



CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR DIGITAL MEDIA

MRTS 3525 – Fall 2026

Department of Media Arts

CLASS INFORMATION

Section - 001 and 301

Time/Location – 9:35-10:55am in RTFP 264

Text – None. Online materials and links provided in Canvas

Instructor – Frances Perkins

Office Hours – room 263 (next to Media Arts office)

T/Th 1-4pm

W 11am-2pm

Virtual Office Hours

Book a meeting here: [Frances' Virtual Office Hours](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MRTS 3525 is an intermediate production course designed to lift students to new levels of media creation, with special attention to adapting traditional media to emerging online platforms.

This course fulfills the [CLASS Distribution requirement for Communication and Digital Skills](#). At the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate effective communication using a digital technological platform and do at least two of the following:

1. Demonstrate the ability to communicate a central idea effectively using appropriate organization/structure.
2. Demonstrate the ability to develop content at an advanced level using a combination of effective supporting materials.
3. Demonstrate the ability to engage in verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that are appropriate for the audience and adhere to the conventions of the medium selected (written, oral, or visual)

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand digital platforms and content created for them.
2. Create professional digital projects based on creative briefs.
3. Demonstrate how to plan, produce and edit projects for digital platforms.
4. Demonstrate ability to present ideas to groups large and small.
5. Demonstrate ability to collaborate effectively on creative projects.
6. Analyze and evaluate digital content for effective storytelling.

Course Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives	Alignment to Course Outcomes
1. Analyze digital content for effective storytelling	6
2. Identify industry trends in digital media.	1
3. Articulate (pitch) digital content idea to a small group for consideration.	3, 5
4. Describe (present) media content idea to a large group for feedback.	4, 5, 6
5. Create digital productions from detailed planning.	1, 2
6. Produce original digital content individually and with a small group.	2, 3, 5

COURSE BASICS

Structure – lecture, class discussion, demonstrations, viewing of television news and other videos, critiques of professional and personal work.

Attendance – this is an interactive class and your attendance and participation in discussions are expected. Absences will be tracked. **Two** absences will be allowed without explanation. The next two additional absences will result in a **10 point deduction per absence from your final grade**. Any absences after four will result in **25 point deduction per absence from your final grade**.

Use of electronics – phones, laptops and tablets are allowed in class but must be used responsibly and with respect for your classmates and instructor. It is the instructor's right to ask that electronics be put away during class.

Assignments – All assignments are due in Canvas and will be submitted on the assignment page. All assignments are due by the end-of-day on the due date (meaning 11:59pm on the due date) unless otherwise stated in the assignment. All written work must be typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides. All outside information must be properly cited in an academically acceptable format, such as APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. No handwritten assignment will be accepted unless specifically stated. See the syllabus section "Submission of Media Projects" for ways to upload your projects for viewing.

Video projects will be screened in class and will need to be screen ready. See the syllabus section "Submission of Projects" to see the best methods for doing this. It is up to you to make sure your project is available to be screened in class, not me.

Late Work - 2 late assignments will accepted late, **graded at 70%**. No other late assignments will be accepted without permission from the instructor.

Artificial Intelligence will be periodically discussed in class. The use of artificial intelligence tools without full transparency violates professional media standards of journalism and violates the University policies regarding Academic Integrity (also see below). Violations of either or both policies will result in disciplinary action up to and including a failing grade on a specific assignment or in this course.

Equipment Reservation and Check-Out – here's the [Equipment Room Procedures](#), Policies and the equipment list for this class.

Use of Personal Equipment - If you use your own equipment, expectations are EXACTLY THE SAME as if you were using school equipment. That means WORK FLOW, AUDIO, VIDEO should all be approached as if you were on professional-grade equipment. Not using a mic or a tripod won't work. Telling me you couldn't edit because the footage format was different won't work. **Workflow is up to you.**

Technical Proficiency - It is expected that you are proficient in the use of basic production equipment although training will be provided for equipment specific to this class. Your productions will be required to meet high standards of professional-quality audio and video. If you are not strong in one of the areas required for a project, be sure to find a classmate who is. Everyone has different strengths and collaboration is encouraged and expected in this course. "I didn't know how to do it" will not be a valid excuse for sub-par work.

No Double Dipping - You cannot use a project you produced for another class for an assignment in this class. That includes work you created before coming to UNT. If you wrote the project in another class and want to produce it, that can be arranged if you let me know in advance. No re-editing prior projects, no re-using already shot footage, no rehashing old work of any kind. Everything you produce in this class should be ORIGINAL. That said, if you can do a real project, such as a video for a client, a friend, your church, etc, by all means use it for a class project as well, but it must be original and not started before this class began.

