Syllabus for
Advanced Topics in Designing / Producing
JMC 4310:0001 • Spring 2020
Tuesday/Thursday 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. • W332AJB

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- Office: E328 AJB
- Drop-in office hours: Tue/Thu 1:30-3:30 p.m & Mon/Wed by appointment

Purpose:
The purpose of this course is to provide students the opportunity to work collaboratively to create a professional quality, commercially viable content for media. Students who wish to succeed in professional fields related to journalism, strategic communication, or mass marketing are those who demonstrate mastery of storytelling across media. Thus, this course is ideal for those who wish to produce products that have viability in the real world and who bring with them an understanding of still, video, audio, text and visual design techniques. The central focus of this course output. That means this is a class in which students produce real, practical “stuff” of value in our competitive commercial world that demands high quality products to inform, persuade or entertain.

Success:
Students who will perform best in this course are those who 1) have ideas, 2) thrive when collaborating in a team setting to develop them, and 3) are individually disciplined enough to meet a semester-end requirement for high value output.

Approach:
Students will build upon the knowledge base acquired in previous SJMC courses and focus it practical, team-driven effort to create products of a sufficiently high standard to be of potential interest to businesses beyond the university. Students will be subject to critical judgments from industry professionals and their own peers.

Structure:
This class will be structured in a workshop-like manner where teamwork, creativity, innovation, participation and free-form thinking will define not only our semester’s output, but also provide students with a solid foundation from which to pursue post-collegiate careers.

Who should take this course:
This course is for students who wish to harness their creative ideas and unleash them on story narratives that are brought to life across platforms. Additionally, it is for:
- Students who get excited about stories and wish to tell them effectively consistent with accepted industry techniques and best practices.
• Students who plan to go into business and realize that those who make the best visual presentations in a business setting will be the ones who move the quickest and farthest in their careers.
• Entrepreneurs whose business idea includes the use of media and who want to build a persuasive presentation to advance it.
• Those who wish to weave together their narrative-writing and video skills into powerful short-form documentaries.

Learning outcomes:
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC) is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn an SJMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes at the following link: http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment.

We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. This course has content to help you achieve proficiency in two areas specific to the SJMC learning outcomes.

1. Media Literacy Learning Goal
Understand the principles of media literacy and develop the skills necessary to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages across multiple media domains.

Learning Objective 1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to their personal media habits and professional development.

Learning Objective 2. Students will develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.

Learning Objective 3. Students will learn how to create and disseminate media messages in various forms.

2. Writing and Storytelling Learning Goal
Understand that clear, concise, correct writing is at the heart of journalistic expression and that reporting and communicating it effectively requires a knowledge and achievement of the highest, professionally-accepted standards in all work.

Learning Objective 1. Students will demonstrate the ability to gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media and audiences.

Learning Objective 2. Students will display the ability to access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards.

Learning Objective 3. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.
Instructor note: The modern workplace requires individuals develop the ability to work in high-performing teams. Thus, this course puts heavy emphasis on teamwork, productivity and group interdependence. Each team member is expected to contribute fully and, to the extent practical, equally. Teams' collective and individual performances will be monitored to the ensure all members participate but you should understand that the participation (or lack thereof) of a classmate has some potential to influence your grade. As instructor I will always be available to discuss any concern related to this point.

How you earn your grade:
The class is work performance based. There are not tests. Your course grade will be determined how well you perform in the five categories listed below. Grades are based on a 100-point percentage scale. Note how each is weighted in determining final course grades.

1. ATTENDANCE (20%). Each class session is a unique learning opportunity the experience of which cannot be made up. Sessions are designed to provide valuable time for class discussions and workshops, the value of which you miss if you are not there or if you arrive late. You are responsible for signing the attendance roster for each class.

