Instructor: Noah Lord Nelson  
Office Location: Journalism Building Room 213  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials:

Required Textbook: Going Solo: Doing Video Journalism in the 21st Century  
Author: G. Stuart Smith, University of Missouri Press, 2011

Required Viewing: Local and Network Newscasts  
Required Reading: Regional and National Newspapers and Online News services (TBA)  

Course Description:

Journalism 316 is an upper level convergent media course for students enrolled in the news-editorial sequence. The course combines the fundamentals of print journalism with mobile media production, field reporting, digital editing and social media awareness.

The course addresses the increasing role of digital journalism in the coverage of local and regional issues and events. Students will add to their print journalism experience a broader set of multi-platform skills useful for “backpack journalists” who work alone or in small teams in the field locally and around the world. Strong emphasis will be placed on rich visual and written storytelling of feature stories and hard news.

Learning Outcomes

Newsgathering  
Students will use consumer or prosumer grade digital technology to gather video, audio or still images. They will gain a solid understanding of how to use visual images and sound to create a coherent narrative and develop their own storytelling “voice”.

Editing and Producing:  
Students will write clearly and effectively for news broadcasts, documentaries, and online services.

Demo Portfolio:  
Students will create a small body of work that demonstrates interviewing skills, the ability to write to pictures and news judgment.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods / Activities / Assessments

J-316 will combine instructor-led sessions, class discussion and both visual and written assignments from students.

The class will explore research techniques, the methods of conducting a compelling on-camera interview and the differences between print and broadcast writing. On occasion guest experts will be invited in to lend their expertise.

Students are expected to fully participate in the analysis of current regional and national news events and issues. Students are expected to watch both local and national TV news programs for absorption of content, writing and visual storytelling styles.

In order to build a “news I-Q” students will read a variety of news blogs, local papers such as the Dallas Morning News and Fort Worth Star telegram, as well as national publications such as the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and Newsweek. Most classes will start with a quiz on current news events, sports or financial news.

Once students have mastered basic classroom camera techniques, field assignments will begin, as will the art of visual storytelling. Students will cover assignments initially as teams, then graduate to individual assignments.

Solid expressive writing is central to journalism, so is critical thinking. Content matters, regardless of the delivery system. Underdeveloped writing skills and the inability to produce both written and visual content will limit employability in today’s highly competitive marketplace. The goal is to provide students with the multi-platform skills that backpack journalist must have to perform on the professional level.

Toward the end of the course we will begin to discuss “entrepreneurial journalism” and working as a contracted or freelance journalist.

Grading: 4 Major Field Assignments......................... 80 pts. (Details to be given in class)
Class Attendance and Participation...............10 pts.
Demo Portfolio..............................................10 pts.

Point Breakdown:  A............... 90-100 pts.
                 B............... 80-89 pts.
                 C............... 70-69 pts.
                 D............... 60-69 pts.
Course Expectations and Classroom Behavior:

- All class and field assignments are to be submitted on time unless special arrangements have been made. Late assignments will incur a 20% point penalty.
- Students must attend class. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the loss of a full grade for the class. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.
- Students will not text, make or receive phone calls during class.
- Plagiarism will result in failure of the course.
- Consistent tardiness will affect a student’s grade.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

At least one 8GB HD data card for high-def cameras. Field cameras will be provided. Digital editing will take place in the Journalism Department computer lab/classroom using Apple i-Movie editing program.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services
Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide)

Signed

Dated