

MRTS 3500 Fall 2022

Reporting For Digital Media 8.22.2022

3500-LECTURE MO 11:00-12:50

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: 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).

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:

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 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 NTV if the work is appropriate and of appropriate quality.

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 Quiz	14 quizzes	100 (30 bonus points available)	20%
Lab Assignments		100	20%
<i>Lab #1 Tell me a story-written</i>	10		
<i>Lab #2 Technical video demonstration</i>	10		
<i>Lab #3 Stock video assignment</i>	20		
<i>Lab #6 Video interview assignment</i>	20		
<i>Lab #8 Writing on Deadline)</i>	20		
<i>Lab #11 Writing for the Ear)</i>	20		
Projects		300	60%

<i>Project #1 (NTTV Story)</i>	
<i>Pitch (due September 26)</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Story (due October 17)</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Project #2 (Final Project)</i>	
<i>Pitch (due November 4)</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Story/Project (due December 12)</i>	<i>120</i>

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 video and inappropriate editing will all affect your final 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 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.

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.

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. You may expect me to respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays and within 72 hours on weekends.

PRELIMINARY WEEKLY Schedule:

(subject to change as needed by the class)

Bold/Underline lectures (will be posted on Canvas after each lecture)

- ✓ Assignments that will be graded

August

- 29 Lecture Week #1
 Introductions, discussion of class syllabus & technology review
 Lecture: *What is a story?*
✓ Assignment: What is an Ally?

September

- 2 Friday Lab Week #1
✓ Non-fiction writing; identify a story, describe it and upload to CANVAS by 5:00 PM
- 5 **Monday NO CLASS (Labor Day)**
- 9 Friday Lab Week #2

DVX200 introduction; 2-person teams demonstrate technical proficiency with a :30 video clip submitted to CANVAS by 5:00 PM

Watching Assignment: Patriots @ Dolphins (if you can find it!)

- 12 Monday Lecture Week #3
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in storytelling
Guest: Mark Grant, Director CBS Sports (NCAA Final Four, NFL)
✓ Reading Assignment: [Magic of multi-shot sequences](#)
- 16 Friday Lab Week #3
✓ Stock video assignment: 2-person teams demonstrate multi-shot sequencing, editing proficiency with a stock video assignment
- 19 Monday Lecture Week #4
Basics of visual storytelling
The Art of the Interview
Lighting demonstration
✓ Reading Assignment: [Listen rather than interview](#)
- 23 Friday Lab Week #4
Developing your story pitch
- 26 **Monday** Lab Week #5
Optional work period;
✓ Project #1 story pitch due 5:00 PM
- 30 **Friday** Lecture Week #5 (during scheduled Lab periods)
✓ 2-person teams assigned to interviews

October

- 3 Monday (Lecture Week #6)
Anatomy of a Story
✓ Reading Assignment: [Moments make stories](#)
- 7 Friday Lab Week #6
✓ Interviews (edited) from Lab #5 due by 5:00 PM
- 10 Monday (Lecture Week #7)
The Art of the edit
Guest TBD
- 14 Friday Lab Week #7
NO LAB: Work period for Project #1 News Story
- 17 Monday Lecture Week #8
Audio & Video on location
✓ Assignment: Project #1 (News Story) due 5:00 PM
- 21 Friday Lab Week #8

- ✓ Writing on deadline; due by end of each lab period
- 24 Monday (Lecture Week #9)
Telling different kinds of stories
Guest: TBD
- 28 Friday Lab Week #9
Pitching Final Projects: Successful projects from 2021
- 31 Monday (Lecture Week #10)
Teamwork & Group Dynamics
✓ Reading Assignment [Realities of advertising, marketing and promotion](#)

November

- 4 Friday Lab #10
✓ Optional work period. Final Project Pitches due by 5:00 PM
- 7 Monday (Lecture Week #11)
The Magic of Sound
Guest: TBD
- 11 Friday Lab #11
✓ Writing for the ear; due by end of each lab period.
- 14 Monday (Lecture Week #12)
A visit from the lawyers
- 18 Friday Lab #12
Work period; Final Project Teams
- 21 Monday (Lecture Week #13)
Selling your content: Advertising, Marketing & Promotion
- 25 Friday (Thanksgiving Week) NO LAB PERIOD
- 28 Monday (Lecture Week #14)
The Businesses of storytelling: Where you will find jobs

December

- 2 Friday Lab #14 (Work period for FINAL PROJECT)
- 5 Monday (Lecture Week #15)
- 12 Final Projects
✓ Final Projects due by 5:00 PM

Key Semester Dates	Full Term August 29 - December 16	8 Week 1 Session August 29- October 21	8 Week 2 Session October 24- December 16
Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT	March 7	March 7	March 7
Registration Opens for specifics by student group/class: See spring registration guide at registrar.unt.edu/registration	March 21	March 21	March 21
Regular Registration Ends Full Semester and 8WK1 registration closes at 4:30 p.m. and Tuition and Fees due by 5:00 p.m. 8WK2 registration closes at 11:30 a.m. and Tuition and Fees due by 12:00 p.m. See Student Accounting for payment deadlines.	Aug 25	Aug 25	Oct 20
Late Registration Begins - For Students not Registered for the Term Students registering late will incur a late registration fee of \$75. See Student Accounting for payment deadlines. Full Semester & 8WK1 registration ends at 4:30 p.m. and Tuition and Fees due by 5 p.m. 8WK2 registration ends at 11:30 a.m. and Tuition and Fees due by 12 p.m.	Aug 26-Sep 2	Aug 26- Sep 2	Oct 21-28
Last Day to Withdraw from Entire Term on myUNT Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdraw from the entire term.	Aug 28	Aug 28	Oct 23 if only 8WK2
Classes Begin	Aug 29	Aug 29	Oct 24
Last Day to Add a Class Section See Student Accounting for payment deadlines.	Sep 2	Sep 2	Oct 28
Census - Official Enrollment Determined Last day to drop a course section to no longer appear on the official transcript. <i>(Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</i>	Sep 12	Sep 3	Oct 29
Drop with a Grade of W Begins 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 tuitions fees remain. <i>(Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</i>	Sep 13	Sep 4	Oct 30
Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads)	Oct 7	Sep 16	Nov 11
Midpoint of the semester	Oct 21	Sep 23	Nov 18

Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W	Nov 18	Oct 7	Dec 2
First day to request a grade of Incomplete	Nov 19	Oct 8	Dec 3
Pre-Finals Days	Dec 7-8	NA	NA
Last Regular Class Meeting	Dec 8	Oct 20	Dec 15
Reading Day - No Classes	Dec 9	NA	NA
Final Exams	Dec 10-16	Oct 21	Dec 16
Last Day Term	Dec 16	Oct 21	Dec 16
University Grade Submission Deadline 4pm	Dec 19	Oct 24	Dec 19
Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript	Dec 21	Dec 21	Dec 21