



CONTENT DEVELOPMENT FOR DIGITAL MEDIA

MRTS 3525 – FALL 2025

Department of Media Arts

CLASS INFORMATION

Section - 001

Time/Location – T/Th 11am-12:20pm in RTFP 264

Text – None. Online materials and links provided in Canvas

Instructor – Frances Perkins

Office – 263 (right next to the Media Arts office)

Media Arts Office Hours
Tuesday 9-11am
Wednesday 4-6pm

Honors Hall Office Hours
Tuesday 5-7pm
Wednesday 10am-12pm

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

Email – frances.perkins@unt.edu

Office Phone – (940) 565-4578

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. Present a media project for professional production consideration.
2. Prepare a media project for professional production and post-production.
3. Execute production of a professional media project based on prior planning.
4. Market themselves and their work to the media industry.

Course Learning Objectives

Course Learning Objectives	
Learning Objectives	Alignment to Course Outcomes
1. Analyze media content for effective storytelling.	1, 2, 4
2. Identify industry trends in digital media.	1-4
3. Articulate (pitch) media content idea to a small group for consideration.	1, 4

4. Describe (present) media content idea to a large group for feedback.	1, 2
5. Interact with new tools, both digital and physical, and apply them to media content planning and/or creation.	1-4
6. Identify media production details with a Project Breakdown.	2, 3
7. Produce original media content with a small group.	2, 3
8. Arrange media creations to highlight professional skills.	4
9. Create a professional website and media resume	4

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. Any additional absences will result in a **10 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.

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 Mock Projects - Mock versions of the projects of any kind are prohibited. Show me you can do the real deal first, then we can talk about satire, parody, and the like. That doesn't mean comedy is outlawed, just that mock versions of projects won't be accepted.

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 2025

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 19 and 21

Topics - Course Overview, Media Analysis for Effective Storytelling, Why Focus on Short Form Content?

Activity – Sign Up for Presentations and Discussions in class

Activity – Prior Experience Poll – complete poll in Canvas by Sept 1

Week 2 – August 26 – Virtual Class on AUGUST 28

Topics - Fostering Creativity and Brainstorming

Activity – Brainstorming Exercise

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE ASSIGNMENT - Content Analysis online in lieu of class on 8/28, due Sept 1

Reminder - Prior Experience Poll – complete poll in Canvas by Sept 1

Week 3 – Virtual class SEPTEMBER 2 and September 4

Topics – Keeping Current in the Industry, Group Project #1 Overview

Presentation/Discussion – Shooting with Smartphones – Visual Tips and Tricks

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE ASSIGNMENT – Industry Websites in lieu of class on 9/2, due Sept 5

Assignment - Group Project #1 – multiple due dates

Group Project #1 Elements and Points		
Item	Due Date and Location	Points
Pitch Idea to your Group	Sept 11 in class	15
Pros/Cons List for Projects	Sept 11 in class	5
Present Idea to Whole Class	Sept 25 in class	20
Project Breakdown and Script	Sept 25 end-of-day	20
Production/Post Days	Sept 30 and Oct 2	
1 st Cut Screening and Production Value Grading	Oct 9	25
2 nd Cut Screening	Oct 14	15
TOTAL POINTS		100

