

JOUR 4210.005 News Games Studio

Tu, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., GAB 319

Instructor/Game Master: Juli James

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Tech Support & Hacker Hours: Tu 5-6 p.m., Wed 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Other: Online, phone, and by appointment

Class Description

In this class students will learn the fundamentals of news game design, how to integrate games into journalistic storytelling, and explore and evaluate game mechanics to engage audiences with news events. Students will design interactions that generate data to open dialogue with the audience and explore issues of balance and perspective. We will begin by playing and analyzing existing news and impact games to develop an understanding of the methods and approaches for designing games. Following the design studio model, we will organize into teams and apply the design process, rapid content generation, iteration and prototyping, with an emphasis on designs that enhance civic engagement.

Objectives

Operating as design studio for interactive journalism, design teams will work together to develop skills as game/interactive media critics, storytellers, data communicators, and ultimately as investigative journalists with news game design skills. Throughout our journey, you will develop your understanding of games, their design, and potential for impact. Expect to have fun!

In this course, journalists will...

- Understand what news games as a storytelling tool offers journalism
- Grapple with impact and advocacy in/for journalism
- Address perspective and bias when using games for journalism
- Pitch news game investigations and interactives
- Apply key ideas in game design, interactive storytelling, and interactive data to the practice of journalism
- Consider games and journalism from an impact perspective: how interactive media and their surrounding cultures shape each other
- Continue to develop research, reporting, writing, critical reading and analytical skills.

Projects

Intro and Impact: Set up studio sites and blogs. Intro to games, impact and design. Play news games and impact games with CGI guides. Write critical deconstructions and analysis for studio blogs.

News Game & Mechanic Wiki: Create a collaborative resource of game mechanics for journalists. This will be a repository of mechanics, stubs with intents and possibilities for interactive storytelling design.

The Mechanic is the Message

- **Narrative:** Investigate a newsworthy topic, and design a game prototype idea using the role-playing genre.
- **Playful Data:** Investigate a newsworthy topic, and design a game prototype idea that engages the audience with the data surrounding the underlying issue.

Texts

- Bogost, I., Ferrari, S., & Schweizer, B. (2010). *Newsgames journalism at play*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Fullerton, T., Swain, C., & Hoffman, S. (2008). *Game design workshop: A playcentric approach to creating innovative games* (2nd ed.). Amsterdam: Elsevier Morgan Kaufmann.
- Schell, J. (2008). *The art of game design: A book of lenses*. Amsterdam: Elsevier/Morgan Kaufmann. Fall

Fall 2015 News Games Studio Plan

Week	Studio Meetings, Tasks	Readings/Plays
8.24	Intro, Syllabus News Games, Perspective and Bias, Studio Teams, Sites & Blogs	Spent, Can you make it in the VA?
8.31	Interrogation Prototype, Paper prototyping, Dopestrong, Twine Games: Depression Quest, Uncle Who Works for Nintendo What we played: Game reflections	Parable of the Polygons Bogost Ch1-2 Fullerton Ch1-2
9.7	Labor Day, Journalism and Impact, Game Design Challenge, Tool: Balsamiq, The Mechanic is the Massage: Game Mechanics Game: Trauma	Fullerton Ch3-5 Propublica White Paper Bad Paper What we played: Game reflections
9.14	The Mechanic is the Massage: Game Mechanics, Contd, Tool: Balsamiq, Twine, Planning & Prototyping, The Free Culture Game	Bogost Ch4 Fullerton Ch9-10 Schell Ch15-16 The Republica Times
9.21	Assignments: Narrative Games	What we played: Game reflections
9.28	Playtest & Iterate: Narrative	What we played: Game reflections
10.5	Deadline - Launch: Narrative	Bogost Ch3
10.12	Debrief: Narrative, Assignment: Data	Heart Saver, Budget Hero
10.19	Prototype: Data	What we played: Game reflections
10.26	Playtest & Iterate: Data	Bogost Ch8-9
11.2	Debrief: Data Pitches: News Game	What we played: Game reflections
11.9		What we played: Game reflections
11.16		What we played: Game reflections
11.23	Thanksgiving	What we played: Game reflections
11.30	Reading Day	What we played: Game reflections
12.7	FINAL EXAMS: Postmortem: News Game & Course	

