Syllabus

COM 561: Professional Multimedia Content Creation
Spring 2018 • 3 Credits • [The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication](#)

Instructor

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Course Description

In COM561, students learn to develop and communicate ideas clearly, concisely, and effectively through multimedia content.

Multimedia perspective involves the convergence of text, graphics, audio and video, and the distribution of these assets over the internet. It also requires critical thinking, information literacy, communication proficiency, and self- and peer-evaluation.

To create diverse multimedia content requires training in multimedia content creation software. To develop these skills, students will work through a number of tutorials. Students will use the skills learned in the tutorials to complete creative multimedia storytelling assignments. Students will create and manage a course blog on the web where they will post assignments and interact with fellow students through content critiques.

However, skill without an understanding of the underlying principles and theories is not enough. The best communicators practice their skills within a framework derived from principles, theories and research. Therefore, as foundation, principles and theories will be offered in three areas: aesthetics, design and interactivity, including user-centered design and social interactivity.

Students will choose a topic at the beginning of the semester. This topic will be used throughout the semester on each content creation assignment. Students are encouraged to choose a topic relevant to their current position or profession, and

use the assignments to create an online portfolio. Regardless of the topic, students must craft their multimedia content to communicate specific ideas to a diverse web-based audience through their course blog.

Students will work in "peer critique groups" throughout the semester. Students are expected to provide constructive feedback about their group members' draft multimedia creations using design principles and technical advice. These critiques should be focused on helping designs achieve their communication goals, as described in the accompanying written blog post. In addition to self-reflection, this exercise in critical thinking and peer feedback will form the basis for design revisions and final projects.

Course learning goals:

Learning Goal:	At the end of this course, students should be able to:	Course topics that advance these learning goals:	This objective will be evaluated primarily by [assignment or activity]:
Communication	Effectively communicate through multi-modal designs and multimedia stories, write clear descriptions of content creation processes.	All topics in this course center around effective multimedia communication. Specific modes of communication include graphic design, vector illustration, audio storytelling and video storytelling.	Students will learn the tools of effective multimedia communication through tutorials, final design projects, and peer critiques.

Information Literacy	Determine the type of information needed to communicate effectively through multimedia content, research and cite inspiration for multimedia communications, understand *fair use* laws and ethically and legally integrate information.	Students will learn about copyright issues that will inform creating ethical multimedia designs. Furthermore, materials will discuss searching for legal-to-use graphics, audio and video.	The write-ups accompanying four major design projects are required to include citations and information about design process, research, inspiration and relate information to design. Multimedia designs are expected to ethically integrate information in content creation and not violate copyright law. Students will take an online quiz covering copyright and fair use.
Diversity	Create multimedia content appropriate to a diverse internet audience, exhibit sensitivity to diverse social, cultural, and intellectual interests, interact with diverse content authors in critiquing peers' work.	Topics covering online identity and user-centered design will discuss the importance of understanding a diverse internet audience and Internet users to create successful online content. Furthermore, throughout the semester communication to a wide audience is discussed.	Students will be evaluated with the effectiveness of their designs for a diverse audience for each of their multimedia projects and blog posts. Students will also be required to respectfully interact with their peers in exploring and assessing the effectiveness of their communications to an internet audience in peer critique assignments.

Form of Instruction

Classes will be conducted online through a mixture of short lectures, readings and software tutorials. In addition to introducing concepts related to aesthetics, interactivity and design, assignments will be discussed in online forums and lectures.

All course materials, including lectures, tutorials, rubrics, and interviews will be posted at this site and/or in Blackboard.

Required Materials and Hardware

This course does not use a traditional hardcopy textbook. Instead, we will use a variety of online readings and videos that include design concepts and software tutorials. Course readings will include materials created by COM561 instructors as well as selections from free online textbooks and professional development resources.

We will be using **Adobe Creative Cloud (CC)** software throughout the semester. Students may choose to purchase an annual subscription to Adobe CC at a greatly reduced special pricing available to WSU students. Students may also choose to download each program for a 30-day subscription at the beginning of each unit. Students must have access to a personal computer capable of running Adobe software and a reliable internet connection. Detailed information about these requirements is provided during Week 1 and upon request.

Assignments and Grading

All assignments should be posted to student blogs **and** submitted to Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on the due date, unless otherwise specified. Grades and instructor feedback will be posted on Blackboard. It is each student's responsibility to watch for grading errors or discrepancies and promptly alert the instructor.

Course Website
Course announcements, assignments, readings, videos and rubrics will be posted online at the course blog at https://com561.wordpress.com.

Online Tutorials
Online tutorials will introduce software techniques and tools in each unit. Students are expected to work through the tutorials, seek assistance if needed, and post the finished product on their class blogs. Students should post the URL to the blog post containing their completed assignment in the appropriate dropbox on Blackboard.

Online Peer Feedback

All students will be assigned to a working group for each portfolio project. Students are expected to provide feedback for each of the assignments to their group members. This feedback should be used when revising your media assets.