   Attendance policy: There is no such thing as an “excused” or “unexcused” absence. You earn one percentage point for each class you attend. You earn a “0” percentage for each class you miss. If you are unable to attend for any of the following reasons you earn 0.80 percentage point:

   • You are ill. Notify me as soon as you can that you will not be attending a class. (I generally leave this to your discretion, but I may request a written verification.)
   • You have a family emergency. Notify me as soon as you are able.
   • You are attending a UI-sanctioned event. Notify me in advance with the dates you will need to be away.
   • You have a religious obligation.

   You are responsible for material covered in class that you miss for any reason!

   [See also “Accommodations for Disabilities” below.]

2. ENGAGEMENT (20%). In addition to attending, students are expected to participate actively in the course process. That means engaging in class discussion sessions, offering frequent and honest comments on classmates’ work, and listening to constructive comments to improve your own work.

   To ensure that course content is contemporary and that students stay engaged with the outside world, all members of the class will be required to seek out and post items on a discussion site titled, “Community Channel.” These items can cover any of a broad range of topics. Examples they can include relevant articles on the status of media, media/tech business trends, noteworthy news items, critiques of published content, research of interest or a personal take on a news event.
Engagement policy. To earn full points score students should plan to post at least one Community Channel item per week and reply to a classmate’s post each week – a total of 30 weekly posts and replies for the semester.

3. MIDTERM ASSESSMENT (10%). Sometime after the 6th week I will meet with each team to assess their progress and the quality of their work so far and assign points based upon that assessment.

4. PEER REVIEW (20%). At least once during the semester teams will be asked to review each other. This is done on a confidential basis and is intended to provide feedback on how well teams are focused on their projects. The feedback is intended both to offer constructive comments to improve team projects and to promote team interaction.

5. JUDGES’ PANEL (30%).
This course is project based. Working in teams students will research, develop, and produce the content for projects of their choice. Each team will be responsible for completing its project. Projects must be of a high standard to be published in at least three media. In the second week of the course students will meet four professionals with experience in these media. These professionals will discuss best practices for ensuring the final projects are of the highest quality. In the final week of the semester the same professionals will sit as a panel to judge and score your semester’s work.

Review policy. At the beginning for the semester I will delineate the grading standards for all these categories and repeat as necessary. The visiting professional will also describe standards they will use to judge final projects. Reviews in Categories 3, 4 and 5 must unavoidably be based on a degree of subjectivity. If you have concerns about the application of these standards or simply questions about their interpretation, please contact me to discuss.

Determining your letter grade:
Each assignment is graded with a 100 point as maximum. The equivalent point/letter grades are:

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<th>From %</th>
<th>To %</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>100</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>76</td>
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Planning your time:
University policy sets a weekly standard of two hours outside of class work for every course hour. Understand that that includes out-of-class work time. Therefore, you should expect up to 6 hours per week of course work. When working with classmates in a team, you must coordinate your availability with your teammates.

Communicating with the instructors and complaints:
We regard student communication as my highest priority. No student should ever feel constrained, intimidated, or in any way discouraged from using any of the following means to communicate concerns or complaints about this course:

- Remaining after class. Never leave a course session with an unanswered question.
- Posting your concern on the ICON folder titled, “Just Saying,” which is set up so that any student can communicate with me anonymously. I check it frequently.
- Scheduling an appointment or drop in during office hours to discuss course content, procedures, standards, your grade, or to discuss a matter of personal concern.
- Telephoning the numbers on page one. Leave voicemail. We always call back!

Unresolved complaints procedure:
You may take a complaint (or suggestion) involving course content, class material, grading, or instruction that you feel is not resolved to your satisfaction to the Director of the UI School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Dr. David Ryfe either by visiting him in room E305 AJB, by phone at 319-335-3486, or by sending an email to david-ryfe@uiowa.edu.

Rules and Policies:
This course is subject to rules and policies established by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. We have excerpted several of the more important ones on the next two pages. Please take a moment to review them. If you have questions, please ask.
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences rules and policies:
You should take a few moments to read the important rules and policies that follow. They
derscribe policies that apply to all of us who teach, learn, and administer in the College of
Liberal Arts and Sciences. They also describe your rights to accommodation and the
complaint procedure beyond that contained in the above paragraph.

