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JRNL 494.03: Pollner Seminar - Advanced Multimedia Storytelling

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ADVANCED MULTIMEDIA STORYTELLING

(The importance of the moment)

In a nod to the Celia Cruz song “Rie y Lloro” from the posthumous release of her “Regalo del Alma” collection a month after her death in 2003.

The University of Montana School of Journalism J494 Pollner Seminar
Spring 2016
Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:40 p.m. – 2 p.m. in 210 Don Anderson Hall

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursday, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. but I’m flexible. I’ll spend hours at the Kaiman, so you might seek me out there. Send me an email to arrange something if it’s outside hours. We’ll need to meet periodically to make sure you’re making progress on the three projects due during the semester.

Course Description

The most powerful narratives have multiple media layers. How a story is developed is uniquely personal to the journalist or journalist team who has innumerable options to meld print, photo, audio, video and interactive graphic combinations - thanks to technological advances.

This course builds on completed required classes at the University of Montana School of Journalism and elevates skill competency, news judgment and narrative techniques for those who successfully complete this course.

The ability to capture moments in visuals and audio is what separates us in an era when all use tools of the journalistic trade to communicate. The idea of the value of moments and how these translate into journalistic storytelling will be a recurring topic of discussion and how we develop stories in this course.

A journalist’s ethics code will be in the forefront of our discussions for this seminar. The final component is marketing one’s work through social media and professional outreach to prospective partners and employers.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, student journalists will:

- a) have mastered the fundamentals for originating and developing stories for web publication.
- b) become proficient pitching ideas to editors.
- c) be able to edit audio, photography, video and other digital assets for use in multimedia storytelling.
- d) perform at a higher level in the chosen core specialization major (whether print, broadcast or photojournalism) and show accomplishment in other digital formats.
- e) be able to work effectively as a member of a team.
- f) understand online readership habits, preferences and trends through analytics.
- g) use social media and be versed in how to market themselves and their work.

Requirements and Criteria for Assessment

There are three multimedia story projects assigned and required for completion in the 16-week semester. The first project is to be completed by the sixth week; second project, a team effort, is due by the 10th week and the third project is due May 6. One project requires that the journalist concentrate on media methods outside the individual's concentration major, whether in print, photo, video or audio. The third, and final, project is a monthlong, indepth look at an approved subject and story with frequent journalist/instructor conferences. The instructor will approve the story ideas for all three projects.

These three projects assume 70% of the overall assessment with 15, 25 and 30 percent respectively for the digital story assignments. An additional 20% will be assigned for attendance (10%) and participation (10%). The remaining 10% will come from a final essay.

Selected Readings and Resources

"A Vanished World," Roman Vishniac. Farrar, Straus and Giroux/1986

A photographic record of the lives of German and Eastern European Jews in the years prior to the Holocaust, 1935-1938.

["A Closer Reading of Roman Vishniac,"](#) Alana Newhouse, The New York Times Magazine,
April 1, 2010.

"Blue Highways: A Journey into America" William Least Heat-Moon, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1982.

["Ethics and Standards,"](#) American Press Institute
[Knight Digital Media Center](#)

["LensCulture"](#) – Contemporary Photography

[New Media Institute](#),

A New York-based research and fact-finding organization which works with the news media and academics as a resource of facts, statistics and analysis.

“On the Road,” Jack Kerouac. Penguin Books/Edition published 1976.
Part One, Chapter 1, pages 3-11.

[“SPJ Ethics Committee Position Papers.”](#) Society of Professional Journalists. 2015

[“The Americans.”](#) Robert Frank. Grove Press, 1959.

[Visual Projects and Blog](#) by MediaStorm, Founder and Director Brian Storm.

“Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling,” Ken Kobre. Focal Press/2012.

University of Montana rules

Academic misconduct

Life is just harder when you break or disregard the University of Montana’s Student Code of Conduct. Within this document are rules that govern journalists’ conduct for perpetuity including these caveats from Page 5 of the Word format version of [the student code](#):

Plagiarism: Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.

Submitting false information: Knowingly submitting false, altered, or invented information, data, quotations, citations, or documentation in connection with an academic exercise.

Submitting work previously presented in another course: Knowingly making such submission in violation of stated course requirements.

Accessibility and accommodation for students with disabilities

The university is committed to making this course accessible to qualified students with disabilities. Please contact me to request course modifications. The [Disability Services for Students office](#) can help us with this.

Deadlines

As journalists, deadlines are a part of what we do. As in real life, deadlines can be broken but there’s a process of how to make this happen in a credible way. Explaining at the last

minute that a deadline can't be met only works in one situation: family emergency.

Use of unauthorized digital devices during class

Read above. There's only one reason I should see you looking or engaging on your digital device during class and that's a family emergency situation.

