Digital Storytelling

Journalism 4341–Section 001 | Fall 2013

Tues. & Thurs., 9:30-10:50 a.m. COBA 336

Instructor: Dr. Erika Pribanic-Smith
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Hours: Tues./Thurs., 8-9 a.m., 11:30 a.m. to noon, & by appt. **Email:** epsmith@uta.edu
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Note: Because of other department and university duties, office hours occasionally will be cancelled. Cancellations will be posted on the office door and, when possible, announced in class and/or via email.

Prerequisites: Completion of JOUR 2346 and JOUR 3341.

Course Description:
Creating multimedia packages in news and narrative formats. Conducting social media journalism. Readings in newsroom practices, law, and ethics of digital communication.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is intended to instruct journalism students in the effective use of digital and social media technology to tell stories. Students will learn the following:

- What digital storytelling journalism is.
- What ethical issues (i.e., intellectual property and copyright) are involved.
- How to gather and store information electronically.
- Types of media that are used online and how to choose the appropriate one to tell a given story.
- Video and audio editing and production skills.
- The importance of social media and interactivity.

Course Materials:

- Readings as assigned and by the instructor (provided on Blackboard)
- Audio, video, and photo equipment. NOTE: A limited supply of equipment is available for checkout from the department, but students are encouraged to use their own when possible. Smartphones will suffice in most cases.

Blackboard:
Although all course assignments will be posted to Twitter and your blog, you still must "submit" a notice of your work on Blackboard (http://elearn.uta.edu). Assignments not submitted to the proper slot on time will not be graded.

The instructor also will post course Power Points to Blackboard in advance of each class, but students are encouraged to take notes in class as well. All course documents are posted to Blackboard for your reference.

All grades for individual course assignments, including in-class work, will be posted to Blackboard, and course averages will be posted there periodically. Please log in regularly to check grades and announcements. No grade information will be emailed. Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester on Blackboard and seek guidance if their grade drops below satisfactory levels.

Course Policies

Grade Calculation:

Assignment	% of grade
Class participation	30
Practice assignments	40
Group Project	30

Grading scale
A – 90-100 percent
B – 80-89 percent
C – 70-79 percent
D – 60-69 percent
F – below 60 percent

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Class participation will be evaluated based on asking insightful questions and contributing informed, thoughtful comments to class discussions, as well as by completing in-class tutorials and assignments.

PRACTICE ASSIGNMENTS: As students learn about each facet of new media reporting and technology, they will be asked to complete assignments that enable them to practice these techniques and demonstrate competence. Additional details will be provided as each assignment arises. Students will be given in-class (workshop) time to complete these assignments, but it is expected that students also will complete some work toward these assignments outside of class.

GROUP PROJECT: Students will be expected to utilize all of the skills gleaned from the practice assignments to produce packages in groups of three. Details on the project will be provided later in the course.

Grading procedures: Each in-class and out-of-class writing assignment handout will include a rubric that explains exactly how the instructor will grade that assignment.

Attendance: Students are to treat the class like a job; they are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Employees who miss work do not get paid. Students who miss class receive 0s for work completed in their absence.

Absences from class are neither excused nor unexcused. Students are given two personal/sick days to use at their discretion over the course of the semester, which will allow the student to make up work missed in class. The student must consult with the instructor immediately upon returning to class to set a deadline for makeup work. Failure to complete the makeup work will result in a zero.

Tardiness will not be tolerated. Employees would be docked pay for arriving late to work. Students similarly will be docked points off the daily participation grade at a rate of 2 percent per minute late. In other words, students will lose a full letter grade off that day's participation exercise for every five minutes they are late.

Late work: Students are expected to adhere to deadlines as posted in the course syllabus, on assignment sheets, and on Blackboard. **ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE.** All assignments will be due at 11:59 p.m. on the assigned deadline day. Remember that you must both post your assignment on your blog or Twitter AND submit on Blackboard that you have completed your assignment in order to be graded. Blackboard assignment portals will close at midnight, and students must complete their assignment on their blog or Twitter first. Students who have not submitted their assignments to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. will receive a 0.

Note that only **unexpected emergencies (such as a death, grave illness or debilitating injury)** will excuse a student from completing an assignment on time; because of the length of time students are given to complete assignments, they should plan accordingly for religious, personal or professional obligations that may arise around the time that an assignment is due.

In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible to indicate that the story will not be submitted on time. The instructor will not accept the assignment late without official documentation.