IMPORTANT FALL 2015 DATES

- August 24 2015 - First Class Day
- September 7, 2015 - Labor Day
- September 8, 2015 - Beginning this date, a student may drop a course only with written consent of instructor.
- October 2, 2015 - Last day for student to receive automatic grade of W for nonattendance; Last day for change in pass/no pass status; Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university with a grade of W for courses a student is not passing. After this date a grade of WF may be recorded.
- October 3, 2015 - Beginning this date, instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance.
- November 2, 2015 - Last day to drop with either W or WF; Last day for a student to drop a course with consent of the instructor.
- November 9, 2015 - Beginning this date a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.
- November 26 – 29, 2015 - Thanksgiving Break (no classes; university closed).
- December 3, 2015 - Last Class Day
- December 4, 2015 - Reading Day (no classes).
- December 5 – 11, 2015 - Final Exams.

Studio Tasks (Assignments)

Studio Teams Site & Blog: Each studio team will set up and manage a website with a landing page and blog. This is also where studio projects will be published. Each week members of the team will post reflections on team activities, games played, project status, development and production, etc.

Game Reflections: Games, Impact and Design. Play games with CGI Impact Guides. Write a play reflection including a game mechanic deconstruction for your studio team's blog. The games do not have to be news or impact games but the reflection/deconstruction should consider the mechanics' applications for news interactives. Details will be provided in class.

News Game & Mechanics Wiki: Create a collaborative resource of news games and game mechanics for journalists. This will be a repository of mechanics with intents and possibilities for interactive storytelling design. The wiki is a collaborative project among the studio teams but each member will be responsible for adding news games and creating an original mechanic entry including description, examples, and visuals. Later, each studio will be responsible for expanding on two mechanics with variations or additional possibilities. Details will be provided in a few weeks.

Project 1: Interactive Narrative - Context and current events

Each studio will deliver a game design prototype and corresponding report on a topic. This will be a role-playing based game that positions the player (reader) as an actor in the story, similar to News 21's "Can you make it?" (<http://backhome.news21.com/article/va-game/>), and Fusion's "Bad Paper" (<http://static.fusion.net/badpaper/>). Details will be provided but requirements include:

- A story to contextualize the topic and frame the game
- Instructions and rules
- A playable prototype of the game's core mechanic (may be tabletop or digital)
- A digital mockup to illustrate the game, or as a way to provide digital assets for playing the game

- A post-mortem on the design's intention and outcomes, and user testing experiences

Project 2: Interactive Data - Digging deeper, playing with data

Each studio will design a game focused on engaging audiences with relevant data as the primary mode of play, as opposed to the role-playing genre. Examples include Propublica's "HeartSaver" (<http://projects.propublica.org/graphics/heartsaver>) and The Public Insight Network's "Budget Hero".

Details will be provided but requirements include:

- A story to contextualize the topic and frame the game
- Instructions and rules
- A playable prototype of the game's core mechanic (may be tabletop or digital)
- A digital mockup to illustrate the game, or as a way to provide digital assets for playing the game
- A post-mortem on the design's intention and outcomes, and user testing experiences

Syllabus: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus depending on the class progress, needs, and interests. This syllabus is an initial plan only and may be changed at any time to meet course needs. Changes in will be announced at group meetings (class) or by email. Unless changes have been announced, this syllabus should be used as the central guide for studio meetings and project planning.

Expectations

For JOUR 4210, and all your classes, you should expect to work in and outside of class. A good rule of thumb is that you should spend two or three hours studying for each credit hour you take. So if you are taking a three credit hour class (which is standard) then you would expect to spend about 6 to 9 hours per week studying for that class. Some exercises in this class may take less time and some may take more time depending on how familiar you are with the computer program.

Please take advantage of tech support, hacker hours, and my office hours whenever you like but especially if you are struggling. Expect to struggle, it is part of the learning process. While uncomfortable, and frustrating, you will work through your challenges, I am here to support you, and you will it and become a better designer through these experiences.

