Course Description and Goals: Today, journalists and strategic communicators are being asked to produce compelling and important stories using digital and social media. While the good ol’ pen and paper have not disappeared, these tools now work alongside Twitter, YouTube, Google Maps, and the iPhone. This course is designed to give students hands-on experience with the most popular digital and social media tools. Throughout the semester, you will report and publish stories on a self-selected topic from multiple angles, using a variety of multimedia formats: text, liveblogs, audio, slideshows, videos, map mashups, interactive timelines, and so on. Along the way, we will also discuss the changing media environment and the technical, ethical, economic, and social ramifications of these changes.

Specifically, you will:
- Learn to recognize and emulate high-quality, compelling multimedia storytelling
- Develop and maintain an individual site focused on a topic of your choosing
- Produce stories in text, image, audio, video, and interactive forms
- Collaborate with your classmates to build a targeted multimedia news site
- Grapple with the issues and opportunities facing digital and social media practitioners

Text: The required text is Producing Online News: Digital Skills, Strong Stories (Ryan M. Thornburg, 2011, CQ Press). You can find additional readings from the supplied links or, when indicated, on ICON.

Technology: You are required to own and bring an external hard drive. We recommend a 320 GB or larger drive with FireWire 800 interface. You can find suitable drives at any office or electronics store/site.

Assignments / Grading

You will be graded on your participation in class, your performance on in-class assignments, your individual site and story assignments, and your contributions to the class’s collaborative news site. Grading of assignments in this course is designed to correspond with the ways that online media workers are assessed.

You will also have five short quizzes throughout the semester. These quizzes will cover assigned readings, exemplars, and material discussed in class. Readings and exemplars are due the day they are listed on the syllabus and, thus, are fair game for quizzes given on that day.
Specifics details and requirements for each assignment will be provided during the semester. There are a total of 1,000 points possible.

**In-Class Work and Participation (180 points):**
- Quizzes ................................................................................................. 40
- Deadline assignment ............................................................................. 20
- Interactive data visualization ................................................................. 10
- Alternative story form ........................................................................... 10
- Participation .......................................................................................... 100

**Individual Site (170 points):**
- Brand assessment worksheet ............................................................... 20
- Posts ...................................................................................................... 100
- Comments ............................................................................................. 50

**Individual Stories (350 points):**
- Liveblog ............................................................................................... 50
- Digital audio .......................................................................................... 50
- Audio slideshow ..................................................................................... 50
- Digital video .......................................................................................... 50
- Multimedia package ................................................................................ 50

**Collaborative News Site (300 points):**
- CNS multimedia package ................................................................... 150
- CNS group assignment ........................................................................... 100
- CNS site/participation .......................................................................... 50

This course will use the +/- system with the following grade distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>0-59</td>
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**Course Policies**

**Late Policy:** Each assignment sheet will specify the due date/time for that assignment. Work submitted after the assigned due date/time will be considered late. Late work will be accepted for credit up to 5 days after the assigned due date/time, but will be marked down 20% for each 24-hour period after the original due date. Assignments turned in more than 5 days after the due date will be awarded no points.

You may request a one-week extension for any **one** assignment listed under the “Individual Stories” above. This extension allows you to turn in that assignment up to 7 days late before any late penalties are incurred. You must formally request your one-week extension from Brian via email prior to the scheduled due date/time.

**Graduate Credit:** Students enrolled in the Graduate College must successfully complete substantive additional work to receive credit for this class. Please talk with Brian about details within the first two weeks of the semester.
**Attendance:** Attendance and participation are very important in this course. Therefore, you are expected to attend every class period, arriving on time and staying until class is dismissed. Excused absences will be granted only if (a) you have a legitimate reason for missing class (documented illness, family emergency, religious holiday, etc.) and (b) you let Brian know via email about your absence prior to the start of the class period you are missing. Failure to give prior notification or a less-than-legitimate justification will result in an unexcused absence.

Unexcused absences are factored into your participation grade. Everyone gets one “grace” absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 10-point deduction from your participation grade.

**Makeup Work:** Quizzes and assignments completed in class cannot be made up. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to learn what was covered that day and acquire notes from your fellow classmates. I will not respond to emails that ask “What did I miss?” or “Did I miss anything important?” (The answers are “Lots” and “Yes.”) I am happy to briefly discuss missed materials during my office hours, but I cannot cover the material in the same amount of detail as I can in class.

**Participation:** Your participation grade will be calculated as the sum of your attendance, preparedness, cooperation, and contribution in class. Attendance means showing up. Preparedness means completing the assigned readings and tasks. Cooperation means working well with your classmates, lab assistant, and professor. Contribution means participating regularly in class discussion and activities.

**Electronic Communication:** As per university policy, you are responsible for all official correspondences sent to your University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu).

**Communication with Brian:** I will make every effort to respond to your communication within 24 hours. Typically, I will respond sooner than that. While I prioritize my interactions with my students, I do have other commitments (meetings, research, sleep, etc.) that may preclude me from giving an immediate response to your email. I am happy to offer feedback and answer specific questions over email, but I will not answer a barrage of questions or review full drafts of assignments over email. If your email would take me more than 5 minutes to answer, I will advise you to visit my office hours or schedule an appointment.

**Technology in class:** We will be using lots of digital and social media tools. **These tools are to be used for class while you are in class.** During scheduled class time, do not make phone calls, do not text, do not tweet Jimmy, do not write on Jane’s Facebook wall, etc. If you need to have your cell phone accessible for an emergency (e.g. family health) or for a source callback (for course assignments), please let me know before class so we can minimize disturbance for other students.
Proposed Schedule

Readings are subject to revision as new materials become available and as our interests dictate. The schedule on the course website will be updated continually, so please refer to it for the latest plans.