Computer and Internet malfunctions will NOT be given consideration for late assignments. Students should give themselves plenty of time to complete assignments so that they may regroup in the wake of a technological snafu.

Work Expectations: Students often will be working on several projects and/or homework assignments at the same time in addition to keeping up with readings for class.

Effective communication requires practice, so students can expect to produce content every week (if not every day) and to complete both out-of-class and in-class assignments. Students will need to begin their projects in advance and not start working on them the night before they are due. If students are struggling with the material or the workload, they should see the instructor during office hours to discuss it.

Behavior expectations:
Students are expected to remain focused on the task at hand for the duration of class each day.

Students will be asked to leave the class if they are engaging in any of the following activities:

- Using cellphones or Smartphones for ANY reason. Keep it silenced and in your pocket/bag for the duration of class.
- Speaking out of turn.
- Studying or working on assignments for other classes.
- Reading any sort of print media (unless required to do so for a lab activity).
- Utilizing the computer for any reason other than in-class assignments.
    - When the class is not working on an assignment, keep the monitor off and mouse upside down.
    - When the class IS working on an assignment, do not use the computer to check email or social media, surf the Web, IM, or anything else unrelated to the assignment.

Students who are asked to leave will be counted as absent for that day (no freebie allowed) and will not be given an opportunity to make up missed work.

Department, College, and University Policies

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. *Stairwells are located at either end of the hallway, to the right and left of the lab.* When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

> *I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*
>
> *I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Furthermore, students are expected to model the honest and ethical behavior in this course that they would be expected to follow as professional communicators. In addition to examples of cheating, plagiarism and collusion described in the student handbook, the following behaviors in this class also constitute academic dishonesty:

- Making up sources, information or quotes except as explicitly specified for certain class assignments
- Failing to properly attribute quotes and ideas to their sources
- Asking someone to lie about a student interviewing him or her
- Getting other people to write class assignments
- Lying to a source to get information
- Copying a published story or using information from a published news account, Web page, database, research paper or press release without proper attribution
- Turning in a story students already have published or written for another class

Course Schedule & Due Dates

The course schedule is tentative and is subject to change. Minor changes will be noted in class; major changes will result in the distribution of a revised schedule.

Week	Dates	Topics/Assignments
1	Aug. 22	Course Overview and Introduction
2	Aug. 27	Building a personal brand/digital portfolio Professional blogspace assigned
	Aug. 29	Workshop: Blogspace DUE (11:59 P.M.): Professional blogspace
3	Sept. 3	****Project Launch with Downtown Arlington**** Telling a story via blogging Practice blog entry assigned
	Sept. 5	Workshop: Blog entry DUE (11:59 P.M.): Blog entry
4	*Sept. 9*	**CENSUS DATE**
	Sept. 10	Telling a story on social media Twitter stories assigned
	Sept. 12	Workshop: Live tweet practice DUE (11:59 P.M.): Live tweet short story
5	Sept. 17	Telling a story with photos Live tweet (photo) and photo slideshow assigned
	Sept. 19	Using photo slideshow software
6	Sept. 24	Workshop: Photo slideshow
	Sept. 26	Workshop: Photo slideshow
7	Oct. 1	Telling a story with audio Live tweet (audio) and audio feature assigned DUE (11:59 P.M.): Photo slideshow
	Oct. 3	Workshop: Photo Live Tweet DUE (11:59 P.M.): Photo Live Tweet
8	Oct. 8	Audio recording
	Oct.10	Workshop: Audio feature
9	Oct. 15	Using audio editing software
	Oct. 17	Workshop: Audio feature DUE (11:59 P.M.): Audio feature
10	Oct. 22	Telling the story with video Live tweet (video) and video feature given
	Oct 25	Workshop: Live tweet (audio) DUE (11:59 P.M.): Live tweet (audio)
11	Oct. 29	Effective videography
	Oct. 30	**LAST DAY TO DROP**
	Oct. 31	COMMUNICATION DAY

12	Nov. 5 Nov. 7	Video editing software Workshop: Live tweet (video) DUE (11:59 P.M.): Live tweet (video)
13	Nov. 12 Nov. 14	Legal, moral, and ethical issues Workshop: Video feature DUE (11:59 P.M.): Video feature
14	Nov. 19 Nov. 21	Feature package assigned Workshop: Feature package
15	Nov. 26 Nov. 28	Workshop: Feature package THANKSGIVING
16	Dec. 3	Workshop: Feature package
FINAL	Dec. 12	DUE (11:59 P.M.): Feature package