Below are the computer hours the lab GAB 305 will be open for your convenience:

- Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am to 10:00 pm
- Friday: 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm
- Saturday: Closed
- Sunday: 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Class Etiquette

Once in the classroom, silence your cell phone and keep it packed inside your purse or backpack. When class instruction is occurring, you may not surf the web or check e-mail; if you do, you may be asked to leave that class and you'll be counted absent. No FOOD or DRINK is allowed in the classroom.

Attendance

- First Class Day Attendance: Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

- There are no unexcused absences in this class.
- This is a hands-on, skills based course, therefore it is important to attend every class and to be on time.
- Being late may cause a disruption of the timing of the lecture and understanding of the lab work.
- If you have an extraordinary problem (visit to the emergency room, auto wreck, death in the family) that will prevent you from attending class, you must communicate with the instructor prior to class time. E-mail will be checked 30 minutes prior to class, but not after class has started. Bring a note from a doctor if you are absent due to illness. Understand that illness is not an excused absence.
- If you're late to class, it is your responsibility to make sure that you weren't counted absent.
- If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with any changes in this syllabus and additional assignments. Get to know a classmate as the instructor is not responsible for you catching up on the lecture notes.
- Any in class work missed due to an unexcused absence may result in a grade of 0. That will have an impact on your final grade.
- Three late attendances will be counted as an unexcused absence.
- One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, you must communicate with me 24 hours prior to your absence. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a practical course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

Office Hours

My tech support and hacker hours are Tuesdays from 5-6 p.m., and Wednesdays from 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. I am available other days and times to meet virtually, by phone, or in the office, by appointment. Please email me to book a time. I'll need a minimum of 24 hours notice to respond. Generally, I will respond to email within 24 hours. However, if your question is course-related (readings, assignments, or course discussions), BEFORE you email me I expect you to first use the following resources: #1 review your syllabus, #2 ask your peers, #3 post to our course discussion boards, or #4 ask your question in class.

JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION

- Registration will begin on the dates noted in the schedule of classes each semester. The system is a live, first come/first serve program.
- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed the GSP test, all foundational courses, and Math 1680/1681. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

TEXTBOOK POLICY

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

FIRST CLASS DAY ATTENDANCE

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Undergraduates

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. Please visit <http://financial aid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. **Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.**

Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:

1. Individual Faculty Member/Advisor
2. Director, Mayborn School of Journalism
3. Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism

OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook. Individual faculty should include penalties for academic dishonesty in their courses.

MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student

has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom, and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html.

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE)

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available at the end of the semester to provide students a chance to comment on how this class is taught. Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course.

FINAL EXAM POLICY

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site www.my.unt.edu. If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please do so, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>

Courses in a Box

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to insure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email international@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

DROPPING AN ONLINE COURSE

A student needing to drop an online course should send their instructor an email with their name, student ID#, reason for dropping a course, and date you are sending the email. This *must be done prior to the UNT deadline to drop a course*.

If approved, the instructor will contact the MSOJ Undergraduate Office in GAB 102 where you may obtain a signed drop form. **It is your responsibility to turn in the completed drop slip to the UNT Registrar's office before the deadline to make sure you have been dropped from the course with a "W".** If you are taking only online courses and your instructor approves the drop, please contact the MSOJ Director of Advising for instructions.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Mayborn School of Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited

professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 3210, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Juli James.

Each graduate must:

Understand and apply First Amendment principles and the law of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and to criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.

Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.

Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.

Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and image of mass communications in a global society.

Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.

Demonstrate and understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.

Think critically, creatively and independently.

Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.

Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts.

Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work and to understand a digital world.

JOUR 4210.005 News Games Studio

Tu, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., GAB 319

Syllabus Agreement and Class Contact Form FALL 2015

By signing this form, I agree that I have read and understood the policies laid out in this syllabus for JOUR 4210 during the Fall Session of 2015. I agree to follow the policies as stated in the syllabus. I understand the Instructor has the right to make changes as needed.

Printed Name: _____

EUID #: _____

UNT E-mail: _____

Year: _____

Major: _____

Minor: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____