

MRTS 3500 Spring 2024

Reporting For Digital Media 1 16 2024

3500-LECTURE MO 10:00-11:50

3500-301 LAB 9:00-10:20 AM

3500-302 LAB 10:30-11:50 AM

3500-303 LAB 12:30-1:50 PM

Room RTFP 184

Instructor: Steven Ackermann (Steven.Ackermann@UNT.edu)

Office: Chilton Complex

Office Hours:

Mondays 8:30-9:30 AM

Other days/times by appointment (by appointment; including Zoom)

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Jaelene Ramirez (JaeleneRamirez@MY.UNT.edu)

TEXTBOOK:

NONE

TECHNOLOGY:

- ✓ Access to a computer (PC or Mac) running current version of Adobe Premiere.
- ✓ Note special discounted personal subscriptions to [Adobe Creative Cloud](#)
- ✓ External Hard Drive (at least 256Gb; SSD preferred).
- ✓ SD Storage (Class 10 SD card; at least 32Gb).

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS:

MRTS 3500 is a beginner-to-intermediate production course intended to follow MRTS 2210 (Introduction to Media Arts Production.) The course covers single-camera videography, editing, writing, reporting, information gathering and storytelling for non-fiction digital media including traditional broadcast. You will receive hands-on experience developing, reporting, shooting and producing (both audio and video) news-style content for broadcast and online delivery. Information programming will include documentary, sports, entertainment formats and news across multiple platforms and distribution modes. Prerequisite(s): MRTS/CBCM major status & MRTS 2210. Stories which demonstrate excellence may be selected to air on NTTV News.

Specifically, you will:

- Understand proper techniques for information gathering including basic video journalism practices.
- Understand story-telling techniques appropriate for various media.
- Practice various forms of writing/scripting appropriate for different projects.
- Practice professional videography skills including shot composition/framing, lighting and sound recording.
- Practice professional on-location techniques.
- Practice professional editing skills including shot sequencing, use of graphics and use of sound.
- Demonstrate production of media projects from conception through production and review on appropriate deadlines.

This course fulfills the CLASS 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).*

Class Structure & Operations:

Monday lectures (10:00-11:50) are structured as discussions and will NOT be recorded. Each lecture will end with approximately ten minutes for you to complete a short online quiz. You will have until 5:00 PM to complete the quiz. Unless class discussion extends beyond 11:40, extensions will NOT be permitted on the weekly quizzes.

Friday labs (the one you are assigned to) are opportunities for you to practice the skills required for your various projects. Some lab assignments will require working in assigned teams, so make-up assignments are difficult. Some lab assignments require completion within specified time which also are difficult to make up. Certain labs will be designated as “working periods” where you will NOT be required to attend, but our Graduate Teaching Assistant will be available to assist you with your projects.

If you miss more than one lab assignment, you will NOT be allowed to make up future lab assignments.

Equipment: This is the kit assigned for this class; it will be demonstrated during the initial Lab session.

- Panasonic DVX200 Camera / Tripod
- Batteries / Charger
- Lav Mic
- Handheld Mic
- Wireless Mic
- Undergrad Boom Mic
- XLR Cables
- 3 Light Kit

When using Department equipment or editing in the lab, you must use the resources assigned to this class.

You can use your own equipment for assignments produced outside of class. If you use your own equipment, expectations are EXACTLY THE SAME as if you were using school equipment. That means WORK FLOW, AUDIO and VIDEO should all be approached as if you were on professional-grade equipment. **Using appropriate microphones and an appropriate tripod are always required.**

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

Overnight Equipment must be requested with instructor permission. Email me a list and the specific check-out/check-in times and I will forward the request to the Equipment Room with my permission. Email me AND the Equipment Room (MRTSequipment@unt.edu) at the same time for faster service.

Submitting your work will be accomplished on CANVAS. Written assignments should be submitted as .doc files (note that scripts should be submitted using the designated dual-column template submitted as **YouTube or Vimeo** links (make certain your videos 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. Templates for PITCHES, SCRIPTS, SLATES and SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS are all provided in CANVAS.

Deadlines: 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. **Late Work:** Each assignment rubric will contain a "DEADLINE" component with points earned ONLY if the work is submitted by the published deadline.

Technical Proficiency: This is considered an "intermediate" level class. Everyone will have had MRTS 2210 but may have different levels of experience beyond that course. THAT IS EXPECTED. If you don't feel strong in an area, this class will give you a chance to practice and expand your knowledge in producing, writing, shooting and editing both audio and video.

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. This rule does NOT preclude your class projects from being used on NTTV if the work is appropriate and of appropriate quality.

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.

Safety First: While working in laboratory sessions or on class projects, 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. During this course, you will go to places on and off campus. Pay attention to your surroundings and personal safety at all times. Sometimes you will work in teams. Other times you will work by yourself. Do not go alone at night. When you are on assignment, let someone know in advance where you are going and when you'll be back. Before you go to work on a class project, think about how you can stay safe. Use your instincts. If something or someone does not appear "safe," do not go there.

