

Syllabus Summer 2013  
JOURNALISM 504: Introduction to Multimedia Skills  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12pm-3:45pm

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays before and after class and by appointment

**About the Course:**

JOUR 504, also known colloquially as the "Slice" class, is a crash course in the basic tools of multimedia storytelling, a prerequisite for most jobs in journalism. The class has historically been "sliced," into three distinct -- but very much interrelated -- sections: Video, Audio (radio and podcasting), and Still photography. During the semester, the class will learn the tools for newsgathering and storytelling, including shooting and editing techniques for multiplatform video, photography and audio. This summer will be an intense and accelerated experience with a lot of feedback and opportunities for growth. You will get experience with tools that are more advanced than has traditionally been available in Slice, including DSLRs. To create powerful journalism, you need to be exposed to it. This class will include a lot of outside assignments, including watching, listening and reading journalism. Each section includes instruction in proper field techniques, shooting, capturing and editing, and, finally, posting assignments online.

This class will require a substantial amount of time management skills and should be very rewarding.

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, you should be able to demonstrate:

- \* Understanding of the techniques and fundamentals of storytelling and visual journalism, including the importance of audio.
- \* Ability to think visually and understand the layered elements (sound, text, images, video) that go into multimedia news stories.
- \* Ability to critique current multimedia journalism practices in the news industry.
- \* Ability to collect, edit and produce audio, photos and videos for telling news stories.
- \* Ability to construct interviews for visual, sound and text storytelling platforms.
- \* Ability to use appropriate hardware (video camera, audio recorder, still camera and tripod) for collecting digital media for use in multimedia journalism.
- \* Demonstrate ability to use professional editing software (Photoshop, Audition, and Premiere Pro) for multimedia news reporting and production.
- \* Participate in group critiques, learn how to give and receive constructive feedback
- \* Learn the differences and similarities for video storytelling on the web, mobile devices and TV
- \* Understanding of metadata and implementation of file saving system
- \* Acquire and sharpen skills necessary to take the next step in your academic/professional careers

**Green Classroom**

Our class is held in Knight Hall, UMD's first LEED Gold rated building, and we aim to continue that mission of sustainability. This includes being a paperless semester and paying attention to our impact, as citizens, students and journalists, on the environment around us.

<http://www.sustainability.umd.edu>

<http://www.merrill.umd.edu/deadline/index.php/2010/08/27/knight-hall-certified-as-first-green-building-at-university-of-maryland-college-park/>

### **Bethany's goals for YOU this semester**

- Get inspired by the power of storytelling, and its role in newsgathering
- Regularly push yourself outside your comfort zone
- Shoot well composed video and still photographs
- Collect clean and compelling audio
- Understand fundamentals of editing, video, photos & audio
- Tell compelling multimedia stories
- Create strong pitches
- Create a Vimeo.com profile
- Better utilize a Twitter account
- Be a smart media consumer
- Feel comfortable giving/receiving feedback and critiques
- Understand the next steps to reach your career goals
- Begin forming a personal brand

### **Grading:**

There will be regular assignments this semester, all aiming to introduce and help you master the skills needed for a successful final project. There is no final exam in this class. The final project IS the final exam. You cannot pass this class without completing your final project.

ASSIGNMENTS 50%

CLASS PARTICIPATION/BONUS ASSIGNMENTS: 10%

FINAL PROJECT, including proposal: 40%

TOTAL: 100%

### **Scale:**

A+ 100-96.7

A 96.6-93.3

A- 93.2-90

B+ 89.9-86.6

B 86.5-83.3

B- 83.2-80

C+ 79.9-76.6

C 76.5-73.3

C- 73.2-70

D+ 69.9-66.6

D 66.5-63.3

D- 63.2-60

### **DEADLINES**

As in the real world of journalism, deadlines are important. This class meets twice a week and there will be assignments due for each session. Technology isn't always reliable or predictable, so allow time for things to go differently than planned. Late assignments will impact your grade, and assignments not turned in at all will get a ZERO. The assignments are all to learn and practice tools to prepare for the final project. There are lots of resources available to help if you have technical issues.