Viewing Cuts/Reading Drafts - I am always available to watch cuts, read drafts and otherwise critique work at any stage of development, whether it's for this class or another. I'm happy to look at work you are doing outside of class. If you aren't free for my office hours, upload your work online and send me a link. I will view it and get back to you in a timely fashion. I'm a geek and love this stuff, so bring it on.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MRTS 3525 FALL 2026

Course Schedule subject to change. Changes will always be posted as an announcement and updated on the schedule in **RED**.

Items that could be on each week of the schedule:

Topic – description of what we are covering that class period.

Activity – something we'll be doing in class or on campus, part of participation points.

Assignment – graded - always due at least a week after being assigned, can be due in class, in Canvas or both.

Reminder – you know what those are!

Week 1 – August 18 and 20

Topics - Course Overview, Why this Class?

Activity - Sign up for Presentation/Discussions
 Activity - Prior Experience Poll in Canvas – Due Aug 20
 Assignment - Content Analysis due August 27

Week 2 – August 25 and 27

Topics – Pitching Ideas

Activities - Vlog Kit Activity #1 Tuesday

Reminder – Content Analysis due Thursday

Assignment – Project #1 – UNT Creative Briefs

Project #1 Elements and Points		
Item	Due Date and Location	Points
Pitch Idea to your Group	Sept 10 in class	15
Pros/Cons List for Projects	Sept 10 in class	5
Present Idea to Whole Class	Sept 22 in class	20
Project Breakdown and Script	Sept 22 end-of-day	20
Production/Post Days	Sept 24, 29 & Oct 1	
1 st Cut Screening and Production Value Grading	Oct 6	25
2 nd Cut Screening	Oct 8	15
TOTAL POINTS		100

Week 3 – Sept 1 and 3 – **VIRTUAL CLASS SEPT 3**

Topics – Shooting and Editing for Verticals, Concept Mapping

Activities - Vlog Kit #2 Tuesday

Presentation/Discussion – Shooting with Smartphones: Visuals TUESDAY

Week 4 – Sept 8 and 10 – **VIRTUAL CLASS SEPT 8**

Topics – Infographics, Pre-Production and Project Breakdowns

Presentation/Discussion – Shooting with Smartphones: Audio THURSDAY

Activities - Small group pitches THURSDAY, Pros/Cons lists

Week 5 – Sept 15 and 17

Topics – Project Planning

Presentation/Discussion – Editing with Smartphones TUESDAY

Presentation/Discussion – Youtube Shorts THURSDAY

Week 6 – Sept 22 and 24

Activity - Project #1 Presentations TUESDAY

Presentation/Discussion TUESDAY – Instagram Reels

PRODUCTION DAY THURSDAY

Week 7 – Sept 29 and Oct 1

PRODUCTION DAYS

Week 8 – Oct 6 and 8

Topics – 1st Cut Screenings TUESDAY, 2nd Cut Screenings THURSDAY

Presentation/Discussions – Tiktok TUESDAY

Presentation/Discussions – Long-Form Content THURSDAY

Assignment – Project #1 Follow Up Survey

Week 9 – Oct 13 and 15

Topics – Micro Dramas

Activity - Micro Drama Presentations

Presentation/Discussion – For-Profit Companies/Brands

Week 10 – Oct 20 – **NO CLASS OCT 22**

Presentation/Discussion – Non-Profits TUESDAY

Assignment - Project #2 – UNT 60 Second Docs Series

Project #2 Elements and Points		
Item	Due Date and Location	Points
Pitch Idea to your Group	Oct 27 in class	15
Pros/Cons List for Projects	Oct 27 in class	5
Present Idea to Whole Class and Vote on Series	Nov 5 in class	20
Project Breakdown and Script	Nov 5 end-of-day	20
Series Planning Day	Nov 1	
Production/Post Days	Nov 12, 17 and 19	
1 st Cut Screening and Production Value Grading	Dec 1	25
2 nd Cut Screening	Dec 3	15
TOTAL POINTS		100

Week 11 – Oct 27 and 29

Topics - Small group pitches, Pros/Cons lists, Work on Project #2

Presentation/Discussion – Predictions for 2027 TUESDAY

Week 12 – November 3 and 5

Topics – Work on group project, class presentations on THURSDAY

Presentation/Discussion – Social Media in News TUESDAY

Activity – class votes on doc series to be produced after presentations

Week 13 – November 10 and 12

Topic – Series Planning day TUESDAY, Production THURSDAY

Presentation/Discussion – Makeup Date TUESDAY

Week 14 – November 17 and 19

PRODUCTION DAYS

NO CLASSES NOV 23-27 FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 – December 1 and 3

Screenings: 1st Cut TUESDAY, 2nd Cut THURSDAY

Reminder: Project #2 Follow Up Poll due Dec 4

Assignments and Points

Assignment	Points Possible	% of Final Grade
Online Surveys	25	5%
Vlog Kit Activity #1	25	5%
Vlog Kit Activity #2	25	5%
Micro Drama Presentation	25	5%
Concept Mapping Exercise	25	5%
Infographic Exercise	25	5%
Presentation/Discussion w/ partner	50	10%
Content Analysis	50	10%
Project #1 – UNT Creative Briefs	125	25%
Project #2 – UNT 60 Second Series	125	25%
TOTAL POINTS	500	100%

UNT Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	90+ - The work is consistently outstanding.
B	80+ - The work is consistently strong and occasionally outstanding.
C	70+ - The work is adequate, fulfilling minimum requirements.
D	60+ - The work fails to meet minimum standards.
F	below 60 - The work is incomplete, or evidence of plagiarism.