Based on three classroom hours per week

SCHEDULE

Week One, Jan. 25 and 27

“The Art of the Story”

Who we are shapes the stories we tell and how we tell them.

Individual skills, interests and experiences shape our storytelling abilities

Student journalists' dissect their biographical attributes.

Developing story, coverage ideas; assignment to produce five researched ideas for the first project due the week of February 29 and March 2. Should the multiple ideas be good, they can be those you work on for the second and third projects. *Hint: You'll be ahead of the game by doing a thorough job to come up with several good ones now.*

Student journalists take the online media survey to indicate experience with tools as well as explore personal attributes and preferences. *Hint: This is no time to be shy but rather honest about one's talents, skills and preferences. Analyzing what you love and where your talents lie help you figure out the stories that give you a competitive edge. Did I mention this is a competitive business? You work harder and put more of yourself into the stories and subject matter that are important to you.*

View student journalists' favorite personal work

Note: We'll come up with a schedule for me to see your portfolios, websites, best work during the first week. I have no preferences for the format. Bring what you have. I learn a lot about a journalist by seeing what she/he thinks is her/his best work.

Reading assignments:

“Blue Highways: A Journey into America” William Least Heat-Moon, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1982. [Required reading pages 1-5.](#)

[“A Closer Reading of Roman Vishniac,”](#) Alana Newhouse, The New York Times Magazine,
April 1, 2010.

Who is this person leading the spring 2016 Pollner seminar?

[“Revisiting the Rwanda Genocide: Origin Stories From The Associated Press,”](#) Pamela Chen, National Geographic Proof blog, March 31, 2014

Week Two, Feb. 1 and Feb. 3

“Facts + Personal stories + Visceral connections + Hard to access situations” can equal content dynamite.

Making stories interesting

Understanding context through research

Connecting with subjects to connect to readers – view as an outsider vs. the insider’s knowledge: Robert Frank versus Roman Vishniac

“The Americans,” Robert Frank. Grove Press, 1959.

“A Vanished World,” Roman Vishniac. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986

Five ideas dissected/story approval for 1st project

Allow the story subject to drive the content platform (Due Week Six, beginning of class)

View these two videos before the Feb. 1 class

From the serious to the simply sublime in multimedia projects:

[“Leaving the Life: Stories of the Survivors of Prostitution and Pimping,”](#) Tim Matsui, Alexia Foundation, 2012.

[“Just Plane Folks,”](#) Mary F. Calvert personal website, 2016.

Required reading and viewing before the Feb. 3 class:

Interview techniques

[“30 Tips on How to Interview Like a Journalist,”](#) David Spark, Spark Minute blog, Nov. 7, 2011.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week Three, Feb. 8 and Feb. 10

“Media without high-impact visuals are critically lacking”

Photojournalism and the value of the moment

The mechanics of photography: aperture/speed/angle/movement/lens selection/light

The journalism behind what good photojournalists do to get the picture

Contacts/access/anticipating the moment

The power behind enigmatic images

World Press Photo 15, Schilt Publishing, Germany, 2015. Note: A copy is available for viewing in Stapleton's office.

["LensCulture"](#) – Contemporary Photography

A visit with Boston Globe Associate Editor Stan Grossfeld

From the "[Madonna and Child](#)" image included in the 1984 Pulitzer Prize winning series from the Ethiopia famine to the 2014 Red Sox American League Championship Series photo that exploded on social media. Not familiar with these images or him? You should be.

Assignment:

Submit a cellphone image that incorporates the visual attributes discussed during Week Three. Your choice: You can submit it any time during the week of Feb. 8. Deadline: midnight Saturday, Feb. 13.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions. Remember, I'm flexible.

Week Four, Feb. 17

"It's all about the editing"

Editing is subjective, no way around it, but there is a method to what appears to be a random selection of images, audio and/or video included in a story. For each editor it's different.

The Stapleton flow method (also known as the double heartbeat method of editing): Images plunked next to each other don't necessarily make a good package. To flow, multimedia elements need multiple layers of interest so that the eye doesn't take everything in with one quick look. The composition/angle of the image or video encourages a lingering, roaming eye and facilitates the movement to the next frame/image.

We'll dissect the "Year in Pictures" New York Times 17-page spread published Dec. 27, 2015.

By now, we'll have something to look at from your first projects. In-class show and tell.

Expect questions.

Editors worth learning from by what they select to highlight:

Jim Estrin and David Gonzalez of the New York Times Lens Blog
The [Lens Blog](#) link and how it came to be

Marcel Saba, founder of [Redux Pictures](#). Check out who's a member of Redux Pictures – among them [Mark Peterson](#) and [Maggie Steber](#).