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning
environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence
policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI
policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day
obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities
(https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use
this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the
College’s Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in
suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through
the UI email address (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-
honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student
may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health,
attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with
Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific
accommodations with the instructor. More information is at
https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this
course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related
policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here:
https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Communication and the Required Use of UI Email
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address
(uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations
Manual, III.15.2).
**Complaints**
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see [https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

**Final Examination Policies**
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. Visit [https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies](https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies).

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University's Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity ([diversity.uiowa.edu](http://diversity.uiowa.edu)).

**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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see [https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/](https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/).

**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 [Department of Public Safety website](http://www.publicsafety.uiowa.edu/).
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Course plan

This weekly plan is subject to change as class dynamics evolve during the course. Sometimes changes are announced in class, sometimes as an ICON “Announcements.” In any case you are responsible for them.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Subject to change</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tue/ Thu 1/21 &amp; 1/23</td>
<td><strong>Phase I – FOUNDATION</strong></td>
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<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>Overview of semester (what we’ll be doing and how we’ll get it done)</td>
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<td>Project description, scope and desired outcome</td>
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<td>Team standards</td>
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<td>Video examples</td>
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<td>Equipment checkout procedure</td>
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<td><em>Select teams and project managers</em></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Tue/Thu 1/28 &amp; 1/30</td>
<td><strong>Phase II - IDEATION</strong></td>
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<td>Importance of storytelling</td>
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<td>Visit by professional panelists Lyle Muller, Jason Brummond and Angie Looney to discuss best practices</td>
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<td>Develop project ideas</td>
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<td><em>Approve project topics</em></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Tue/Thu 2/4 &amp; 2/6</td>
<td><strong>IDEATION (cont.)</strong></td>
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<td>Workshop ideas and approve topics</td>
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<td>Determine scope and media</td>
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<td>Distribute team tasks</td>
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<td><em>Develop project outlines</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Phase</td>
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| 4    | Tue/Thu 2/11 & 2/13 | Phase III – RESEARCH  | Information and resource gathering  
Begin research of topic – team assignments  
*Workshop: team update of progress on research* |
| 5    | Tue/Thu 2/18 & 2/20 | Phase IV - PREPARATION | Develop outline and storyboard  
Determine shooting schedule  
Written workflow for multiple media  
*Finalize multiple media distribution plan* |
| 6    | Tue/Thu 2/25 & 2/27 | PREPARATION (cont.) | Determine scope of project  
Begin to gather video and writing  
Sharpen outline and revise workflow as necessary  
*Team progress reports to class* |
| 7    | Tue/Thu 3/3 & 3/5  | Phase V – PRODUCTION | Shooting and writing |
| 8    | Tue/Thu 3/10 & 3/12 | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Shooting and writing |
| 9    | --------------  | Spring Break  | |
| 10   | Tue-Thur 3/24 & 3/26 | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Shooting and writing  
*Workshop: team status reports* |
<p>| 11   | Tue-Thur 3/31 &amp; 4/2 | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Shooting and writing |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| 12   | Tue/Thu    | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Shooting and writing  
                  | 4/7 & 4/9            | Begin editing       |
|      |            |                |                                                 |
| 13   | Tue/Thu    | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Editing video and writing  
                  | 4/14 & 4/16        | Workshop: review and critiques |
|      |            |                |                                                 |
| 14   | Tue/Thu    | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Final edits  
                  | 4/21 & 4/23        | Workshop: review and critiques |
|      |            |                |                                                 |
| 15   | Tue/Thu    | PRODUCTION (cont.) | Class feedback and revision  
                  | 4/28 & 4/30        |                                           |
|      |            |                |                                                 |
| 16   | Tue/Thu    | **Phase VI – SCREENING** | Screen all projects for professional panel of judges  
                  | 5/5 & 5/7          |                                           |