Portfolio Projects

About half of the grade for this course rests on four multimedia content creation projects. These projects are designed to seed an online multimedia student portfolio. Each final project will be posted online on the student's blog with a design process write-up. Tutorials and weekly assignments will help students make incremental progress in developing the portfolio.

Quizzes

After learning about U.S. copyright law, students take a copyright quiz at the beginning of the semester. Additional quizzes are available for each of the four units to check knowledge and retention of the material.

Weekly Assignments

Weekly assignments will be evaluated on various criteria. Grading rubrics will be posted with each assignment. In general, scores are based on the quality of content, including attributes such as creativity, design excellence, analytical thinking, attention to detail, thoughtful revision and polished writing.

The final project in this course will set up your blog as a site to host your content throughout your time in the Murrow Online M.A. program.

Assignment	Points
WordPress Blog Creation	50
Copyright Quiz	20
Unit 1: Graphic Design	**220**
Adobe Photoshop Tutorial	35
Draft Graphic Design Project	30
Graphic Design Project Peer Feedback	25
Final Graphic Design Project	120

Unit 1 Quiz	10
Unit 2: Vector Graphics	**220**
Adobe Illustrator Tutorial	35
Draft Logo	30
Logo Peer Feedback	25
Final Logo	120
Unit 2 Quiz	10
Unit 3: Digital Audio	**220**
Adobe Audition Tutorial	35
Draft Audio Story	30
Audio Story Peer Feedback	25
Final Audio Story	120
Unit 3 Quiz	10
Unit 4: Digital Video	**235**
Adobe Premiere Tutorial	35
Draft Video Story	30
Video Story Peer Feedback	25
Final Video Story	135
Unit 4 Quiz	10
Final Portfolio	**35**
Total	**1000**

Grade Distribution:

930-1000	A
900-929	A-

870-899	B+
830-869	B
800-829	B-
770-799	C+
730-769	C
700-729	C-
670-699	D+
600-669	D-
<600	D

Select University Policies

Copyright

This syllabus and all course-related materials, presentations, lectures, etc. are my intellectual property (or the intellectual property of my references) and may be protected by copyright. Selling class notes through commercial note taking services, without my written advance permission, could be viewed as copyright infringement and/or an academic integrity violation, WAC 504-26-010 (3)(a,b,c,i). Further, the use of University electronic resources (e.g., Blackboard) for commercial purposes, including advertising to other students to buy notes, is a violation of WSU's computer abuses and theft policy (WAC 504-26-218), a violation of WSU's Electronic Communication policy (EP 4), and also violates the terms of use for the Blackboard software program.

Any course-related materials, presentations, lectures, etc. are the instructor's intellectual property and may be protected by copyright. The use of University electronic resources (e.g., Angel) for commercial purposes, including advertising to other students to buy notes, is a violation of WSU's computer abuses and theft policy (WAC 504-26-218).

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

Washington State University, a community dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, expects all academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Cheating and academic misconduct are defined in the Standards for Student Conduct [WAC 504-26-010 (3)](#). It is your responsibility to read and understand these definitions. Lack of knowledge is not a valid excuse.
Violation of academic integrity on any assignment will involve (i) an academic penalty ranging from a minimum of both a zero on that assignment and the reduction of a full letter grade on your final grade to failure of the entire course, (ii) filing of case with the Office of Student Conduct, and per university regulations, (iii) inability to withdraw from the course.

Course Communication

All official WSU email communication must be sent to students' WSU email addresses. Absolutely NO communication will be sent to external addresses (e.g., yahoo, gmail, and so forth). We will use either the email within Blackboard or "email.wsu.edu" system.

Academic Calendar

Please review the current Academic Calendar to become familiar with critical deadlines on your campus. Select your home campus from the drop-down menu at the top of the WSU Academic Calendar page: https://registrar.wsu.edu/academic-calendar/

Academic Complaint Procedures

Students having complaints about instruction or grading should refer them first to the instructor. If the complaint is not resolved, then the student may refer the complaint in writing to the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered by the end of the last day of the following semester (excluding summer term). The chair's decision shall be rendered within 20 business days. More information is available from the [Academic Regulations website](#).

Discriminatory Conduct Statement

Discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including stalking, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence) is prohibited at WSU (See WSU Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct ([Executive Policy 15](#)) and [WSU Standards of Conduct for Students](#)).

If you feel you have experienced or have witnessed discriminatory conduct, you can contact the [WSU Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO)](#) and/or the WSU Title IX Coordinator at 509-335-8288 to discuss resources, including confidential resources, and reporting options. (Visit [oeo.wsu.edu](#) for more information). Most WSU employees, including faculty, who have information regarding sexual harassment or sexual misconduct are required to report the information to OEO or a designated Title IX Coordinator or Liaison. (Visit [oeo.wsu.edu/reporting-requirements](#) for more info).

Disability Accommodations

WSU is committed to providing equal opportunity in its services, programs, and employment for individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. All accommodations are authorized on an individual basis and must be approved through the Access Center. Call the Access Center at 509-335-3417 or email access.center@wsu.edu for further information and to request accommodation. Find additional information [here](#).