Week 4 – Sept 9 and 11

Topic - How to Pitch, Pre-Production

Presentation/Discussion – Shooting with Smartphones – Audio Tips and Tricks

Activities – In-Class Vlog Kit Production, Pros/Cons Exercise

Assignment - Pitch Idea to your small group **in class** on Sept 11

Activity - Work time on Project Breakdown and Presentation to Whole Class

Week 5 – Sept 16 and 18

Topic – Pre-Production Overview and Project Breakdowns

Presentation/Discussion – Shooting with Smartphones – Accessories

Assignment - Presentation to Whole Class on Sept 25

Week 6 – Sept 23 and 25

Topic – Project Breakdowns

Presentation/Discussion – Youtube Shorts – What Content Creators Need to Know

Presentation/Discussion – Instagram Reels – What Content Creators Need to Know

Activity – work on and present Group Presentation to Whole Class

Reminder – Project Breakdowns due end-of-day Sept 25

Week 7 – Sept 30 and Oct 2

Topic – GROUP WORK DAYS – check in with Frances w/ your plans

Week 8 – Oct 7 and 9

Presentation/Discussion – TikTok – What Content Creators Need to Know

Topic - Post-Production, Finishing up 1st cuts

Activity – Group Project #1 1st cut screenings in class on 10/9

Week 9 – Oct 14 and 16

Presentation/Discussion – Long-form Content – over 2 min

Activities - Group Project #1 2nd cut screenings in class on 10/14, Vlog Kit #2 Activity w/groups, Pitch to your Group, Pros/Cons Exercise

Assignment - Group Project #2 Overview

Group Project #2 Elements and Points		
Item	Due Date and Location	Points
Project Idea Small Group Pitches	Oct 16 in class	15
Pros/Cons list for Projects	Oct 16 in class	5
Pitch Idea to Whole Class	Oct 23 in class	20
Project Breakdown and Script	Oct 23 end-of-day	20
Group Work Days	Oct 28 and 30	
1 st Cut Screening, Footage Log and Production Value Grading	Nov 6 in class	25
2 nd Cut Screening	Nov 11 in class	15
TOTAL POINTS		100

Reminder – take Group Project follow-up poll in Canvas

Week 10 – Oct 21 and 23

Presentation/Discussion – Using Social Media – for-profit companies

Presentation/Discussion – Using Social Media – non-profit orgs

Activity - Work time on Class Pitches and Project Breakdowns

Activity - Presentations to Whole Class on 10/23

Assignment – Confidence Poll – 5 points – in Canvas

Week 11 – Oct 28 and 30

Activity - Shoot Days and/or Post Days

Week 12 – November 4 and 6

Topic – Marketing Yourself: Resumes, Reels and Portfolios

Presentation/Discussion – Predictions for 2026

Presentation/Discussion - Social Media Video – effective video trends

Activity – Watching 1st cuts in class Nov 6

Assignment – Group Project #1 Follow Up Poll – 5 points in Canvas

Reminder – bring resumes to class next week

Week 13 – Nov 11 and 13

Topic – Marketing Yourself cont.: Website Assignment and Examples

Activity – Watching 2nd cuts in class Nov 11

Activity - Resume Workshop in class Nov 13

Assignment – Media Resume due Nov 20 in Canvas

Assignment - Portfolio Website – Multiple Due Dates

Week 14 – Nov 18 and 20

Topic – Marketing Yourself cont.

Activity – Website Rough Drafts #1 Nov 20

Possible Makeup Lesson and/or Presentation/Discussion

NO CLASSES NOV 24-28 FOR THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 – December 2 and 4

Activity – Website Rough Drafts #2 Dec 2

Activity – Website Rough Drafts #3 Dec 4

Assignment – 3 Takeaways Poll – 5 points – in Canvas

Reminder – Final Website due Dec 9 in Canvas

NO CLASSES DEC 5 – Reading Day

Finals Dec 6-12

Reminder – ALL LATE WORK and Portfolio Website DUE DEC 9

COURSE GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments and Points

Assignment	Points Possible	% of Final Grade
In-Class Activities and Polls – 10 points each	100	20%
Presentation/Discussion w/ partner	25	5%
Content Analysis	25	5%
Industry Websites	25	5%
Group Project #1	100	20%
Group Project #2	100	20%
Media Resume	25	5%
Portfolio Website	100	10%
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

- 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 Mock Projects** - Mock versions of the projects of any kind are prohibited. Show me you can do the real deal first, then we can talk about satire, parody and the like. That doesn't mean comedy is outlawed, just that mock versions of projects won't be accepted.
- **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.

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, either 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 dramatic 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.