

MCOM 4332—Advanced Multimedia News
Monday/Wednesday 3:00 p.m.- 4:20 p.m. (HPR 274)
Syllabus—Spring 2015

I. Faculty Information

- Instructor: Rauf Arif
- Office: HPR 264
- Office Hours: Fridays 11:10 a.m.-2:10 p.m., or by appointment.
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Course Description and Goals:

The next generation of media is here. You need to be equipped with the most current skills available. Whether you plan to work at a newspaper, television station, radio station you need to be able to write and produce for multiple platforms in the digital era. This course has a specific emphasis on multimedia storytelling platforms. You will put into practice what you have learned in previous courses.

Today, journalists and strategic communicators are being asked to produce compelling and important stories using digital and social media. This course is designed to utilize their knowledge and skills to produce multimedia content to be consumed on social media platforms. Students will apply journalistic standards and ethics to produce their stories throughout the semester.

Throughout the semester, students 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.¹

¹ This syllabus has been adopted and modified from UT Austin's Professor's syllabus, Rosental Calmon Alves, who teaches "Multimedia Journalism" there. His original syllabus can be found by following this link: https://utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/student/coursedocs/nlogon/?semester=&department=J++&course_number=&course_title=&unique=&instructor_first=&instructor_last=&course_type=In+Residence&search=Search

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Analyze writing practices, strategies, and procedures for multiple forms of news production.
- Demonstrate an understanding of digital medium requirements through written assignments, including research, scripts, and projects.
- Demonstrate an understanding of and proficiency with the skills needed to make practical producing decisions.
- Students will be able to conduct research and evaluate information using methods appropriate to public relations/integrated communication or multimedia journalism professions.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to apply the First Amendment and other legal principles for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- Students will understand and apply concepts and theories in the use and presentation of images and information using tools and technologies appropriate for public relations/integrated communication or mediated journalism.
- Students will be able to construct a persuasive message, adapted to the audience, purpose, and context of the situation.

Recommended Readings

- Brooks, B., Kennedy, G., Moen, D., Ranly, D. (2013). *Telling the Story: The Convergence of Print, Broadcast and Online Media*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.
- *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 Blackboard.

Technology

I encourage you to have an external hard drive. I recommend a 320 GB or larger drive with FireWire 800 interface. You can find suitable drives at any office or electronics

store/site.

Important Note:

This class is not about computers or software, and will focus on the ways journalists can use new technology. However, it is important that students come to this class already familiarized with the basic tools of Internet publishing and multimedia journalism. Some additional, intermediate level software knowledge will be provided in class and lab sessions, including Photoshop, Audacity, Soundslides, Final Cut Pro, etc.

Assignments & Grading

There are five major assignments in this class:

- Quiz =10%
- Live Event Posts =10 %
- Two Multimedia Projects 20% each= 40%
- Research paper =20%
- Attendance =10%
- In-class participation = 10%

Quiz:

There will be five quizzes in total to test your ability to work with the software. Three quizzes will be given before the Spring break, and the rest of the two will be administered during the second half of the semester.

Live Event Posts:

All students will be responsible to cover five live events (on-campus or off-campus) in their area of interest/specialization. Based on these five events, each student will be responsible to publish at least five blog posts throughout the semester. A Blackboard folder has already been created and will remain open throughout the semester. Make sure to keep the instructor informed before covering the event.

At least two of these blog posts of each student must include a video or a slideshow component.

Multimedia Packages:

As we have practiced in the intro to multimedia class, the multimedia package is a journalistic package that combines text, audio, images, video, data visualizations, animation and other elements to tell one or several related stories. Students will create two multimedia packages during this semester. The first package will be due during the mid-term exams, and the second package will be due during the week 13.

These MM packages will be developed individually and each student will publish a blog related to his/her project.

Research Paper:

Students have to write one paper during the semester about a topic related to digital media that will be chosen individually, in agreement with the instructor. The paper should have a clear focus on journalism and/or PR. The paper will be due during the final's week of the semester.

The research paper must be 12-pages long (double-spaced). Students must use Times New Roman 12 or equivalent font. The papers are individual assignments and must be written following an academic style of student's choice (i.e. APA, Chicago, MLA).

The research papers must contain an extended bibliography (at least half a dozen sources) and reflect some of the issues covered during the class discussions. Class notes can be also used as sources for the papers, but cannot be the majority of the citations. Oral Presentations: Students will give oral presentations of their research papers during the last week of the class. In their presentations, students will share the main findings, and contributions with the rest of the class.

The paper is intended to give students a chance to go more in-depth on issues covered during the class lectures and discussion, as well as the reading materials used in class and the main trends in the news industry, especially those related to the use of digital technologies by journalists. As the class is focused on current issues in journalism, news articles and other sources found on the Internet are welcome, but the use of books is highly recommended, especially those in this syllabus reading list.

Attendance & In-Class Participation

- Attendance is required in the bi-weekly class meetings.
- Three to four unexcused absences will result in an automatic half grade deduction out of your final grades (5 percent).
- Five or more unexcused absences will result in a full grade deduction. Missing more than five classes, without discussing the situation with me, could result in a failing grade for the course.

It is expected that you will come to classes prepared to participate. You are expected to

come prepared with the necessary materials for working on your assignments.

Grading Scale

Grades are based on the overall points available for you to earn.

A: 900-1000 **B:** 800-899 **C:** 700-799 **D:** 600-699 **F:** 0- 599 **I:** Incomplete

Late Policy

No extensions will be given unless you have truly extenuating circumstances. In these cases, you must speak with me **before** the assignment is due to make an arrangement.

Technology excuses are not acceptable. Assignments turned in late without an approved extension will be marked down a letter grade for every day late. After five days late, the assignment will earn a 0. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss assignments including questions about technology.

Classroom Courtesies:

- No cellphone use during class. No calls, no texts, no status update checks. In an emergency, please exit the classroom to use your device.
- No eating, unless there is enough for everybody. Beverages (non-alcoholic) are allowed.
- Laptop and tablet use is for note taking and class-related research. Other uses will be noted and these devices can be restricted in class.
- Talk, debate, ask questions and challenge but stay on topic.

Access to Technology:

- I use Blackboard to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback, and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. Check Blackboard regularly.

Academic Honesty:

- Practice academic integrity and accept responsibility for your actions.

- Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, unattributed use of others' work (including test and paper "banks"), disruption of class, and discourtesy to, or harassment of, other students or your instructor.

- Anyone caught cheating will earn a "0" for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

- **PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** This includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment, may fail this class and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

- Go here for more:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php>

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR UNIVERSITY:

WRITING CENTER: Take advantage of writing help. The UT Tyler Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. 903-565-5995.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

- **Students Rights and Responsibilities:** To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:<http://www2.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>
- **Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:** Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract. The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
 - Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
 - Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
 - Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
 - Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid
- **State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:** Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.
- **Disability Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. If you are unsure if the above criteria apply to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more

information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@uttyler.edu

- **Student Absence due to Religious Observance:** Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.
- **Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities:** If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.
- **Social Security and FERPA Statement:** It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.
- **Emergency Exits and Evacuation:** Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.