

University of North Texas
Department of Journalism
JOUR 4900 - NTNewsNet.com
Semester: Fall 2009
Tuesdays, 12:30pm – 3:30pm

Instructor: Neil Foote, Senior Lecturer, GAB 109

Phone: Office: 940.369.8088; Cell: 214.448.3765

Email: neil@neilfoote.com (preferred) or foote@unt.edu

Office hours: By appointment or immediately following class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Class Meetings: GAB 111.

Text: DOWNLOAD (free):

- “Journalism 2.0 How to Survive and Thrive”, reported by Mark Briggs, edited by Jan Schaffer.
(http://www.kcnn.org/resources/journalism_20/)
- “Digital Storytelling Cookbook”, <http://www.storycenter.org/cookbook.html>

Recommended Reading: “*We the Media, Grassroots Journalism for the People, By the People*”, Dan Gilmour (O’Reilly Media, 334 pp)

Additional readings will be made available online or distributed during class.

Course Objectives

By the end of this class you will:

- Learn how to tell informative and compelling news stories using multimedia tools
- Learn how to write for the web and understand the fundamentals of multimedia storytelling
- Report, edit and produce content for NTNewsNet.com, a website showcasing the works of University of North Texas journalism students.
- Edit and produce weekly webcasts hosted on NTNewsNet.com, and NTDaily.com
- Shoot and edit photographs for print, online and use in video projects
- The fundamentals of storytelling for various formats including print, online and broadcast.
- Use critical thinking skills for presentation of ideas for coverage of various stories and marketing campaigns.
- Uphold the ethical standards of the School of Journalism and the various media outlets using the material produced in the course.
- Provide an accurate portrayal of the diverse student population at the University as well as the general population in North Texas.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Critically evaluate your own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

This class will combine lectures, discussion, in class assignments and reading assignments. This will be a hands on class where you will be using your basic journalism skills as well as learn the basics of integrating audio, photographs, graphics and video to enhance your articles. There will be regular and timely assignments where you will analyze, critique and discuss current practices of interactive tools on media websites. You will have in-class writing and deadline assignments along with guest lecturers who will offer you timely and topical advice on today’s journalism.

Getting the Most Out of This Class

Since you are the next generation of journalists, the goal is to prepare you to jump into a newsroom job tomorrow. This class will offer you a combination of basic fundamentals, reinforcing traditional print and broadcast journalism skills, but also challenging you to become digitally savvy, mobile journalists who can produce quality news reports. We will combine some class lectures, but we will also function like a newsroom where you will be expected to present story pitches and adhere to strict deadlines.

To be best prepared for this class, you will be expected to have a working knowledge, and a basic proficiency in the following software:

- Adobe Photoshop
- Final Cut Pro
- Audacity
- Garage Band

To learn more, you may consider using the many free online tutorials available by doing a search on Google.com or YouTube.com or by checking at Apple.com, Adobe.com. You also can subscribe to online sessions at Lynda.com, which offers some free and fee-based online tutorials.

You may draw from any number of the recommended sites below:

- Local/regional media news outlets (in print, on air and online), e.g. Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star Telegram, Denton Record Chronicle, NT Daily, KNTU, WFAA, NBC5, Fox4, CBS-11, Denton-TV,
- National/international Media via cable or online: ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CNN, MSNBC, NY Times, Wall Street Journal, NPR, etc.
- CyberJournalist.net: <http://cyberjournalist.net>
- News Voyager: <http://newsvoyager.com>
- NewsDirectory.com: <http://assignmenteditor.com>
- Poynter Institute: <http://poynter.org>
- American Press Institute: <http://www.mediacenter.org/> and <http://www.mediacenter.org/convergencetracker/search/>
- Editor & Publisher: <http://mediainfo.com>
- Wired Magazine: <http://wired.com>
- Media Week: <http://mediaweek.com>
- Broadcasting & Cable: <http://broadcastingandcable.com>
- MediaPost.com: <http://mediapost.com>
- PBS's MediaShift (<http://www.pbs.org/mediashift>)

Attendance & Attitude

- You are expected to attend every class. You will be dropped from the class if you have more than two (2) unexcused absences.
- During class time, do not check your email, use your cell phone or text during class.
- Be respectful of your professor and your classmates. Engage in conversation with the entire class. During critique sessions, be constructive and professional. Leave the personality outside the classroom.
- **NO FOOD OR DRINK IN THE LAB AT ANY TIME!** The first time I will ask you to remove the article from the lab. The second time I will ask you to leave the lab for the remainder of the class and prohibit you from access to the lab during after class lab hours for one week.
- **Safety** - Covering the news can be a dangerous job. Be very aware of your surroundings, take precautions when working at night, do not work alone if possible and be prepared at all times.
- **Appearance** - dress as a professional journalist is expected to dress. This helps you establish credibility with your sources, the viewers and your professors.

University Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of seven to ten words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially journalism. It's a firing offense in the professional world. In the School of Journalism and Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism at UNT, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism (depending on the importance of the assignment):

- A grade of 'F' on a minor assignment;
- A request that the student drop the class;
- Withdrawal of the student from class, initiated by the professor;
- An 'F' for the course;

- A referral to the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities;
- A notation on the student's transcript; and,
- Expulsion from the university.

A combination of these penalties may also be used.