Week 1 – Introduction

Tuesday, 1/17 – Course overview and syllabus

Thursday, 1/19 – Introduction and Online Branding

Readings:
- *Producing Online News*, Ch. 1 “Online news is different”

*Assigned: Site brand assessment worksheet*

Week 2 – Producing Digital Stories for Social Audiences

Tuesday, 1/24 – New Media, Old Values

Readings:
- *Producing Online News*, Ch. 2 “Online news is still news”

*Due: Site brand assessment worksheet, start of class*

Thursday, 1/26 – The “Audience”

Readings:
- *Producing Online News*, Ch. 3 “The online news audience”

Week 3 – Writing Style and Structure Online

Tuesday, 1/31 – Niche Reporting Online

Readings:
- *Producing Online News*, Ch. 10 “Journalism as process: Blogs and breaking news”
Quiz #1

Assigned: Individual Site (Weeks 3-12)

Thursday, 2/2 – Writing for Google and Fickle Audiences

Readings:
• Producing Online News, Ch. 5 “Editing news for searchers and scanners”

Assigned: Liveblog

Week 4 – Immediacy #FTW

Tuesday, 2/7 – Microblogging and Liveblogging

Readings:

Thursday, 2/9 – In Class: Deadline assignment

Due: Deadline assignment, in class

Week 5 – Digital Audio

Tuesday, 2/16 – Audio Storytelling

Readings:
• Producing Online News, Ch. 8 “Multimedia reporting” (p. 210-223)
• Sound Reporting, Ch. 1 “Sound and stories,” (ICON)

Exemplars:
• Manners for the Digital Age, Slate, “Call me back when you’re out of the bathroom,”
http://www.slate.com/articles/podcasts/manners_for_the_digital_age/2011/11/digital_manners_talking_on_the_phone_in_the_bathroom_.html

**Quiz #2**

**Assigned:** Digital audio

Thursday, 2/18 – Digital Audio Technology

In Class: Software training

**Due:** Liveblog assignment, start of class

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**Week 6 – Polishing Off Audio, Adding Visuals**

Tuesday, 2/21 – In Class: Work on Digital Audio Assignment

**Due:** Digital audio assignment, end of class

Thursday, 2/23 – Digital Images and Audio Slideshows

**Readings:**

- *Producing Online News*, Ch. 8 “Multimedia reporting” (p. 193-210)

**Exemplars:**


**Quiz #3**

**Assigned:** Audio slideshow

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**Week 7 – Communities and Conversations**

Tuesday, 2/28 – Audio Slideshow Technology

In Class: Software training
Thursday, 3/1 – Building a Following and Keeping It

Readings:
- Producing Online News, Ch. 11 “Journalism as conversation: Engaging the audience”

Week 8 – Moving Visuals in Motion

Tuesday, 3/6 – In Class: Work on Audio Slideshow Assignment

Due: Audio slideshow assignment, end of class

Thursday, 3/8 – Video Storytelling

Readings:
- Producing Online News, Ch. 8 “Multimedia reporting” (p. 223-239)
- Aim for the Heart, Ch. 12 “Working as a backpack, VJ and one-man-band journalist” (ICON)

Exemplars:

Quiz #4

Assigned: Digital video

SPRING BREAK

Have fun, relax, be safe

Week 9 – Putting It All Together

Tuesday, 3/20 – Digital Video Technology

In Class: Software training

Thursday, 3/22 – Multimedia Story Packages

Readings:
• Mark Gould, “Multimedia decisions: Choosing the right medium for your message,” http://www.markgouldmedia.com/multimedia-decisions-choosing-the-right-medium-for-your-message/

Exemplars:

Assigned: Multimedia package

Week 10 – Multimedia Packages

Tuesday, 3/27 – In Class: Work on Digital Video Assignment

Due: Digital video assignment, end of class

Thursday, 3/29 – Interactive Data Visualizations

Readings:
• Producing Online News, Ch. 9 “Collecting and Using Data”

Exemplars:

Due: Interactive data visualization, in class

Week 11 – Multimedia Packages

Tuesday, 4/3 – Alternative Story Forms

Readings:
• Mark S. Luckie, “How newsrooms and journalists are using Storify” http://www.mediabistro.com/10000words/how-newsrooms-and-journalists-are-using-storify_b1676
• TBA (as new tools emerge)

Due: Alternative story form, in class
Thursday, 4/5 – In Class: Work on Your Multimedia Package

*Quiz #5*

**Week 12 – Introducing the Collaborative News Site**

Tuesday, 4/10 – Assignment Overview; CNS Site Concept

Thursday, 4/12 – CNS Site and Story Development

*Due: Multimedia package, start of class*

**Week 13 thru Week 15 – In Class: Work on Collaborative News Site**

*Detailed schedule will be distributed by Week 12*

**Final Week**

*Due: Launch Collaborative News Site*
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Accommodations for Disabilities: A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Honesty: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty. Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.
The Iowa Dozen

The mission of our School is to educate journalism and mass communication professionals, scholars and faculty. Through professional and creative research activities, they enhance a continually growing and evolving understanding of the social and cultural roles, responsibilities, and contexts for communicators in a democratic society, as well as in diverse global contexts. To accomplish that mission:

We learn to ...
1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...
6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...
10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.