

COM 561: Multimedia Content Creation

3 Credits

Course Overview

In the information society, content rules. In this class, students will 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 and to become facile with Web 2.0 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.

Students will choose a topic relevant to their current or prospective careers at the beginning of the semester. This topic will be used throughout the semester on each content creation assignment. Students will use these assignments to create a baseline in an online portfolio that will be filled out throughout the program. 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 "critique groups" throughout the semester. Students are expected to provide constructive feedback about their peer 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 (& Dates) 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 (weeks 2-4), vector illustration (weeks 5-7), audio storytelling (weeks 8-10), and video storytelling (weeks 11-14).	Students will learn the tools of effective multimedia communication through tutorials (weeks 2, 5, 8, 12 & 13), final design projects (weeks 1, 2, 4, 7, 11, and finals week), and peer critiques (weeks 4, 7, 10, 13)
Information Literacy	Determine the type of information needed to communicate effectively through multimedia content, research and cite inspiration for multimedia communications, understand <i>fair use</i> laws and ethically and legally integrate information.	Students will learn about copyright issues that will inform creating ethical multimedia designs. Furthermore, materials in week 2, 8 & 11 will discuss searching for graphics, audio and video respectively.	<p>The write-ups accompanying posted 4 major design projects (weeks 4, 7, 10, finals week) are required to include citations and information about design process, research, inspiration and relate information to design.</p> <p>Multimedia designs are expected to ethically integrate information in content creation and not violate copyright law.</p> <p>Students will take an online quiz covering copyright and fair use in week 2.</p>
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 (week 3), user-centered design (week 6), and interactivity (week 11) 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 (weeks 4, 7, 10, finals week). 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 (weeks 4, 7, 10, 14).

Form of Instruction

Classes will be conducted online through a mixture of short lectures, software tutorials, and interviews with communication professionals. In addition to introducing concepts related to aesthetics, interactivity and design; assignments will be discussed during the lectures.

All course materials, including lectures, tutorials, rubrics, and interviews will be posted on the course website.

Class Attendance

Students are expected to engage in the online course lectures, professional interviews, and tutorials posted in Angel for 2 hours per week. An additional hour of course time is expected in the lab or on your own computer working on the multimedia content projects, which comprise the majority of your points in the semester.

Required Materials

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 provided online in Angel. Course readings will include this text, which is available for free online: *Journalism 2.0: How to Survive and Thrive* by Mark Briggs.

We will be using the **Adobe Creative Suite** throughout the semester. Software for the assignments is available in the Murrow computer labs. Students are encouraged to purchase the Adobe Production Suite at a greatly reduced special pricing available to WSU students. Students may also choose to download a free 30-day trial of each piece of software from Adobe at the beginning of the unit.

Note: Adobe Premiere Pro, used during our final unit in the course, requires a 64-bit operating system. If you do not have a 64-bit operating system, you may need to enroll in a subsequent hybrid online/offline version of the course where you will have access to the Murrow labs.

Course Website

Course announcements, assignments, videos, and rubrics will be posted online at the course blog at [website URL] Grades and instructor feedback will be posted on Angel at <http://lms.wsu.edu/>. The instructors will hold live virtual office hours on Angel. Also, live interviews with designers will offer a forum for students to poll communication professionals about their craft. Interviews will be archived for future viewing.

Online Tutorials

Online tutorials will be posted in each unit. Students are expected to work through the tutorials and post them on their class blogs. Students should post the URL to their completed assignments on their blog in the appropriate dropbox on Angel at <http://lms.wsu.edu/>.

Online Feedback

All students will be assigned to a working group. 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 should be posted online on your blog. A self-reflection write-up accompanies each creative component presented in the blog post. Tutorials and weekly assignments will help students make incremental progress in developing the portfolio. Weekly assignments will be evaluated on various criteria, included in the rubric below. 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.

Students should post the URL to their completed assignments on their blog in the appropriate dropbox on Angel at <http://lms.wsu.edu/>.