This is how the final grade breaks down out of 500 points:

Grade/Points	Percentage
A 450	90+ - The work is consistently outstanding.
B 400	80+ - The work is consistently strong, occasionally outstanding.
C 350	70+ - The work is adequate, fulfilling minimum requirements.
D 300	60+ - The work fails to meet minimum standards.
F	below 60 - The work is incomplete, or evidence of plagiarism.

Assignments Details

- All assignments are due as uploads in Canvas unless otherwise stated in assignment
- All video projects should be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo, and a link provided in Canvas for grading.
- Video projects are often screened in class and will need to be screen-ready. It is up to you to make sure your project is available to be screened in class, not me.
- All documents/written work must be typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1-inch margins on all sides, or in screenplay format where applicable.
- No handwritten assignment will be accepted unless otherwise stated in assignments (i.e. storyboards, diagrams).

- All document submissions **MUST BE IN MICROSOFT WORD (.doc, .docx) or ADOBE ACROBAT (.pdf) formats.** You can also use Google Docs or another web-based application if you supply me a link to your document.
- All assignments are due by the end-of-day on the due date (meaning 11:59pm on the due date) unless otherwise stated in the assignment.
- Any outside sources must be properly cited in an academically acceptable format such as MLA, APA, etc. Visit [Citing Sources](#) from the UNT Library for more information.
- If you are unable to upload your assignments to Canvas, you may try emailing it to me. NOTE: emailing me assignments will result in delay in grading.
- **No Double Dipping** - You cannot use a project you produced for another class for an assignment in this class. If you wrote the project in another class and want to produce it, that can be arranged if you let me know in advance. No re-editing prior projects, no re-using already shot footage, no rehashing old work of any kind. Everything you produce in this class should be ORIGINAL. That said, if you have the opportunity to do a real project, such as a video for a client, a friend, your church, etc, by all means use it for a class project as well, but it must be original and not started before this class began.
- If you read this entire list, and got this far, send me an email with a fun photo. I'll give you 5 extra credit points. Photos of pets are always appreciated.

Deadlines

- You are allowed TWO late assignments, graded at 70% of the total possible points for that assignment (so if an assignment is worth 10 points, the highest score a late assignment could receive is 7 points).
- It is inevitable that you will experience technical difficulties, so plan ahead and leave extra time. What you think will take an hour will take three, so don't leave anything (rendering, compressing, uploading) until the last minute.

Grading Turnaround Time

You will always have at least 1 week (if not longer) to complete each assignment, so it's fair that I also get one week to grade the work. I am happy to explain/chat about grades and grading comments at any time in office hours, by phone or Zoom.

Participation

Class participation is part of your final grade; I expect you to participate in all activities, exercises and discussions. This is a communication course, and you must be able to

communicate, experiment and share your ideas with your classmates. The instructor reserves the right to implement pop quizzes if the class does not read the assigned material.

Philosophy of Grading

What I look for and care most about is the obvious thought and energy that goes into your work. Connecting the dots between lessons, readings, and your writing is what this course is all about. Doing literally what is asked for in an assignment usually requires the least amount of effort and care, and it comes across in your work. Putting thought and effort into an assignment also comes across in the work. I am *always* willing to read first drafts, watch cuts, give notes, or answer questions at any time. I am *always* frustrated by giving someone a lower grade who says, after the fact, "Well, I wasn't sure exactly what you wanted...."

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or words as your own. It will not be tolerated. *Even when you are paraphrasing*, you must give appropriate (and formal) credit to the source of the ideas or the words. Plagiarism will result in a failing course grade. For more information refer to the [UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Let's talk about AI

AI is a tool, like anything else. It can be used properly or misused, and this has become a bigger issue over the past few years. We will discuss this in class, but for now, always remember - **what you submit must be in your words**. If your work gets flagged for AI, I will read the report and check your submission with two or more other AI detectors to ensure that it is a fair report. As I have found, sometimes it is not. I find AI helpful in giving me ideas and options with how to develop a specific effect, but that is as far as I take it - I use it as another research tool, but my writing is what truly makes work original.

The [Writers Guild of America addresses AI](#) really well and it is a good policy to follow.

The following [AI Disclosure Statement](#) is required if you use AI in any of your assignments.