Academic Regulations

Students enrolled in distance courses are subject to the same WSU academic regulations as on-campus students. A complete listing of the WSU academic regulations is available online from the [Office of the Registrar](#). All graduate students are required to abide by and meet the regulations and policies set forth in the most current and revised [Graduate School Policies and Procedures](#).

Student Privacy

As a University student, you have legal rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for protection of your academic records. For a complete explanation of these rights, visit the Notification of Student Rights Under FERPA page: http://registrar.wsu.edu/ferpa

Campus Safety

Washington State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its faculty, staff, and students. Safety is the responsibility of every member of the campus community and individuals should know the appropriate actions to take when an emergency arises. In support of our commitment to the safety of the campus community the University has developed a Campus Safety

Plan, http://safetyplan.wsu.edu. It is highly recommended that you visit this web site as well as the University emergency management web site at http://oem.wsu.edu/emergenciesto become familiar with the information provided.

Course Policies

Instructor-Student Interaction

I make a point to respond to student emails as quickly as possible. You can expect a response within 24 hours during the week and 36 hours on weekends. If you do not receive a response, please attempt to resend the message or use an alternate means of communication, such as Blackboard. Students are similarly expected to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week.

Assignment Submission Requirements

All assignments must be published online on the student's course blog **and** the URL for that blog post must be submitted to the correct Blackboard assignment dropbox, unless otherwise specified in the assignment instructions. All work must be submitted correctly to receive a grade. Assignments are not considered complete until they are submitted correctly, so late penalties apply until the submission process is successfully completed.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will receive one full letter grade deduction (10%) per day late, up to three days. Assignments will not be accepted more than three days after the deadline. Some specified assignments are time-sensitive and will not be accepted after a shorter number of days, such as those due at the end of the semester.

Extensions

Extensions for all assignments will only be granted in cases of documented personal emergency or serious illness. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor **before** the deadline. Extensions are not granted for technical difficulties such as computer malfunctions, internet disruptions or file loss, though it is still advised that you contact the instructor if you experience technical issues.

Incomplete Grade Policy

Incomplete grades are granted only in rare cases with permission of the instructor, and must be requested and discussed by the end of Week 15. Grades of "Incomplete" will be given only in cases of documented medical or family emergency, and must meet other university requirements as described in [Academic Rule 90h](#).

Portfolio Completion

Students must complete all four unit portfolio projects to pass the course. Any missing project must be completed before the end of the semester, even if it is too late to earn points, or that student will not receive a passing grade.

Working Ahead

In some cases it will be possible for students to work ahead and complete assignments well before the deadline. However, this is not possible throughout the course since many assignments involve a peer feedback component. Students are expected to complete work at the same pace as others in the course, according to the course schedule. Early access to materials is sometimes available, but cannot be guaranteed.

Original Work

All work for this course must be new: You may not submit assignments produced for other courses or work previously produced for other purposes.

Text, graphics, music, video or any content that you did not create on your own does not belong to you. (We will cover what content you may legally use and integrate into your designs.) Any work included in your assignments that is not your own *must* be clearly cited and linked in your design write-up. For any copyrighted material, the student must present documentation of permission to use the material from the copyright holder or appropriate authority. If you improperly use content that you did not create yourself or fail to cite others' work, the plagiarism and cheating policy will apply.

You may not submit work done by your colleagues or peers. You may not submit something purchased online or downloaded from a website as your own work. While you may integrate existing, properly cited elements into your designs, these elements must be legally modifiable and transformed in some way by your work.

Technical Support

Technical support is available for Global Campus students 24 hours a day. Call 509-335-4320 or 800-222-4978 and select 1 for faculty and technical support, or email wsuonline.support@wsu.edu.

Resources for Global Campus Students

WSU students pursuing online degrees and certificates have a variety of resources available for support and involvement. Along with those listed below, find a full list of resources [here](#).

Library Support
All WSU online students can access WSU library resources, including many books and journals entirely online. Services available include internet access to databases, reference assistance, borrowing WSU-owned books and other circulating materials, and photocopies of non-circulating materials. Distance students can request assistance with research projects by emailing lib.reference@wsu.edu.

eTutoring
As a WSU student you have unlimited, free access to eTutoring.org, a tutoring platform that enables students and tutors to collaborate in an online environment. This is not a course requirement, but simply an available resource that you may utilize as needed. Get more information about accessing and setting up your eTutoring account [here](#).

The TechStore
All WSU students are eligible for discounts on software and hardware from several major technology retailers, including Apple and Microsoft.

Wellbeing Online
University Recreation operates a hub for resources promoting personal wellbeing, including featured recipes and workouts and the [Cyber Coug Fitness Club: Gym Reimbursement Program](#).

Counseling and Testing Services Self-Help
WSU Counseling and Testing Services can be contacted at 509-335-4511 during business hours, or 509-335-2159 for weekends and after hours. To help students with a variety of common mental health and wellbeing concerns, the Self Help

portal provides information on dozens of recommended organizations, resources and hotlines.