CMA 304

Multimedia Storytelling

Fall 2019

This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be responsible for keeping up with the adjustments made during class.

Note: The syllabus in Blackboard contains hyperlinks to required readings.

Dr. Elizabeth Atwood
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Office: 208 Rosenstock
Class: Monday and Wednesday, 2 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, or by appointment.

Required textbooks:

- *The Associated Press Stylebook*

Required social media:
Students are required to have the following accounts:
- Facebook
- Twitter (Use #CMA304 to identify Tweets of interest to this class.)
- WordPress
- YouTube
- Gmail
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn

Required equipment:
- You will need a smart phone or iPad with an up-to-date operating system. You can borrow an iPad from the IT department if you do not have one.

Required Apps on the phone or iPad:

- iMovie

- Voice Record
- WordPress
- YouTube

Required software:

- Adobe Audition (on lab computers)
- Basic photo-editing software

Course information: This course will cover the principles and practices of multimedia journalism, including writing and editing for digital media; blogging; gathering and editing images, audio and video for online use; and legal and ethical issues facing multimedia journalists. You will be required to create a digital portfolio to showcase the work you do in this class as well as the best examples of your academic and professional work.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Develop a practical understanding of the practice of multimedia journalism;
- Become familiar with ethical and legal considerations in the practice of multimedia journalism;
- Become familiar with the basic applications that allow information to exchange over the Internet, including HTML and CSS;
- Understand the concept of convergence and how it affects journalism;
- Understand various forms of digital journalism;
- Gain practical experience in story research and presentation, particularly the techniques of multimedia storytelling;
- Learn the role of social media in reporting stories and building brand;
- Develop a sense of professionalism by communicating accurately and meeting deadlines;

This course aligns with the following CMA program goals in teaching students to:
- Communicate appropriate and clearly in forms specific to the audiences and purposes they serve
- Use multimedia tools effectively and create communications specific for the audience and purposes they serve
- Identify legal principles applicable to communicators
- Develop strategies to confront moral and ethical dilemmas facing communicators
- Research critically, evaluate the results and present them in a cogent manner
- Apply business fundamentals to the creation and distribution of mass media
- Evaluate the influence of media on society

This challenging class requires you to apply the journalism skills you have learned in previous classes to create a digital portfolio to showcase your work. You also will learn the basics of writing and editing for online journalism sites. You will create and maintain a blog during the course of the semester, and you will produce a multimedia story project. Because this is a journalism class, accurate reporting and writing are paramount.

Your work will be displayed for all to see on the internet. Keep that in mind as you report and write. Strive to do you very best work.

Note: While this course will help you navigate a number of different technologies, it is first and foremost a journalism course. The focus will be on the journalism – the reporting and the story – not on the tools. Nor is this a Web design course. Students interested in learning more about website design are encouraged to take IT 180.

To do well in this class, you must read and observe how news is presented online on a consistent basis. Sites worth monitoring include Washingtonpost.com, nytimes.com, Politico.com, The Huffington Post and CNN.com. You also should follow new organizations and journalists on Twitter and Facebook.

Blackboard

Class work, homework and outside writing assignments must be submitted to Blackboard for grading. I will not accept assignments that are emailed to me or handed to me on paper. You also will be expected to check Blackboard regularly for announcements and assignments. Copies of lectures will also be posted to Blackboard the day they are given.

Attendance
Because a significant portion of your grade will be based on in-class work, attendance is required. However, I know life happens. For that reason, I will allow you 2 absences—excused or unexcused. Any work missed due to absence must be made up within one week of your return to class. I will not accept work that is more than one week late without a note from the doctor of Dean of Students. Missing three or more class periods may result in your dismissal from the class.

If any personal or health problems occur during the semester, see me about arranging extra help before getting behind on assignments.

Inclement Weather

Snow happens. In the event that our class must be canceled because of school closing or a delayed opening, you will still be responsible for the assigned readings. Be sure to check Blackboard because I may present alternative lectures or assignments.

Classroom courtesy

- Be on time. You will lose attendance points for habitual tardiness.
- I do not permit cell phones use in my class except in certain lessons. Turn them off and put them away.
- You may use iPads and laptops for taking notes or writing assignments, however, if their use becomes disruptive, you will not be permitted to use them.

