expulsion from the university. Although all of these are clear violations of the university Honor Code, plagiarism is a special concern for communications professionals and scholars.

What is plagiarism? It is using someone else's work such as passages, photographs, music, video, graphics and other images, and claiming it as your own. It can be copying work that has appeared in a journal, a magazine, a newspaper or online – anywhere, really – and presenting it as your own. Cutting and pasting passages from the web into your work, for example, is plagiarism unless you credit the source of the material or images. Take this as your guiding principle: If you quote someone else's words or appropriate their image, attribute the source.

In brief, you may not adopt or reproduce the ideas, words or statements of another person without acknowledgment or attribution. In many cases, such work is copyrighted. Acknowledgment is required when borrowing facts, statistics, images or illustrative material, unless that information is common knowledge or in the public domain. (Example: China is the most populous nation on Earth. Or: Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system.)

If you quote someone else's words or use information or material acquired or created by someone else, then you must attribute the source. Definitions and examples of Elon Honor Code violations above may be found online.

Disability Services

If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disabilities Services in the Duke Building, Room 108 (336-278-6500), for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. For more information about Disabilities Services, please visit its website.

Religious Holidays Policies

In supporting religious diversity, Elon has a policy and procedures for students who wish to observe religious holidays that are in conflict with the academic calendar, allowing students an excused absence. Students who wish to observe a holiday during the semester must complete the online Religious Observance Notification Form within the first two weeks of the semester.

Tuesday, Aug. 29

Introduction to multimedia journalism. Review syllabus. Investigative journalism.



Multimedia Survey

Thursday, Aug. 31

Examples of multimedia journalism and story planning guides.



Online Package Planning Guide

Tuesday, Sept. 5

Visual composition.

Thursday, Sept. 7

Feature writing.

Tuesday, Sept. 12

Skills bootcamp.



Investigative Story 1 Pitch

Thursday, Sept. 14

No class today. Sign up for a pitch conference to review your story pitch either on Thursday, Sept. 14, or Friday, Sept. 15.

Tuesday, Sept. 19

Interview preparation for Richard G. Gary, executive director of Allied Churches of Alamance County.



Multimedia Journalism Research

Thursday, Sept. 21

Interview with Richard G. Gary, executive director of Allied Churches of Alamance County.

Tuesday, Sept. 26

Investigative Story 1 Draft evaluations.



Investigative Story 1 Draft

Thursday, Sept. 28

Skills bootcamp.

Tuesday, Oct. 3

Skills bootcamp.

Thursday, Oct. 5



Investigative Story 1 Final

Tuesday, Oct. 10

Math for journalists. Data cleansing with Excel.

Thursday, Oct. 12

Databases.



Tuesday, Oct. 17

Fall break. No class today.

Thursday, Oct. 19

No class today. Sign up for a pitch conference (as a group if working in a pair) to review your story pitch either on Wednesday, Oct. 18, or Thursday, Oct. 19.

Tuesday, Oct. 24

Ethical case studies.

Thursday, Oct. 26

No class today.

Tuesday, Oct. 31

Investigative Story 2 evaluations.



Investigative Story 2 Draft

Thursday, Nov. 2


Photography and videography with unmanned aerial systems.

Tuesday, Nov. 7

360-degree photography and videography.

Thursday, Nov. 9

Investigative Story 3 workday.

 Investigative Story 2 Final

Tuesday, Nov. 14

Investigative Story 3 workday.

Thursday, Nov. 16

No class today.

 Investigative Story 3 Draft

Tuesday, Nov. 21

Thanksgiving break. No class today.

Thursday, Nov. 23

Thanksgiving break. No class today.

Tuesday, Nov. 28

No class today. Sign up for a project conference (as a group) to review your project draft either on Tuesday, Nov. 28, or Wednesday, Nov. 29.

Thursday, Nov. 30

Intellectual property and defamation law.



Embeddable 2

Tuesday, Dec. 5

Analytics and search engine optimization.

Thursday, Dec. 7

Careers in media.

Monday, Dec. 11

Final from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Investigative Story 3 Final