GRADING:

90-100	450-500	A
80-89	400-459	B
70-79	350-399	C
61-69	300-349	D
60 or less	Less than 300 (F)

Weekly Post-lecture Quizzes (13 quizzes) 100 (30 bonus points available)

Lab Assignments (8 Lab Assignments; see below) 150

Class Video Projects

<i>Project #1 (NTTV Story)</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Project #2 (Final Project—team-work permitted)</i>	<i><u>150</u></i>

GRAND TOTAL: 500

(Bonus opportunities include the post-lecture quizzes and 10 bonus points if 70% of the class completes the SPOT survey)

Notes:

- ✓ **Weekly Post-lecture Quiz** will be made available during the final ten minutes of each class. Students will have until 5:00 PM on the day of the lecture to complete the quiz. BONUS points can be earned; unless class extends beyond 11:40 AM, there will be NO extensions on the class quiz.
- ✓ **Lab Assignments** are indicated on the weekly schedule; some lab assignments CANNOT be made up; if you miss more than one lab assignment, no further make-up assignments will be offered.
- ✓ **TWO Projects** are described below/ Each assignment will be graded on both technical and editorial criteria. Failing to use a tripod, improper white-balance or focus, poor quality audio or video and inappropriate editing will affect your technical grade; use of credible sources and proper attribution will affect your editorial grade.
 - **Project 1** is a traditional news story suitable for use on NTTV. You will be graded on your PITCH and on the NEWS STORY; NTTV News Stories generally should not exceed 1:30.
 - **Project 2** serves as the final exam for this class. You may choose from the following categories and you will again be graded on the PITCH, the FIRST DRAFT and the FINAL SUBMISSION.
 - Traditional broadcast news story: Similar to the first project, this can be any DIFFERENT general-interest subject. News story cannot exceed 2:00, but you have the option of submitting up to (2) parts with the total not to exceed 3:00.
 - Branded content: The purpose of the video story must clearly promote a specific brand, product or service. The video story cannot exceed 3:00.
 - Promotional content: This is a slightly different version of the Branded Content that can promote an event, business or something similar. The promotional content can be multiple “promos” which cannot exceed 3:00 when combined together.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The class meets ONCE each week with ONE lab experience each week. You will only receive QUIZ credit for classes you attend and can only receive LAB credit for lab sessions you attend. Lectures will NOT be recorded. PowerPoint decks and other materials will be posted to CANVAS.

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION:

Communicating with students using the UNT student email account is part of the university's contract with students. Electronic communication with students in this class will be through the students' myunt accounts rather than personal accounts, so be sure you regularly check your @myunt email. You may expect me to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays and within 72 hours on weekends.

CLOTHING/APPEARANCE:

It is not possible to address every possible situation. It is important that you understand that your appearance speaks directly to your professionalism and to credibility. When interacting with the public, you are representing the Media Arts Department and the University of North Texas.

Here are general guidelines from a specific broadcast television station as an example of professional attire:

- Collared shirts or blouses with slacks, dresses, sports jackets or business suits are generally preferred.
- Tshirts, sweat-pants, shorts and similar clothing is not acceptable.
- Outfits that expose shoulders and midriffs are not acceptable.
- Tattered or torn outfits are not acceptable.
- Tattoos, body piercings and body--art other than generally accepted jewelry--should not be exposed.
- Always wear appropriate footwear—that generally means avoiding flip-flops, sandals or ultra-casual footwear.
- Professional appearance includes proper hair styling including properly groomed facial hair.
- Ballcaps, hats and other informal head-coverings should be avoided other than during inclement weather. If you have another reason for head-covering, please consult a faculty member.

When seen by the audience (on-camera), the following additional guideline apply:

- Professional business attire is always expected. That includes jackets, shirts with ties or business suits.
- Sport shirts are periodically acceptable for certain assignments—when in doubt, ask.
- Logo-wear with the station logo is also periodically acceptable for certain assignments. No OTHER logo-wear should be worn.