Deadlines:

CMA 304 carries rigorous expectations. You will need to learn to perform consistently under inflexible deadlines. If you don't, you won't be prepared to work as a professional communicator. You must have all assignments ready no later than the beginning of the class period for which they are due. A late assignment is a missed deadline.

I will deduct one letter grade per day for late assignments. If an assignment is five days late, you can earn no higher than 50 percent (F). Missed assignments will be scored at 0.

Exceptions can be made for documented serious illnesses that require trips to the emergency room or hospitalizations, and notifications from the Dean of Students. Students must see me as soon as they return to class in order to set up a schedule for making up missed assignments.

General grading criteria on writing assignments:

("A" & "A-")) Publishable work. It is a story that is clear, interesting, and well-written. It has good organization, effective quotes, smooth transitions and no spelling, grammar, or accuracy errors.

("B+", "B", & "B-") Publishable with some editing. It may have some minor spelling or grammatical errors. The lead is effective. The body is cohesive and well-organized.

("C+" & "C") Requires extensive editing to publish. Several sections must be rewritten. The lead may be buried or fail to focus on the most important aspects of the story. The body of the story is disorganized and contains many minor errors. Significant information is missing.

("D") Needs a complete rewrite to be published. The facts are presented ineffectively. The story contains an unacceptable number of spelling, grammar, or accuracy errors.

("F") Contains major factual error(s). Names are misspelled. The facts are so distorted that they could not be rewritten and published.

You will be graded based on professional standards. That might seem a high expectation, but most of you are less than a year away from entering the workforce and any lower standard would be unrealistic and unfair. You should rightfully expect to be prepared to enter the professional world with ease and to perform with competence. Employers will expect you to contribute from day one. You are capable of doing that. Success in this course means you are prepared to do that.

As you might suspect, deciding what is "publishable work" is not an exact science, but is based upon my judgment with more than 30 years of experience as a reporter and editor. For a number of reasons, it's often easier to identify what doesn't work than what does. That means you'll get far more negative than positive feedback at times. A thick skin is considered a tool of the trade. You must learn to benefit from your mistakes, make a serious effort to build on your strengths, and work on your weaknesses.

This course aims to help you develop the skills, self-awareness and grace-under-pressure to become a communications professional. This is important not only if you are going into journalism, but also for careers in marketing or public relations.

Guidelines for writing and reporting:

- Do not plagiarize, fabricate, or submit work you have done for another class (with the exception of the portfolio).
- You may not use photos from other websites without permission, including the Hood website.
- You may not use family members or close friends for your sources.
- Except for your blog, you should not write about events or organizations with which you are involved.
- You may not use quotes or other information published in other news sources. You must do original reporting.
- In writing for the media, accuracy is paramount. Therefore, writing that contains factual errors, including misspelled names, will be marked down **one letter** grade for each mistake.
- Proofread and correctly edit your copy! Punctuation, grammar, spelling and AP style errors will cause you to lose grade points.

About my grading system:

You can keep track of your grade in Blackboard. Your grade is based on a 1,000-point scale. You start with 0 points. You will accumulate points as you complete projects throughout the semester. Divide the points received by points possible and you have your grade.

I make every effort to grade papers within a week after they are submitted. If you do not see your grade within two weeks, ask me about it. **It is your responsibility to be sure your work is submitted properly and that I see it.**

<div align="center">**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**</div>

I **DO NOT** tolerate plagiarism or fabrication of any kind. This includes failing to attribute quotations and information gathered from sources you interview. Also, you may not gather quotations published in other sources and pass them off as your own. Journalists value their integrity and strive to present the truth to their audiences to the best of their ability. You will be asked to live up to these standards as well. Instances of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade on the assignment and no chance for a re-do. I check student work through SafeAssign.

Accommodations

If you have a disability or a personal circumstance that will affect your learning in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs. (Any student who needs accommodation for disabilities is strongly encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services at 301-696-3421 to obtain an official letter of accommodation for all their courses.)