The final project in this course will setup your blog as a site to host your content throughout your time in the Murrow Online MA program.

Required Flash Drives

Students should invest in a 4GB USB memory stick, which can be used to back up your work. **Always make sure that you back up all your work.**

Downloading Trial Software

You are encouraged to install the software we use in class to your personal computer. You can [download trial versions](#) of Adobe software from Adobe.com. However, the trial period lasts only 30 days. It is recommend that you wait to install each piece of software at the beginning of the unit, to avoid having problems with deadlines. Also, you can purchase your own copy at student discounted rates.

Grading

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	925 – 1000	C	725 – 774
A-	900 – 924	C-	700 – 724
B+	875 – 899	D+	675 – 699
B	825 – 874	D	600 – 674
B-	800 – 824	F	< 600
C+	775 -799		

Assignment	Points	Due Date
WordPress Blog Creation	50	Week 1 (F)
Copyright Quiz	20	Week 3 (F)
Part 1 — Graphic Design	210	
Adobe Photoshop Tutorial	25	Week 2 (F)
Draft Graphic Collage	40	Week 3 (F)
Graphic Collage Feedback	20	Week 4 (T)
Final Graphic Collage	125	Week 4 (F)
Unit 2 — Vector Graphics	210	
Adobe Illustrator Tutorial	25	Week 5 (F)
Draft Logo	40	Week 6 (F)
Logo Feedback	20	Week 7 (T)
Final Logo	125	Week 7 (F)
Unit 3 – Digital Audio	210	
Adobe Audition Tutorial	25	Week 8 (F)
Draft Audio Story	40	Week 9 (F)
Audio Story Feedback	20	Week 10 (T)
Final Audio Story	125	Week 10 (F)
Unit 4 — Digital Video	235	
Adobe Premiere Tutorial	25	Week 11 (F)
Draft Video Story	40	Week 12 (F)
Video Story Feedback	20	Week 13 (F)
Final Video Story	150	Week 14 (F)
Final Portfolio	45	Week 14 (F)
Total	1000	

Course Policies

The primary reason for poor performance in this course is failure to complete the tutorials and to keep up with the requirements posted online.

Also, it is important to read instructions posted online. Each assignment has different evaluation criteria. Try to fully understand the requirements of each assignment before you begin a project.

Text, graphics, music, video or any content that you did not create on your own does not belong to you. We will discuss what content you may legally use and integrate into your designs. Any work included in your assignments that is not your own *must* be posted online using a creative-commons license and also must be cited and linked in your final design write-up. If you use content that you did not create improperly or fail to cite others' work, the plagiarism and cheating policy will be enforced.

All assignments must be completed to receive credit in the course.

Late assignments will receive zero credit towards the final grade.

Incomplete grades are granted only with permission of the instructor and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Students must request an incomplete in writing or by e-mail from the instructor before the end of the semester.
2. The request must be signed and dated by the student (or identified by student's e-mail address), and must explain the reasons behind the request for the incomplete.
3. In order to be considered for an incomplete, **there are two main conditions:**
 - a student must complete a minimum amount of the assigned course work. Specifically, a student must complete 75 percent of the course work.
 - a student must have a mathematical possibility of passing the class. A passing grade is 60 percent or above for the entire course.
4. If extraordinary circumstances (e.g., family emergency, serious illness) are involved and are documented to the instructor's satisfaction, the professor/instructor retains the discretion to grant an incomplete even if the minimum conditions outlined in item 3 above are not met.

If an incomplete is granted, the standard WSU policy applies (i.e., ALL work must be completed within one full year from the end of the enrollment semester at issue. Otherwise, an automatic grade of "F," or failing, will be entered on the student's transcript).

All work for this course must be new: you may not submit assignments produced for other courses.

All work for this course must be your own: you may not submit work done by your friends or submit something purchased online or lifted off 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.

Academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade in the course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, falsification, fabrication, multiple submission, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity, or misconduct in research, all of which are defined in section WAC 504-25-310 of the student handbook.

