

MRTS 3500 Spring 2023

Reporting For Digital Media 1 17 2023

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: Sycamore 212

Office Hours:

Mondays 8:30-9:30 AM and 12:00-1:00 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 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 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:** Each assignment rubric will contain a "DEADLINE" component; Late work will be graded at 80% of the available points. **NO WORK WILL BE GRADED AFTER THE FINAL PROJECT 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.

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 (22%)	13 quizzes	110 (20 bonus points available)
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Lab Assignments (34%)		170
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<i>Lab #1 Written Broadcast Story</i>	20
<i>Lab #2 Technical video demonstration</i>	20
<i>Lab #3 Stock video assignment</i>	30
<i>Lab #4 Video interview assignment</i>	40
<i>Lab #5 Writing on Deadline</i>	30
<i>Lab #6 Promotional Writing</i>	30

Projects (44%)		220
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<i>Project #1 (NTTV Story—individuals)</i>	
<i>Pitch (due Monday Feb 27)</i>	40
<i>Story (due Friday Mar 10)</i>	60
<i>Project #2 (Final Project—teams allowed)</i>	
<i>Pitch (due Monday Apr 10)</i>	40
<i>First Draft (due Monday Apr 24)</i>	40
<i>Story/Project (due Monday May 8)</i>	80

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 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. This project also includes a graded first-draft along with 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 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. 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.
- 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)

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

- ✓ Assignments that will be graded

January

FRI 20

Lab

Introductions, discussion of class syllabus & technology review

- ✓ Lab #1 Writing Assignment

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

MON 23

Lecture

What is a story & Working in the Field

- ✓ Quiz #1

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

FRI 27

Lab

Camera, Microphone, Tripod & Lighting Review

Guest: Tanner Matthews

- ✓ Lab #2 Basic multi-shot video assignment

MON 30

Lecture

Practicing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Guest: Mark Grant, CBS Sports Director (Lead Director, CBS Final Four)

- ✓ Quiz #2

*Reading:Assignment: [An example of credible research](#)

February

- FRI 3 **Lab**
Explaining stock video
✓ Lab #3 Stock video (team assignments)
- MON 6 **Lecture**
The Art of the Interview
✓ Quiz #3
Reading Assignment: [Listen rather than interview](#)
- FRI 10 **Lab**
Practicing to interview
- MON 13 **Lecture**
The Anatomy of a story
✓ Quiz #4
*Reading:Assignment: [Finding Focus in three words](#)
- FRI 17 **Lab**
Professional interview guests (team assignments)
Michael Rey, North Texas Tollway Authority
Amanda McNew, Grapevine Police Department
Chris Pilcic, State Farm Insurance
- MON 20 **Lecture**
The Art of the Edit
Guest: Warren Lustig, CBS News 60 Minutes Editor/Producer
✓ Quiz #5
- FRI 24 **Lab**
Professional interview work-period (team from previous lab)
✓ Lab #5: Professional Interview (Deadline 5:00 PM)
- MON 27 **Lecture**
Using sound in storytelling
Guest: Stephen Arnold (The most famous composer you've never heard of)
✓ Quiz #6
✓ Project #1 Story Pitch (Deadline 5:00 PM)
*Reading:Assignment: [Social Media by the numbers](#)

March

- FRI 3 **Lab**
Work period on Project #1
- MON 6 **Lecture**
The Digital Universe
Guest: Brian Ross, NBC Universal (NBC 5 D/FW)
✓ Quiz #7
- FRI 10 **Lab**

Work period on Project #1

✓ *Project #1 Story (Deadline 5:00 PM)*

SPRING BREAK (Saturday March 11-Sunday March 19)

MON 20

Lecture

Is that really a story?

Guest: Jim Zarchin, Z-Media Ventures)

✓ Quiz #8

FRI 24

Lab

Writing a story with soundbites.

✓ Lab #6: Writing a VO/SOT (timed assignment)

MON 27

Lecture

The Art of the Promo

Guest: Lauren Cozar, PepsiCo

✓ Quiz #9

FRI 31

Lab

Writing a promo.

✓ Lab #7: Writing a promo (timed assignment)

April

MON 3

Lecture

Branded content is a story too!

Guest: Stephen Keller, storyteller Southwest Airlines)

✓ Quiz #10

FRI 7

Lab

Discussing Final Projects

MON 10

Lecture

A visit from the Lawyers

✓ Quiz #11

✓ Project #2 Pitches (Deadline 5:00 PM)

FRI 14

Lab: Work Period on Project #2

MON 17

Lecture

Deep Fakes & Artificial Intelligence

✓ Quiz #12

✓ SPOT Survey opens (bonus opportunity)

FRI 21

Lab: Work Period on Project #2

MON 24

Lecture

Going Forward in Media Arts

✓ Quiz #13

✓ *Project #2 First Draft (Deadline 5:00 PM)*

Fri 28

Lab: First Draft Workshop

May

MO 1 **NO Lecture; Work Period Project #2 Final Project**

MO 8 **Final Exam Time Period**

✓ Final Project Submission (Deadline 5:00 PM)

(No work accepted at 11:59 PM)

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

KEY SEMESTER DATES	Full Semester Jan. 17-May 12	3 week I Winter Session Dec. 19-Jan. 13	8 week I Session Jan 17-Mar 10	8 week II Session Mar. 20-May 12
Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT	Sept. 19	Sept. 19	Sept. 19	Sept. 19
Registration Opens <small>For specifics by student group/class: https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register</small>	Oct. 3	Oct. 3	Oct. 3	Oct. 3
Regular Registration Ends	Jan. 12	Dec. 15	Jan. 12	Mar. 16
Late Registration—For Students not Registered for the Term <small>Students registering late will incur a late registration fee of \$75.</small>	Jan. 13-20	Dec. 16-19	Jan. 13-20	Mar. 17-24
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. 16	Dec. 18	Jan. 16	Mar. 19
Classes Begin	Jan. 17	Dec. 19	Jan. 17	Mar. 20
Last Day to Add a Class Section	Jan. 20	Dec. 19	Jan. 20	Mar. 24
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. 30	Dec. 20	Jan. 23	Mar. 25
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. 31	Dec. 21	Jan. 24	Mar. 26
Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads)	Feb. 24	Dec. 23	Feb. 3	April 7
Midpoint of the Semester	Mar. 10	Jan. 4	Feb. 10	April 14
Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W.	April 7	Jan. 10	Feb. 24	April 28
First day to request a grade of Incomplete	April 8	Jan. 11	Feb. 25	April 29
Pre-Finals Days	May 3-4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Last Regular Class Meeting	May 4	Jan. 12	Mar. 9	May 11
Reading Day—No Classes	May 5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Exams	May 8-12	Jan. 13	Mar. 10	May 12
Last Day of Session	May 12	Jan. 13	Mar. 10	May 12
University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm <small>Last day of Spring Term is May 13.</small>	May 15	Jan. 16	Mar. 13	May 15
Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript 6pm	May 17	May 17	May 17	May 17
Winter Break (no classes; university closed)	Dec. 26-30			
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Jan. 16			
Spring Break	March 13-18			

Last Modified: November 18, 2022