The Office of Accessibility Services provides academic support for students with disabilities. Examples of disabilities include, but are not limited to, mobility impairments, blindness/low vision, psychiatric conditions, recurring medical conditions, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and others. The following are examples of academic accommodations:

- Extended time on exams
- Note-taking support
- Textbooks in alternative formats (electronic, audio, etc.)
- ASL interpreting services

Center for Academic Achievement and Retention (CAAR):

The CAAR office is located on the third floor of Rosenstock Hall and provides a wide range of academic supports for all students. Services range from math and writing tutoring to individualized one-on-one meetings to discuss any barriers that might prevent you from reaching your full academic potential. If you ever need help, feel free to stop by.

About the Grading in CMA 304:

Blog: 250 points
Online portfolio: 250
Mojo assignment: 100 points
Multimedia story project: 225 points
Podcast: 25 points
Class assignments/homework: 150 points

Project descriptions:

Blog (250 points)

You will set up and maintain a reported blog for the duration of the course at Wordpress.com. Choose your topic carefully. Students who struggle in CMA 304 often run into trouble because they cannot keep up with their blogs. Your topic should reflect your professional or personal interest and should help you develop the contacts and resources you will need for your final project.

- You are required to write 12 posts (each post, except the pillar post, is worth 20 points; the pillar post is worth 30 points).
- The posts must span the duration of the semester and you must post at least once a week to receive credit. **You may post more often and are encouraged to do so, but only one post per week will count toward your grade**.
- Each post must include at least one hyperlink.
- Each post should include a comment on a recent event or another's blog post or a news item related to your topic.
- **At least three of the posts must contain original reporting obtained from interviews you conduct in person or by phone or Skype**. Sources must be named and authoritative (not your friends and family).
- Posts should be about 300-350 words each, except the pillar post, which should be 350-500 words.

Posts will be graded on content, mechanics, and the quality and relevance of the link. Links to examples of blogs and blog guidelines can be found on the blog resources page in course documents.

Portfolio. (250 points)
In addition to the blog posts, you will use Wordpress to build your personal brand by creating a portfolio of your work. You will create a page(s) that reflect(s) your accomplishments and career interests. The page(s) will include photographs, a resume, a biographical statement, and at least five samples of your work. You may use work created in this class.

Mojo assignment (100 points): Today's communicators must report and write on the go. This assignment has multiple parts:

1. You will cover an event such as a meeting, speech or sporting event <u>in person</u> and on deadline.

2. Tweet at least three times about the event as it is happening. (15 points)
3. Post about the event on the class Facebook page within two hours after the end of the event. (15 points)
4. Post a photo of the event to Twitter and Facebook (10 points)
5. File a 350- to 500-word story within two hours after the end of the event. (60 points)

Begin looking right away for a news event you can cover for this assignment.

Podcast (25 points)
Using Adobe Audition, you will create a three-minute podcast suitable for airing on Blazer radio.

Multimedia final project (225 points):

You will plan and execute multi-media package on a topic of interest to the Hood community or a college-age audience.

The package will include:

1. An 800- to 1,000-word news or feature story, or two smaller stories of the same word count.

   Your story(ies) must include at least **four** credible and authoritative human sources. **You must interview the sources in person or by phone or Skype, not email.** You may not interview close friends or family members. You may not write in the first person or include your opinion.

   You must make your story pitch to the class and your topic must be approved in advance (before the draft is due). Writing on a topic other than one approved will result in a grade of 0. Although the proposal is due **Nov. 6**, you should start to think of your final project topic sooner.

   You are required to submit a draft of your project text as well as web enhancements. The story must be completely reported, but I will review the text grammar, spelling, style and organization, and the web enhancements for effectiveness and execution. Failure to submit a draft will result in a **25 percent deduction** on the final story grade. A project that is full of typographical and grammatical errors will not be posted to the web. If it cannot be posted to the web, you will lose 100 points on the final project grade.

2. At least three **original** digital elements of at least two different kinds (photos, videos, graphic illustrations or Google map, audio slideshow or audio.)