Required reading before the Feb. 17 class:

“[Photo Journal: The New York Times – Lens](#),” Jim Colton, NPPA Magazine, 2012.

“[10 minutes with Marcel Saba](#),” We'll see what this is all about blog, June 24, 2015.



Week Five, Feb. 22 and Feb. 24

“The common denominator for these images? Missed audio opportunities”
The underutilized power of sound and experience

Don't underestimate the power of everyday sounds

September 11, 2001 audio from New York City fire rescue recording with images from outside/inside the World Trade Center towers and lower Manhattan

Required reading before the Feb. 22 class:

New and noted: Audio Journalism bookmarks interesting links:

“[How to make an interesting audio slideshow](#),” Jenny Roper. 2011.

<http://audiojournalism.wordpress.com/2011/03/29/what-makes-a-good-audio-slideshow/>

Powerful images that could be enhanced by audio – ambient and voiceover.

Cinematographer and videographer Carlos Diaz and his ambient audio emphasis (but note the [visuals here](#) also):

The [personal website for Carlos Diaz](#) is worth your time.

Multimedia journalist Peter Huoppi of The Day started his career as a photojournalist. He morphed into a videographer and multimedia storyteller. [Here's the power of good](#)

[voiceover.](#)

Updates on Project 1 progress, due Week Six.
Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

[Required viewing before the Wednesday](#), Feb. 24 class:

Wednesday, Feb. 24

“The heart of a videographer through the eye of a photojournalist”

We’ll dissect Ed Kashi and Julie Winokur’s video, “[Syria’s Lost Generation](#),” which was part of Kashi’s portfolio of work that earned him the Multimedia Photographer of the Year in last year’s [Missouri POY competition](#).

We’ll discuss what you liked and didn’t from the Kashi and Diaz work, so be prepared with concrete examples from the Feb. 22 assignments.

We’ll discuss important points made by
“Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling,” Ken Kobre. Focal Press/2012.

Discussion of ongoing problems prior to completion of first personal project, due week six.

Office appointments available for further review and project discussions.

Week Six, Feb. 29 and March 2

“Presentation of personal projects”

Journalists describe their thinking, successes and difficulties with the project.

We discuss opportunities to get the stories shown to a wider audience.

Shutterstock

Time LightBox

European digital publications

Social media strategies

Others?

Working as a journalist in a team producing a multimedia story/Project 2

Team members are grouped, story possibilities are discussed and roles are distributed for the second project, due Week Ten.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Required reading prior to Monday, March 7 class:

[“Our 11 Favorite Multimedia Storytelling Platforms,”](#) Wakefield, Jan. 27, 2015.

Week Seven, March 7 and March 9

“The What-If Generation of journalists adapting technology”

Adapting technology to meet the need, embrace viewer preferences. We discuss and try out several relatively new storytelling platforms.

Why I should’ve built the GoPro back in the 1980s.

We’ll discuss and I’ll ask for student journalists’ experiences with the platforms

[“Our 11 Favorite Multimedia Storytelling Platforms,”](#) Wakefield, Jan. 27, 2015.

Teams work together on their stories, due Week 10.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Required reading prior to Ut’s class visit March 9:

[Nick Ut on Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Ut)https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Ut

Also, become familiar with Ut’s images from Vietnam to the present.

Wednesday, March 9

Nick Ut, Pulitzer Prize winning photojournalist from the Associated Press takes over the class Wednesday, March 9.

He will present a public talk about his iconic image “Napalm girl” from the Vietnam War Wednesday evening on campus at the Law School auditorium. Details to come and attendance is requested. This talk is in conjunction with the [Pulitzer Prize 100th anniversary events](#) occurring across the country in 2016.

Week Eight, March 14 and March 16

“Marketing your work and yourself”

How to reach out and get noticed.

Student journalists list their Top 10 employment opportunities and craft a plan of action to get a meeting, interview and/or show one’s portfolio.

What does your personal website say about you? Several class members submit their personal websites for critiques.

We'll look at some good ones, in my opinion:

Photographer [Eli Reed](#)

Photographer [David Guttenfelder](#)

Note: My goal is to get 20 minutes with Guttenfelder for a class in April. I'll keep you posted. The wheels are in motion.

Videographer [Travis Fox](#)

Social media avenues for recognition

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, et.al., and best practices for promoting your work.

Remember for perpetuity: You can't undo what you've wrought.

If there's time, team editing session for projects, due Week 10.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week Nine, March 21 and 23

“The ethical parameters required for narrative truthfulness”

The sins of journalism: Advocacy in content and social media; 9 to 5 journalism; lack of transparency in decision making, standards and inconsistencies; content manipulation; asking for favors to get the shot; not anticipating consequences and public reaction of publishing controversial content; stealing without attribution; exaggerations; journalists becoming part of the story; lack of transparency when errors are made; ego magnification. Should I go on?