DISABILITIES. The School of Journalism, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, makes reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you require any such accommodation, please contact the instructor within the first three weeks of class.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 27	Classes start
Aug. 27 – Sep 2	Add/Drop **
Final Stories Due: December 8	

** Consult with School of Journalism office or Registrar for refund details

Grading and Required Work

This class will assign a letter grade for all of your work in this course based on the following criteria: Sixty percent (60%) of your grade will be based on the various tasks you will perform in the NTNewsNet.com lab. This is where content for the NTNewsNet.com will be generated.

Reporter/Written Content: includes ability to report and write stories for the website, radio, television and newspapers. These stories must be accurate, written in approved web style, have multiple sources and accurately reflect both sides of the issue being reported. Stories will be graded based on the style, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Editor/Written Content: responsible for editing all content prior to publishing on the web. The editor is responsible for the accuracy and clarity of all headlines and captions. This student is responsible for making sure all of the technical aspects of the stories work correctly including links, graphics, video and location of various stories posted.

Visual & Audio Reporting includes ability to shoot and edit video, gather audio, shoot still images and create all of the visual elements of the website. Students will write photo captions, create text to accompany any video which is shot independently (without an assigned reporter) and generate video podcasts. Students will be responsible for assignments for television news stories and radio reports.

Final Project (30%): This project is going to reflect a culmination of all your coursework. Your final project is designed to: (1) Take our class readings, discussions and analysis and put them into practice; (2) Tap into your skill as a multimedia journalist, and (3) Allow you to produce a project that will be a valuable component of your portfolio. Your final grade for this project will be based on your thoroughness in reporting and writing; effective use of storytelling, your creativity and your 10-minute in-class presentation.

Other ten (10%) percent: Includes attendance in class and for all assigned shifts; ability to work as a team member with other students on various assignments, ability to generate newsworthy and timely story ideas on a **weekly basis**, grades on unannounced quizzes based on readings, lecture notes and other writing assignments.

FINAL GRADE SCALE:

100 – 90 = A
 89 – 80 = B
 79 – 70 = C

69 – 60 = D
59 – Below = F

NOTE: The work you do in this class must be original and may not be turned in for any other class. You are allowed to use equipment assigned to this class and, with approval from the professor, other equipment as long as it is similar to the equipment accessible from the University.

You must follow all rules and guidelines related to checking out any audio/visual equipment. Any violation of those guidelines will limit or completely restrict your usage of the equipment. You also are responsible for all costs related to any damage to the equipment.

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Course Outline

Week 1:

Sept. 1

Introduction: Review syllabus, grading, class format. Course goals. Story assignments. Discussion.

HOMEWORK DUE Sept. 1:

Read and be prepared to discuss the following chapters of “The State of the New Media Report 2009”:

- Overview: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_overview_intro.php?media=1
- Newspapers: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_newspapers_intro.php?media=4
- Online: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_online_intro.php?media=5
- Network TV: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_networktv_intro.php?media=6
- Cable TV: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_cabletv_intro.php?media=7
- Local TV: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_localtv_intro.php?media=8
- Radio: http://www.stateofthedia.org/2009/narrative_audio_intro.php?media=10

HOMEWORK DUE Sept. 8:

- **Read Chapters 1, 2 & 3 of the “Digital Storytelling Cookbook” and be prepared to discuss**
- **Submit at two (2) story ideas based on Week 1 discussion.**

Week 2: Sept. 8 - Digital Storytelling.

Understanding the fundamentals of visual journalism. When do you use audio? Video? Pictures? What makes compelling packages? In class writing exercise. Using digital media tools: video cameras, digital recorders. Digital cameras.

HOMEWORK Due Sept. 15: Be prepared to discuss

- **First story due.**
- Read National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics, http://www.nppa.org/professional_development/business_practices/ethics.html
- “Inauguration Photo Manipulation Raises Questions,” Sara Dickenson Quinn, <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=47&aid=157631>

Week 3: Sept. 15 – Ethical Considerations.

Knowing what’s right and wrong in the world of digital media, blogs, YouTube, Flickr and Twitter. Edit/post stories.
Discuss Story # 2

HOMEWORK DUE Sept. 2:

- **Read Chapters 4 & 5 of the “Digital Storytelling Cookbook” and be prepared to discuss**
- **Submit at two (2) story ideas based on Week 1 discussion.**

Week 4: Sept. 22 – Writing for the Web/Creating Slide shows.

Uploading to the web. Using SoundSlides. Getting the most out of your software.

During the remaining weeks of the semester, we will be having story pitch meetings to start each class, combined with some assigned reading and guest lecturers.

Week 5: Sept. 29 - Story pitches. Storyboarding.
DUE: STORY # 2

Weeks 6: Oct. 6 - Editing/Producing Webcasts.

Week 7: Oct. 13 - Covering meetings / conferences / seminars.
Final Project Discussion

Week 8: Oct. 20
FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL /Discussion / Critique

Week 9: Oct. 27 – Covering politicians and elections.

Week 10: Nov. 3 – Critiquing Multimedia News
What really works? Are media effectively engaging their audiences? Who's doing it well? How can it be one better?

Week 11: Nov. 10 – Producing investigative packages

Week 12: Nov. 17 – Producing profiles

Week 13: Nov. 24
Future Trends: What's New, What's Next
Innovation & Ideas – Mobile Technology

Week 14: Dec. 1
Job Search: Using the Web / Final Project Workshop

Week 15: Dec. 8
Final Projects Due / Class presentations