3. At least three hyperlinks embedded within the text of the story (stories).

4. An Alternative Story Form element, such as a list, Q&A, bio box, etc.

In addition to the multimedia package, you will develop and implement a social media plan for pushing this story out to the public.

1. Write a one-page paper describing the social media platforms you would use and why. Detail the posts and include a schedule for their publication.
2. Post blurbs or teasers to those social media platforms

Presentation:

Present the completed website and social media outreach to the class.

Final project deliverables:

1. The story pitch and story board. Your proposed topic, why this topic is newsworthy and at least <u>four</u> specific (named) sources you will interview for your story. You must include their contact information and what information you expect them to provide for your story**.** In your pitch, you need to show a story board that lists the web elements you expect to use to tell the story. **(10 points)**
2. Text of project with at least three embedded hyperlinks. **(75 points)**
3. Visual or audio elements (photos, graphics, video, audio, audio slideshow) **(50 points)**
4. Alternative Story Form Element **(5 points)**
5. Completed Web pages **(50 points)**
6. Social media plan and links to posts **(25 points)**
7. Presentation **(10 points)**

Class Work/Homework

Class work and homework assignments will be given to reinforce readings and practice concepts learned in class. A student with an excused absence may make up the missed work, but it must be submitted no later than one week after the original due date.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Note: Articles and videos must be read and watched before class on the day listed.

Aug. 26: Intro -- Creating a brand.

Aug. 28: Electronic Portfolios

Due: Your Mission Statement

Post your Twitter handle in the Course Discusson

Read/Watch:

[Digital News Fact Sheet](#)

[Tips for building brand](#)

[Social media resume](#)

[Journalism Students Need to Develop Their Personal Brand](#)

Wordpress tutorial—[Getting Started](#)

[Portfolio Tips](#)

Sept. 2—NO CLASS. LABOR DAY

Sept. 4: Introduction to blogging.

Read:

[Blogging](#)

Due: Personal Inventory Report

Sept. 9: Building your blog readership.

Read: [SEO](#)

Due: Your blog topic and URL

Sept. 11: Writing for the Web

Read:

[What is a Multimedia Story?](#)

[Making good links](#)

Sept. 16: Writing for the Web—Alternative Story Forms

Due: The pillar post.

Sept. 18: Evaluating Online Sources

Read:

[How to Spot Fake News](#)

[More on How to Spot Fake News](#)

Sept. 23: Law and Ethics

Read:

[Washington Post dismisses reporter](#)

Due: Fact-Checking Homework

Sept. 25: Social media tools—Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, others.

Read:

[Introduction to social media](#)

[When Social Media Became News](#)

Due: Blog User Agreement

Sept. 30: Developing a Social Media Plan

[How to Develop A Social Media Plan](#)

[More Social Media Tips](#)

Due: Crowd Source assignment

Oct. 2: Reporting on the go

Due: Mojo Story Proposal

Oct. 7: More Mojo practice

Oct. 9: Working with images—photos and slide shows

Oct. 14: MIDTERM RECESS

Oct. 16: Working with images—maps and charts

Due: Slide Show

Oct. 21: Working with images— video

Last day mojo assignment will be accepted.

Oct. 23: Telling stories with sound

Due: Sounds of your day

Oct. 28: More on audio

Due: Audio Interview

Oct. 30: More on audio

Due: Podcast (at end of class period)

Nov. 4: Content Management Systems

Nov. 6: Web Page Design

Due: Final project proposal with sources and story board

Nov. 11: Nuts and Bolts—HTML

Read: [HTML lesson](#)

Practice: http://www.w3schools.com/html/

Nov. 13: Nuts and Bolts—CSS

Practice: https://www.w3schools.com/css/

Nov. 18: Work on Project

Due: Draft text & art of multimedia project.

Nov. 20: Work on Project and Portfolio

Due: Resume, biographical statement, personal image in Blackboard.

Nov. 25: Work on Project and Portfolio

Due: Revised text and art of multimedia project

Nov. 27: NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec. 2: Work on Project and Portfolio

Due: Social media plan and postings

Dec. 4: Project presentations

Dec. 9: Audience Analytics

Due: Audience Analytics report

Last day blog posts will be accepted.