**You have the opportunity to re-do assignments to improve your grade and your learning. If your instructor thinks your work isn't at the level it should be, you maybe asked to do it again. The priority of this class isn't grades, but learning outcomes.**

### **The Final Project:**

Again, there is no final exam in this class. The final project will take the place of the final, and a draft is due on the last day of class. On that day you will get feedback and constructive advice on how to improve your project. If it's perfect, you're done. Otherwise you will have until the next week to turn in your FINAL final project.

Remember: The final project is THE most important part of the class. It is a work of journalism that will incorporate all the multimedia skills you should have learned over the course of study this semester.

Unlike some of the class assignments you will get during the course of the semester, which are exercises designed to teach particular technical skills, the final project must have journalistic merit. It cannot simply document an event. Technical proficiency will count, but unless there is a real story, with real people, and real issues, the project will not get an A. And it will be difficult to get an A in the class without getting an A on the final.

So there's a lot riding on it. Start thinking about it NOW. Check me about your ideas, and have a back-up plan. The final project will be a multimedia presentation that tells a compelling story, using video and/or still photos, and sound. It should be at between two and three minutes long, but can be longer IF the material is strong enough, and the story gripping enough.

### **Additional Notes on the Final Project:**

- You may NOT use music in your final project unless the music is a naturally occurring, integral part of the story you are covering, such as a profile of a musician, or a shot of a marching band in a parade. Otherwise, the use of music tracks in audio, video, or slideshow projects must be approved in advance. The music in that case must be "royalty free," that is you must have the rights to use it.
- Do not focus on family members, roommates, or close friends for your final project without prior approval from me.
- First-person approaches must be approved in advance.
- All sources must be identified with names and titles. The use of unidentified, or anonymous sources would have to be approved well in advance by instructor.
- The final deadline REALLY IS absolute.
- As discussed during the course of the semester, interviews, photos, and videos may not be staged, coerced, directed, falsified or manipulated in anyway. These actions will result in a failing grade on the final project and students will be referred to the dean. In this class you must commit to the National Press Photographers Association's Code of Ethics.

### **The Class Blog:**

The class will have a separate class blog. All assignments will be turned in by posting them to the blog. A free Google account is required. The blog is PRIVATE, so only class members can access it. You will be invited as an "author," and only authors will have permission to see the blog. Be sure to post your assignments in the proper format.

**NAME-VIDEO ASSN1-DESCRIPTION (SLUG) 50 character limit!**

Example: BethanySwain – Video 1 – Ice Cream Madness

### **The Photo Slice**

The photojournalism slice explores the unique ability of still photos to produce images that are often more powerful than the moving images of video. You will be immersed into the working life of a photojournalist, learning truth and accuracy are the keys to good photojournalism. Discussions will center around ways to approach newsworthy events/situations, how to create provocative, storytelling images, rules for work within ethical boundaries and grasping the all-important concept of "no photos please," and the fundamental question of "What makes a good image?"

(Students will be required to caption every photograph in this slice and be ready to back up why their images have journalistic value.) Of utmost importance is the premise that students need to use their imaginations and not be afraid to fail creatively. In photography, we learn more from our mistakes than from our successes.

There are many photo-editing programs including Preview software, which is standard on all Macs, but you will also be introduced to Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Bridge, which are the industry standard. We'll learn how photos can be digitally altered in ways that are nearly undetectable. We'll discuss what digital editing is acceptable, and which is not. You are encouraged to keep your camera with you during this class and be on the constant lookout for good images.

### **The Audio (Radio) Slice**

The audio slice focuses on production and editing of sound-rich radio stories in commercial broadcast style, public radio style, and podcast style. We will listen to and critically evaluate various radio reports. We will discuss the techniques and ethics of "invisible" audio editing. Students will work on writing for broadcasting, and improving their on-air sound, with the aim of sounding like themselves, but a little better. At the end of this semester, you should have an understanding of the unique qualities of broadcast news production. You will be assigned numerous radio podcasts to listen to, and should regularly listen to NPR and WTOP during the class.

### **The Video Slice**

The video slice in an instruction to video storytelling, combining the skills of finding visual stories, capturing the appropriate video images and natural audio sounds, and editing the images into stories that can be posted on the web, either as stand alone stories, or companion pieces to online text journalism. You will learn how to record and edit interviews and "man-on-the-street" surveys, using Nikon DSLR cameras. We will use Premiere Pro to learn basic video editing, including creating titles, simple effects and editing stories. You will learn the fundamentals of framing, lighting, composition and sequencing, along with the ethical reporting, shooting and editing practices.