Speaking of transparency/

Required reading prior to Wednesday, March 23 class:

“[A Family Swept Up in the Migrant Tide](#),” Anemona Hartocollis, The New York Times, Oct. 22, 2015.

Ethics in technology

“[SPJ Ethics Committee Position Papers](#).” Society of Professional Journalists. 2014.

“[That Painful World Press Photo Decision](#),” David Burnett, “We’re Just Sayin” blog, March 4, 2015.

Team editing session for the second story projects, due Week 10.

Explanation of Project 3: The final project to fulfill the requirements of the Advanced Multimedia Storytelling course. Once the instructor approves the story, there will be progress reviews. This project incorporates multiple new media strategies. This project is

worth 30% of your final grade. *Hint: I worked very hard during my time as an undergrad and grad student at the University of Missouri-Columbia to make good grades. No one has ever asked me what my grade point was during a job interview.*

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week 10, March 28 and March 30

Presentation of team projects

Utilizing Final Cut, Premier or other software to present their stories, student journalists describe their thinking, successes and difficulties with the second project.

Webby Awards staff members discuss the 2015 best.

[The Webby Awards](#), the leading international award honoring [excellence on the Internet](#). I'll try for a Webby Awards staff member via Skype.

A jury of our peers dissects the best team projects.

Discussion of final projects.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week 11, No classes for spring break April 4 and April 6

Hint: This could be an opportune time to reach out to potential employers. Get that face-to-face meeting, even if it's only through Skype.

Week 12, April 11 and April 13

"The role of voice and style in storytelling"

Choosing the best way to tell the story. The subject matter, methodology and narrator.

Natacha Pisarenko joined AP's Buenos Aires bureau in 2002. Last year she was named chief photographer for southern South America. She'll describe her growth as a photojournalist.

[A collection of her images.](#)

[Chilean miners photos](#)

Former AP photographer [David Guttenfelder](#), currently a National Geographic Fellow, is the perfect journalist to talk about developing one's style. His 20-year transformation as a photojournalist from joining the AP as a stringer in Rwanda in 1994 to his coverage of North Korea in 2014 and 2015 is a great case study. What were his influences and how did they shape how he works?

Required reading prior to the Wednesday, April 13 class

"On the Road," Jack Kerouac. Penguin Books/Edition published 1976.

[Part One, Chapter 1, pages 3-11.](#)

THIS → "We focused on others, on the Masters, on the recognized, the accepted, the artists whose work was collected by museums. What we needed to do was focus on ourselves," landscape photographer Alain Briot. *Note: Remember the first week of class?*

["How to Establish a Personal Photographic Style,"](#) Alain Briot, The Luminous Landscape, Oct. 17, 2013.

Work in progress discussions for Project 3 stories. Media lab class session.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week 13, April 18 and April 20

"What your digital footprints say about you"

Representing your work and how you think via the Internet

At this point, you'll have previous projects, blogs, single images, video and social media to build your brand.

Updates on contacting potential employers, getting interviews, updating your personal website etc.

Work in progress discussions for Project 3 stories. Media lab class session.

Office appointments available for further review, project discussions.

Week 14, April 25 and April 27

"The culmination of a lot of hard work"

I acknowledge this course is demanding. We'll use class time the week prior to your third projects being due to get your stories in shape.

Editing session for final story projects, due at midnight Friday, April 29.
Office appointments available for further review, project discussions prior to the end of week deadline.

Week 15, May 2 and May 4

“Opening night”

Student journalists present their final projects and explain the director’s vision to invited classes and faculty.

You’ll bring all the tools we’ve practiced and discussed in class – capturing powerful and telling multimedia visuals, story development, editing prowess, teamwork and articulating your motives, experiences and assessments.

Week 16, May 9 and May 11

“You’ll never think about stories the same way again”

Essay exam encompassing the semester’s reading assignments, discussions, guest lecturers and profiled journalists. *Hint: Those who have read the assignments and attended class will ace this.*

Jonathan Harris is a New York-based digital storyteller. How does he explain [the mystery behind stories and storytelling?](#)

Harris: “What are stories? Everything is a story. Nothing is a story. It depends on your perspective,” he says. “‘Storytelling’ has become such a cliché in the past few years as to be nearly meaningless—like ‘sustainability’ or ‘innovation.’ Every ad campaign is now a ‘storytelling’ endeavor, and every kind of communication seems to be called ‘storytelling.’ I actually find that word pretty boring now. I just make stuff that feels interesting to me. Call it whatever you want.”