<http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338>

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 ([Academic Regulations](#); select "Printable" next to "List All Academic Regulations" to view a printable list of all regulations).

Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. DDP and the Disability Resource Center (DRC) work together to provide reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities and who are registered both with DDP and the DRC. DDP's liaison to the DRC will assist you in getting started. To begin this process, contact DDP (800-222-4978 or distance@wsu.edu). We strongly recommend that you notify us as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Center.

If you have questions, please contact the DRC at DRC.FrontDesk@ad.wsu.edu or 509-335-3417. Additional information is available on the DRC website: <http://www.drc.wsu.edu>.

Critical Thinking

The ability to think and write critically are essential skills in many walks of life. Critical thinking skills are developed and refined through practice, self-reflection, and the critique and support of peers and instructors. Throughout this course you will have many opportunities to exercise your analytical thinking, synthesize information, and apply knowledge to real-life situations. To help facilitate your thinking and writing, the "Critical Thinking Rubric" is provided in the online course space, if applicable, to assess your own writing and that of other students. Please review it carefully before completing each activity.

Technical Support

If you need technical assistance, please expand the **Content** folder in the Map menu on the left by clicking the plus sign (+), then select **Technical Support**.

DDP Student Help Centers,

DDP understands that navigating the academic world may be confusing – that is why we have created the DDP [Help Centers](#), a central location where students can find information on a variety of topics. Take a moment to check out the many links available in the various help centers. Below are just a few important links to information in the help centers we would like to bring to your attention:

- Please review "Tuition & Fees" in the [Finance Center](#). Tuition is due on the first day of the semester, and WSU does not mail billing statements.
- If you are a new DDP student, information to assist you with online learning is available under "Resources and Tips" in the [New DDP Students Center](#). In this section you will find study tips, resources, and skills to give you a good head start in assuring success with your course.
- Also check out [myDDP](#), your personal DDP Web page where you can find quick links to important information, upcoming DDP events, deadlines and more. The quick link "Go to myDDP" is available from every page in the help centers, found in the upper right part of the page.

Library Support,

All students enrolled in Washington State University distance courses can use the WSU Libraries online databases and receive reference and research assistance from the Distance Degree Library Services (DDLS). Enrolled students can also borrow books and other circulating material and receive photocopies of journal articles.

Visit the DDLS Web page ([DDLS](#)) for links to the WSU online database and library support information.

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.

Currently, eTutoring is available for Accounting, Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Math and Calculus, MS Office 2007, Spanish, Statistics, and Writing! With three ways to access a tutor you can choose the one that best fits your needs...

- Use the Online Writing Lab that allows students to submit a draft of a paper to a tutor, ask for specific feedback, and receive a tutor's response within 24-48 hours.
- Access live eTutoring via eChat that allows students to meet with a tutor in one-on-one tutoring sessions via a fully interactive, virtual online environment.
- Utilize the offline eQuestions that allow students to leave a specific question for an eTutor, who will respond within 24-48 hours.

The list of available tutoring subjects can be found on the <http://etutoring.org/login.cfm?institutionid=176> site.

For more information on accessing and setting up your eTutoring account, visit: http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/as_eTutoring_start.aspx

DDP Academic Calendar,

Please review the current DDP [Academic Calendar](#) to become familiar with critical deadlines.

On 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/emergencies> to become familiar with the information provided.

