

MRTS 3500 Fall 2021

Reporting For Digital Media 1.18.2022

3500-LECTURE MO 11:00-12:50

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

3500-302 LAB 11:00-12:20 PM

3500-303 LAB 1:00-2:20 PM

Room RTFP 184

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

Office: Sycamore 212

Office Hours:

Mondays 9:30-10:30 AM AND 1:00-3:00 PM by appointment

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 subscriptions](#) to Adobe Creative Cloud
- ✓ External Hard Drive (at least 256Gb; SSD preferred).
- ✓ SD Storage (Class 10 SD card; at least 32Gb).

ABOUT COVID-19:

This is a face-to-face class. Lectures require class participation and elements of the class emphasize collaboration. This syllabus was prepared using [University guidelines](#)

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Note that UNT does NOT provide masks in the classroom. We will also follow broadcast industry practice of NOT wearing masks while broadcasting on camera from a designated studio.

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. If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID](#), please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS:

MRTS 3500 is a beginner-to-intermediate production course intended to follow MRTS 2210 (Introduction to Production.) The course covers single-camera video photography, 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 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:

This is a face-to-face class. Accomplishing class objectives requires participation in lecture/discussions and collaboration during the lab assignments.

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Monday lectures (11:00-12:50) 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, but you must attend the lecture in order to receive credit for the quiz.

Friday labs (the one you are assigned to) are opportunities for you to practice the skills required for your various projects. 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.

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. 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. You get my point?

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 of what you need and I will forward the request to the Equipment Room with my permission. There is a template for equipment requests in Canvas; using it will make the whole process go a lot faster! 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). Video assignments must be 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.

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: Late work will be graded at 80% of the available points.

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, cutting and audio.

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.

GRADING:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
61-69	D
60 or less	F

Weekly Post-lecture Quiz	14 @ 10 points each	100 (30 bonus points available)	20%
Lab Assignments		100	20%
<i>Tell me a story-written</i>	10		
<i>Technical video demonstration</i>	10		
<i>Stock video assignment</i>	20		
<i>Video interview assignment</i>	20		
<i>Broadcast writing (#1)</i>	20		
<i>Broadcast writing (#2)</i>	20		
Projects		300	60%
<i>Project #1 (NTTV Story)</i>	100		
<i>FINAL Project #2</i>	200		

Notes:

- ✓ **Weekly Post-lecture Quiz** will be made available during the last ten minutes of each class. Students will have until 5:00 PM on the day of the lecture to complete the quiz. You must attend the class in order to earn quiz credit. BONUS points can be earned!
- ✓ **Lab Assignments** are indicated on the weekly schedule.
- ✓ **TWO Projects** are described below and are worth 60% of your final grade. 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 poor quality lighting will all affect your Project grades.
 - **Project 1** is a traditional news story suitable for use on NTTV. You will be graded on your PITCH and on the NEWS STORY.
 - **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 and the final submission. Additionally, this project will require separate marketing, promotional or social media elements.
 - 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 4:00.
 - Branded content: The purpose of the video story must clearly promote a specific brand, product or service. The video story cannot exceed 4:00.
 - Instructional video: The purpose of the video story must be to instruct the viewer on how to perform a skill or other task. The video MUST include at least one interview. The video story cannot exceed 4:00.

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.

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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. It may be periodically necessary for the faculty to ask that someone change their dress based upon the nature of a specific assignment or their determination that a particular outfit is not appropriate.

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.
- T-shirts, 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.

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.

PRELIMINARY WEEKLY Schedule:

(subject to change as needed by the class)

January

21 (Lab) Steve & Jaelene:

Introductions, discussion of class syllabus & technology review

Assignment: Find an online non-fiction story; describe it and upload to CANVAS by deadline.

24 (Lecture Week #2) Steve

What is a story?

✓ Assignment read: [What is an Ally?](#)

28 (Lab) Jaelene

2-person teams shooting outdoors: thirty seconds of video demonstrating technical proficiency with the DVX200 (proper focus, white balance, natural sound and use of tripod; also demonstrating understanding of YouTube/Vimeo submission to CANVAS. Work must be submitted by DEADLINE (end of each lab period).

31 (Lecture Week #3) Steve

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in storytelling

Basics of visual storytelling

✓ Assignment read: [Magic of multi-shot sequences](#)

February

4 (Lab) Jaelene

2-person teams assigned to complete a designated "stock" video assignment.

7 (Lecture Week #4) Steve

Basics of editing (Guest: KXAS Editor Weston Swim)

✓ Assignment: [Listen rather than interview](#)

11: (Lab) Jaelene

2-person team (from previous lab) edit the designated stock video assignment

14: (Lecture Week #5) Steve

The Art of the Interview

Technology demonstration (Lighting techniques for both indoor and outdoor interviews)

✓ Assignment read: [Moments make stories](#)

18: Lab (Jaelene & Steve)

2-person teams assigned to one of the interview subjects

21: (Lecture Week #6) (Steve)
The Anatomy of a Story
The Art of the Story Pitch

25: (Lab) Jaelene
2-person teams edit/submit assigned interview subjects.

28: (Lecture Week #7) Steve
Audio & Video on location
✓ Assignment: [Writing Short](#)

March

4: (Lab) Jaelene
Complete (2) writing assignments on deadline; Submit in CANVAS
1. Write :30 of broadcast-style copy from a provided news release
2. Write 1:00 of broadcast style copy from a designed CNN interview

7: (Lecture Week #8) Steve
Discuss Project 1: The News Story
Storytelling beyond News Pt 1
(Guest: Southwest Airlines video producer Stephen Keller)

✓ Assignment [Realities of advertising, marketing and promotion](#)

11: (Lab Workshop) Jaelene
Project #1 "The News Story" Pitch workshop
✓ Project #1: The News Story Pitches due by 5:00 PM

14-18 University Spring Break

21: (Lecture Week #9) Steve
Selling your content: Marketing, Promotion & Social Media

25: (Lab by appointment) --Work-period on Project 1: News Story

28: (Lecture Week #10)
Your Final Project: Discussion
Storytelling beyond News Pt 2
(Guest: ZMedia President Jim Zarchin)

✓ Project #1: The News Story due by 5:00 PM

April:

1: (Lab) Jaelene
Planning Project 2 (discuss examples from FALL 2021 class)
(Time for initial Project 2 Team Meetings)

4: (Lecture Week #11) Steve
Working as a team: Leadership and Group Dynamics
(Time for follow-up team meetings)

8: (Lab) Jaelene

Write 1:30 "package-style" script from provided information

11: Lecture Week #12 (Steve)

Quick visit from the lawyers

✓ PROJECT 2 (FINAL) Pitches due

(NOTE: Passover/Easter weekend begins Friday 15 April-Sunday 17 April)

15: (Lab by appointment) Jaelene

Worktime for Final Projects

18: (Lecture Week #13) NO Class Steve; No Quiz

Worktime for Final Projects

22: (Lab by-appointment) Jaelene

25: Lecture Week #14 (Steve)

The businesses of visual storytelling & where to find jobs

29: Lab (Jaelene)

TBD

May:

2: (Lecture Week #15) (Steve)

The Streaming Wars: What it means for you?

✓ Final Projects due 5:00 PM