PRELIMINARY WEEKLY Schedule:

(Subject to scheduling changes-- indicate post-lecture quizzes)*

January

MON	15	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. HOLIDAY (no class)
FRI	19	Introductions, Syllabus Discussion, <i>Power of an Image</i> Practice Quiz (not graded) Lab #1: The Power of an Image (10 points)
MON	22	*Lecture: <i>What is a story?</i>
FRI	26	Lab: Technology Review: DVX-200 Camera, tripod and microphone choices Lab #2: Using the Technology (10 points)
MON	29	*Lecture: <i>Practicing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion</i> (Guest: Mark Grant, Director CBS Sports)

February

FRI	2	Lab: Lighting & Framing Demonstration Lab #3: Lighting & Framing a subject (10 points)
MON	5	*Lecture: <i>The Multi-shot Sequence</i>
FRI	9	Lab #4: A demonstration in two minutes (20 points)
MON	12	*Lecture: <i>The Anatomy of a Story & Crafting a Pitch</i>
FRI	16	Lab: Story Pitch Workshop (NTTV Story Pitches due by 5:00 PM)
MON	19	*Lecture: <i>The Art of the Interview & Choosing Sound</i>

FRI 23 Lab #5: The Professional Interview (40 points)

MON 26 *Lecture: *The Art of the Edit*
(Guest: Warren Lustig, CBS News 60 Minutes Editor)

March

FRI 1 Lab: Work Period NTTV Story

MON 4 *Lecture: *Is That a Story?*
(Guest: Stephen Keller, Creative Consultant Southwest Airlines)

FRI 8 NO LAB--NTTV Story Deadline 5:00 PM

MON 11 SPRING BREAK (No Classes)

FRI 15 SPRING BREAK (No Classes)

MON 18 *Lecture: *A Visit from the Lawyers*

FRI 22 Lab #6: Writing Smaller (20 points)

MON 25 *Lecture: *Telling Stories Without Narration*
(Guest: Jim Zarchin, ZMedia Ventures)

FRI 29 Lab #7 Writing on Deadline (20 points)
Final Project Pitches due 5:00 PM

April

MON 1 *Lecture: *The Art of the Promo*

FRI 5 Lab #8: Writing a Promo (20 points)

MON 8 *Lecture *Telling Stories with Sound*
(Guest: Stephen Arnold, Stephen Arnold Music)

FRI 12 Lab: Work Period for Final Project/First Draft

MON 15 *Lecture: *Deep Fakes & Artificial Intelligence*

FRI 19 Lab: Final Project/First Draft / Feedback session

MON 22 WORK PERIOD: Using Feedback/Final Project

FRI 26 Lab: TBD

MON 29 *Lecture: *The Media Eco-system—Going forward in Media Arts*
Final Project Deadline (5:00 PM)

May

FRI 3 Reading Day (No classes)
Final Opportunity to submit work in this class.

OFFICIAL University Calendar (please note dates for class-drops, etc.)

UNT Spring 2024 Semester Calendar

Academic Calendar is subject to change

KEY SEMESTER DATES	Full Semester Jan. 16-May 10	3 week I Winter Session Dec. 18-Jan. 12	8 week I Session Jan 16-Mar. 9	8 week II Session Mar. 18-May 10
Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT	Sept. 18	Sept. 18	Sept. 18	Sept. 18
Registration Opens <small>For specifics by student group/class: https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register</small>	Oct. 2	Oct. 2	Oct. 2	Oct. 2
Regular Registration Ends	Jan. 11	Dec. 15	Jan. 11	Mar. 15
Late Registration—For Students not Registered for the Term <small>Students registering late will incur a late registration fee of \$75.</small>	Jan. 12-19	Dec. 16-18	Jan. 12-19	Mar. 16-22
Last Day to Withdrawal from Entire Term on myUNT <small>Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdrawal from the entire term.</small>	Jan. 15	Dec. 17	Jan. 15	Mar. 17
Classes Begin	Jan. 16	Dec. 18	Jan. 16	Mar. 18
Last Day to Add a Class Section	Jan. 19	Dec. 18	Jan. 19	Mar. 22
Census—Official Enrollment Determined <small>Last day to drop a course section to no longer appear on the official transcript. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</small>	Jan. 29	Dec. 19	Jan. 22	Mar. 23
Drop with a Grade of W Begins <small>Beginning this date, students can drop a course with a grade of W. The course appears on the transcript with a grade of W and tuition and fees remain. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</small>	Jan. 30	Dec. 20	Jan. 23	Mar. 24
Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads)	Feb. 23	Dec. 22	Feb. 2	April 5
Midpoint of the Semester	Mar. 8	Jan. 3	Feb. 9	April 12
Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W.	April 5	Jan. 9	Feb. 23	April 26
First day to request a grade of Incomplete	April 6	Jan. 10	Feb. 24	April 27
Pre-Finals Days	May 1-2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Last Regular Class Meeting	May 2	Jan. 11	Mar. 7	May 9
Reading Day—No Classes	May 3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Exams	May 4-May 10	Jan. 12	Mar. 8	May 10
Last Day of Session	May 10	Jan. 12	Mar. 8	May 10
University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm	May 13	Jan. 16	Mar. 11	May 13
Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript 6pm	May 15	May 15	May 15	May 15
Winter Break (no classes; university closed)	Dec. 25-29, 2023, Jan. 1, 2024			
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Jan. 15, 2024			
Spring Break	March 11-17, 2024			
University Commencement	May 10-12			

Last Modified: November 22, 2023