Calendar (subject to revision)

Week	Day	Topics	Assignments Due
Week 1		Introduction to class Wordpress Blog Setup	Create Wordpress Blog
Unit 1 / Graphic Design / Adobe Photoshop			
Week 2		The New Media Mindset Elements of digital photography & digital editing	Photoshop Tutorial
Week 3		Copyright & Fair Use	Draft Graphic Collage

			Copyright Quiz
Week 4		Unity and Elements of Design, Gestalt Principles	Graphic Collage Feedback Final Graphic Collage
Unit 2 / Vector Graphics / Adobe Illustrator			
Week 5		Balance, Figure, Ground	Illustrator Tutorial
Week 6		Principles of User-Centered Design	Draft Logo
Week 7		Video interviews with graphic design professionals	Logo Feedback Final Logo
Unit 3 / Digital Audio / Adobe Audition			
Week 8		Audio Storytelling	Audacity Tutorial
Week 9		Audio Editing/Interviewing	Draft Audio Story
Week 10		Online Identity Interviews with Audio Professionals	Audio Story Feedback Final Audio Story
Unit 4/ Digital Video / Adobe Premiere			
Week 11		Multimedia Fundamentals	Premiere Tutorial
Week 12		Editing Digital Video	Draft Video Story
Week 13		Compressing, exporting and sharing video	Video Story Feedback
Week 14		Exploring Digital Effects Interviews with Video Professionals	Final Video Project Final Portfolio

Design Rubric

Multimedia Asset (60%):

1. Design – 20%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Primarily remains within conventional or safe parameters of thinking and ideas. Minimal exploration or experimentation.		Explores multiple ideas or approaches, with some flexibility and experimentation / risk taking.		Generates many ideas, exploring inventive & divergent thinking. Demonstrates flexibility and openness, new combinations and experimentation.	
2. Content – 15%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Identifies and communicates the topic/issue with limited success; some basic aspects may be incomplete or confused. Inappropriate for diverse Internet audience. Improper use of copyrighted material.		Identifies and focuses on the topic/issue. Communicates narrative about the topic/issue it is designed for. Appropriate for diverse Internet audience.		Content clearly and effectively communicates a narrative about the topic/issue it is designed for. Appropriate for diverse Internet audience.	
3. Design principles – 15%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Content is difficult to follow. There is little or no evidence of a story.		Adequately demonstrates understanding of design principles. Content generally has flow. Elements are mostly cohesive and flow together. May be lacking some depth.		Demonstrates strong understanding of design principles. Content elements are consistent and relevant when combined into whole.	
4. Technical Proficiency – 10%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Elements do not blend smoothly. Major technical flaws detract from overall content. Content design is rough.		Adequate technical proficiency. Elements are mostly blended. Some elements may be rough, but do not distract from overall design.		Demonstrates strong use of technical manipulation to create overall design. Polished and professional use of tools.	

Written Design Blog Post **(40%)**:

1. Design Process – 10%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Minimal or absent explanation or exploration in description of the multimedia creation process.		Explores design process with some flexibility. Length is acceptable and clearly communicates topic. Discusses research and inspiration for design.		Generates many ideas in exploring the process of creating the multimedia narrative. Thoughtful and insightful to content creation. Discusses research and inspiration for design.	
2. Relates to topic/issue – 10%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Absent or minimal explanation of how multimedia elements in relate to topic/issue narrative. Little explanation of design elements' meaning.		Adequate explanation of how multimedia elements relate to topic/issue. Some elements inclusion may be unclear, but overall theme is understandable.		Strong explanation of how multimedia elements in relate to topic/issue. All elements in narrative are thoroughly explored and explained.	
3. Diverse Perspectives – 10%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Multimedia narrative explanation is largely discussed with little consideration or inappropriate for diverse Internet audience.		Multimedia narrative explanation includes some original thinking and acknowledges or relates to multiple viewpoints. Adequately written for wide Internet audience.		Multimedia narrative explanation includes accurate, nuanced, and respectful thinking. Acknowledges and relates to multiple viewpoints. Easily accessible for wide Internet audience.	
4. Technical Detail – 10%					
1-Minimal	2-Emerging	3-Developing	4-Competent	5-Effective	6-Publishable
Absent or incoherent explanation of how content editing was executed using software tools.		Adequate explanation of how content editing was executed using software tools. Some elements may be missing or unclear, but gives an overall understanding of software tools utilized to create narrative.		Strong explanation of how content editing was executed using software tools. It is very clear how the design was created and how multimedia elements were manipulated.	

