

# MRTS 4415 Unscripted Reality TV Production

Spring 2026 - Tues 11am-1:50 pm (RTVP 180I)

## Instructor:

Lisa Hewitt [Lisa.Hewitt2@unt.edu](mailto:Lisa.Hewitt2@unt.edu) (Note the #2 in email address)

Office: RTVP 229

Office Hours: Mon 1-2:30 pm

Other days/times by appointment (including Zoom)

**Textbook required:** *Creating Reality* by Pete Tartaglia (bring to every class!)

-not required but valuable: *Reality TV* by Troy DeVold (we are reading handouts from book)

## Technology required:

- ✓ External Hard Drive (at least 256Gb; SSD preferred).
- ✓ SD Storage (V90 SD card; at least 64Gb)
- ✓ Access to a computer (PC or Mac) running current version of Adobe Premiere.
- ✓ Note special discounted personal subscriptions to the [Adobe Creative Suite at this link](#).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This **Special Topics class** examines the development of Unscripted/Reality TV and explains the various categories/types of shows in this genre. This is an advanced HANDS-ON production course where students will produce basic unscripted programming while learning the process of pre-production, production and post-production in this genre. Production work outside the formal class time will be required. This is the first time this course has been taught so flexibility is expected.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** To learn the basics of reality/unscripted tv. To produce a mini “Food Network” style segment from pre-production to post-production.

**Mobile device policy:** *Bottom line: PLEASE GET OFF your phones and pay attention.* The Department of RTVF prohibits the use of personal mobile devices during class, unless otherwise allowed by the individual Instructor. All devices should be turned to SILENT MODE before entering the classroom. No “doomscrolling” or texting during class. We will take a short break every class so you can check messages.

**Equipment:** This is the kit assigned for this class:

- Sony 4K Camera / Tripod
- Batteries / Charger
- Headphones
- Shotgun mic, handheld mic, lav mic, wireless mic
- XLR Cables
- Basic Light Kit

**Using appropriate microphones and tripods are always required.**

**Equipment Reservation and Check-Out:** You must reserve equipment in advance using the online checkout system: [checkout.unt.edu](http://checkout.unt.edu) ([Links to an external site.](#)). Checking out equipment without a reservation means there is no guarantee you'll get what you need.

**Overnight Equipment** must be requested with instructor permission. Email me AND the Equipment Room ([MRTSequipment@unt.edu](mailto:MRTSequipment@unt.edu)) **ON THE SAME EMAIL** with specific check-out/check-in times and I will approve based on your request.

**Attendance:** Do NOT sit in the back of the room or you will be asked to move. **First four rows if possible.** Arrive on time, attendance will be taken within the first 10 minutes of class. Participation is key in this HANDS-ON class. With the amount of content covered in each individual class – attending class is the most important part of being a student. Life events do occur, so I will allow **1 absence (the equivalent of one week). Beyond that, 15 points will be subtracted from each unexcused absence.** If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to check in with another student to see what you missed. **Email me immediately if you will be absent.**

**Submitting your work:** *You will submit all work via Canvas.* **Written assignments should be submitted as Microsoft word files.** NO google docs or PDFs accepted. Assignments including video should be submitted as a **YouTube or Vimeo** link. Please make certain your videos/links are NOT marked private. **ALWAYS PUT A SLATE ahead of your videos.** You should export from Adobe Premiere as **H264 using the preset HD1080i 29.97.**

**Deadlines:** It is inevitable that you will experience technical difficulties, so plan ahead. What you think will take an hour will take three, so don't leave anything (rendering, compressing, uploading) until the last minute.

**Late Work:** You are allowed only **one** late assignments, graded at 80%. And the “late work” must be turned in within **two weeks** of the original due date. Notify the instructor if you will be absent. Talk to me IMMEDIATELY if you miss a quiz. You will be expected to make up all missing group work on your own.

**Producing Pods:** You will be split up into “Producing Pods” for this class. It is my discretion to evaluate whether you have pulled your weight in your pod. Do not let your teammates down! The goal is for everyone to achieve an A in this class because you showed up and produced your assigned segment.

**Technical Proficiency:** This is considered an “intermediate/advanced” level class. Everyone will have different levels of experience and different strengths when it comes to shooting, editing, producing and graphic design. Use your top talents in this class and help teach your classmates. THAT IS EXPECTED.

## **SYLLABUS**

***\*\*\*All dates and content are subject to change based on class needs, production, post production and level of student skills. I will update as necessary. Bottom line, come to class.***

<b><u>Week 1</u></b> Jan 13th	-Intro to class -The History of Reality TV
<b><u>Week 2</u></b> Jan 20th	-Types of Shows: Competition, Formatted, Docu-style, Factual and Soft-scripted
<b><u>Week 3</u></b> Jan 27th	-Quiz on material up to this point -Examples of additional shows
<b><u>Week 4</u></b> Feb 3rd	-What is Pre-production, Production, and Post-Production? -Divide into producing pods
<b><u>Week 5</u></b> Feb 10 <sup>th</sup>	-Quiz on material up to this point -Setting up and Ending a Scene”“Types of Interview Bites” pages 243-249
<b><u>Week 6</u></b> Feb 17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>-Dissect Food Show Segment</b> -Assignment: Read chef background and bakery research documents
<b><u>Week 7</u></b> Feb 24th	-Meet with Chef Bill and tour Clark Bakery Kitchen
<b><u>Week 8</u></b> March 3rd	-Pre-produce with your pod -Develop rough outline/schedule “Pre-Production Plan”
<b><u>Week 9</u></b> Spring Break	No class
<b><u>Week 10</u></b> March 17th	-Shoot Production Day – one pod in Clark Kitchen, one pod in Clark Bakery
<b><u>Week 11</u></b> March 24th	-Shoot Production Day - one pod in Clark Kitchen, one pod in Clark Bakery -Assignment: Read “Story Producing/Editing” and “Host Copy and VO” and “Stringout” handouts by Troy DeVold
<b><u>Week 12</u></b> March 31st	-Shoot/Edit Week – Production and Post Production
<b><u>Week 13</u></b> April 7th	-Shoot/Edit Week - Production and Post Production Possible Guest Speaker in April depending on class progress with Food Segment -Assignment: Read “Storytelling and Editing” pages 250-275
<b><u>Week 14</u></b> April 14th	-Shoot/Edit Week - Production and Post Production
<b><u>Week 15</u></b> April 21st	-Edit and GFX Week – Post Production
<b><u>Week 16</u></b> April 28th	-Edit and GFX Week – Post Production – Rough Cuts due at beginning of class -Screen and give notes

<b>Week 17</b> May 5th	-Final Exam Week – Final Projects Due -Screen final projects
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Note: There is **NO** Final Exam in this class – Instead there is a **FINAL PROJECT**.

**Your Assignments are:**

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Quizzes</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Pre-Production Plan</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Roughcut</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Final Project</b>	<b>150</b>

**TOTAL CLASS POINTS POSSIBLE** 500 POINTS

**GRADING:**

450-500	A
400-449	B
350-399	C
300-349	D
299 or less	F

**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.

**Disability Accommodations:** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable 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 reasonable 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, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](#) website

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** 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 classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr). Please note that if a student is disruptive or abusive, the professor has the legal right to ask that student to leave immediately. If the student does not leave, the professor has the legal right to contact UNT Police.