### **Required Readings**

"Aim for the Heart: Write, Shoot, Report and Produce for TV and Multimedia". Second Edition. By Al Tompkins.

## **Outside of Class Assignment**

There are lots of amazing opportunities, here at Merrill and in DC area, and you should take advantage of as many as possible. These are good learning and networking experiences. To get the full credit for the class participation you need to have an outside of class experience, take photos and write a post to the class blog. There will be a handful of suggestions, or you can ask your instructor if you have something you think could count. Here are two options. Look for more on the Visual Storytelling Tips Facebook group.

Critical Exposure's exhibit in Pepco Edison Place Gallery. Weekdays 12p-4p. Metro accessible:  
<http://criticalexposure.org>

Newseum visit, including this event: Behind the Scenes: Meet the Press Saturday, June 15, 2013 at 2:30 PM <http://www.newseum.org/programs/2013/0615-inside-media/behind-the-scenes-at-meet-the-press.html>

## **Required and Suggested Equipment**

Some, but not all, of the necessary equipment is available for checkout from the Knight Hall equipment room 1107. The equipment desk doesn't have open hours during the summer, so you will check out the tools at the beginning of the session and turn them in at the end, by Friday, July 5th. There are fees for equipment that is turned in late.

The college provides the MINIMUM equipment required to successfully complete the class, but you may not always be able to get everything you want, when you want it. Yes, a Mac is an advantage in multi-media creation.

### **What the college provides:**

- Nikon D3100 DSLR camera
- Tripod, 4ft extension.
- Tascam DR07 Digital Audio Recorder, or other portable audio recorder that records in mp3 and/or .wav format

### **What else you Must have:**

An external hard drive formatted for Mac (I recommend 500 gig or larger with USB 3.0).

If you are going to use Adobe for PC you can partition the drive for both PC and Mac, and must bring your PC laptop to class.

SD memory card for HD video. (I recommend 16 gb or larger), class 10, with a speed of 30mb/s or faster

(example: <http://www.bhphotovideo.com/bnh/controller/home?O=&sku=828325&Q=&is=REG&A=details> )

- "Aim of the Heart" by Al Tompkins. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

A **public** Twitter account

Vimeo Account. You might want to upgrade to Vimeo Plus for \$10/month, or \$60/year.

A Lynda.com account

AA batteries

**What else would make your life easier:**

As a UMD student, you can download a copy of the Adobe Creative Suite to a personal computer. The NewsBubble is open 24-7, and you can work there, so you don't need a laptop. Digital SLR, or other SLR with zoom, flash and manual controls  
A MacBook laptop.  
A tie-clip or Lavalier microphone to attach to the audio recorder and/or DSLR (\$30)

**Attendance/Participation**

Attendance is important and deadlines will be strictly enforced. Group critiques and feedback are an important part of the process. You will be learning from each other's successes and failures, as well as from my lectures and feedback.

This is a "hands on" class. Your attendance and participation will greatly enhance your ability to succeed. So the main reason to come to class, EVERY class -- aside from the fact you or your parents are paying good money for it -- is that we are learning a lot of complicated concepts, and missing classes will put you behind. If you have a pre-approved, legitimate excuse, I will make an effort to help you catch up with what you missed, but you should ask a student. I do expect that any excused absences to be based on TRUTHFUL circumstances. After all we are journalists and our credibility rests on telling the truth. See "Academic Integrity."

**Inclement Weather Policy**

If we miss an entire class day, we will rework the schedule to find another class day.

**Academic Integrity**

The College of Journalism has a "zero tolerance" policy on academic dishonesty. Adhering to a high ethical standard is of special importance in the world of journalism, where reliability and credibility are the cornerstones of the field. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, turning in others work as your own, getting expert outside assistance in completing your assignments or final project, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Any violation of the university's academic integrity standards in a journalism course will be referred directly to the dean. The dean will send all confirmed cases to the University's Office of Judicial Affairs with a recommendation of expulsion from the University.

Code of Academic Integrity <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html>

Student Honor Council <<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>

Make sure what you write, shoot, edit is your own. Plagiarism is cheating. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, the University of Maryland library system provides helpful details: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/shadygrove/plagiarism.html> and <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/citing.html>

**Students with Disabilities**

Any students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning) needing special accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to discuss their situation.