

## **COMM498P Producing Digital Media from Funding to Finish**

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In May 2016, I attended the Chesapeake Project hosted by the UMD Sustainability Office. In response to those meetings I revised my course *COMM498P Producing Digital Media from Funding to Finish*. The revised course is focused on building a social media campaign around individuals and organizations working toward environmental sustainability. In the course students construct new-media projects that tell the story of someone who is working to change usage of the planet's resources in small or large ways.

Core disciplinary concept: New-media, web site creation, film-making, the writing of press releases, and brand-building are first about constructing a narrative arc, and then second about mastering the technical tools to form that arc and tell the story. Digital tools are utilized to bring those stories to wide audiences.

Assignments Include:

- A written pitch / project plan
- A Kickstarter/Go-fund me campaign
- a 60-second video advertisement
- A Web site and social media campaign
- A press release
- A Producer's 'Book'

Written responses and feedback posts from our readings

Action/collaborative learning Experience. Students can work in teams by dividing roles. There should be a producer, a writer, a director, a host, a cinematographer, and an editor. Roles can be shared and any person can hold multiple roles in the project. For example the Producer is often the Writer. One person could act as both cinematographer and editor. In some cases a single person fills all roles simultaneously.

Assignment: 60-second commercial for sustainability. Students will produce a 60-second ad for someone who is working to clean the environment, reduce waste, change behaviors. The ad should be shot from multiple locations, use b-roll, have clear audio, and should include both a story and strong cinematography. An A will be earned from an ad that is visually interesting, tells a compelling story and is well made.

Follow up. Build a social media campaign including a web site. Write a Press release

Final, a Go Fund me campaign and producer's Book tracking all work.. The funding campaign can be targeted to a specific organization (or cause if organization already handles their own fundraising, or is part of a larger institution).

Students are encouraged to build their a campaign around the following:

The Food Recovery Network

UMD's rooftop gardens and community learning garden

UMD's TerpFarm.

Zagster bike share on campus

The Green Office program

The Green peer educator program

The Sustainability Studies minor

The Landscape Architecture Department's work building green spaces

Worst practices. Shame wasters into reforming actions.

OR any topic in environmentalism and sustainability that they want to pitch. They are also encouraged to reach out directly to the UMD Sustainability Office to explore other areas of focus or other individuals working toward sustainability.

Sustainability learning outcomes and Assessment: Students will learn to build a social media campaign focused on sustainability, they will spend time with individuals working toward change, help that person to tell their story and then use to tools of social media to distribute that narrative. Students will be assessed by their work, the funding campaign, press release, web site, advertisement and their 'Producer's Book' – a resource for tracking their project from beginning to end. The focus on sustainability will have an impact beyond the project and outside of he classroom, potentially affecting their approach to sustainability in their own lives.