Syllabus JMS 550: Multimedia News Lab
Fall 2015 Journalism Capstone Course

Section 1, Schedule: 21918
Mondays 1 – 3:40  Wednesdays 2 – 3:40, PSFA 374
Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Coates Nee, Assistant Professor
Office: PSFA 338
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesdays, 11 am - 12 pm and by appointment
Email: Rnee@mail.sdsu.edu

I. Prerequisites & Requirements
To enroll in JMS 550, students must meet the following prerequisites:
Journalism and Media Studies 300, 310W, 420 and three units selected from Journalism
and Media Studies 315, 430 or 445 with grades of C (2.0) or better in each course. Proof
of completion of prerequisites required.
Students are also required to:
Make use of the online course materials available via Blackboard. Check to make sure
your email address on Blackboard is current.
Complete assignments by the dates indicated on the syllabus. Check email on a daily
basis.
Plan assignments well in advance, check equipment in and out in a timely and
responsible manner.
Required books and materials:
1. TEXT: Briggs, Mark Journalism Next: A Practical Guide to Digital Reporting and
2. READER: Assignments and Course Guide (available in the SDSU bookstore)
3. AP Style Guide.
Portable storage device (USB) minimum 8 gb – if used only for this class, Mac
compatible. Do not rely on your work to be saved on your computer terminal in the lab.
Note: Students who have an external hard drive should not use them on a PC. They will
need to be reformatted to use in class and all data may be lost.

Access to a digital still camera. Students must provide their own digital cameras or
borrow one for the assignment. Smartphone photos generally do not transfer well to the
editing platform used for the slideshows and focusing is not as accurate. Therefore,
smartphone photos are not used for the slideshow assignment. (Students may use them as
still photos.)

Video cameras and audio recorders will be available for check out during class, as
specified on the schedule.
IMPORTANT: Students may NOT use video or editing equipment other than the
camera and software supplied in class. Each student must do his/her own work
(shooting, reporting and editing). Failure to comply may result in a zero for the
assignment.
Additional Supplies (buy early). These are MANDATORY:
Two mini DV tapes for video shooting (60 min. each). Students should buy a pack on Amazon and split the cost.
Six double A batteries for audio recorders and lavaliere microphone

II. Course Description
Catalogue Course Description
Capstone course using skills and knowledge acquired in critical thinking, writing, reporting, editing, production, and design courses. Students prepare multimedia news content. Field and laboratory experience.

III. Course Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes
The capstone course provides an opportunity for journalism seniors and graduate students to showcase and enhance their reporting skills while utilizing an array of multimedia and Web 2.0 technologies. The emphasis of the course is on strengthening students’ abilities to identify and research issues, gather information and effectively communicate their findings across media platforms.

While this course incorporates the principles of convergence and uses various digital media, traditional journalistic ethics and values remain the foundation of the class. The desired learning outcomes of JMS 550 are for students to:
- Generate original, topical story ideas relevant to the greater San Diego community.
- Utilize Web 2.0 capabilities to create multimedia stories
- Demonstrate proficiency in capturing and editing photos, sound and video.
- Effectively choose which medium suits which type of story
- Contribute high-quality print, audio and visual content to a student-run website, JMS Reports.org within the School of Journalism and Media Studies.
- Sharpen writing and reporting skills.
- Establish a targeted, professional online Web presence
- Think critically and discuss future trends in journalism practices, ethics and norms.

IV. Major Assignments
JMS Reports Project
Each student will produce one semester-long project that will be published on the JMS Reports website. The entire package will focus on one topic and will include the following elements:
One text overview story. This story will tie the multimedia elements together and will explain the significance of the topic. At least four sources will be needed for this story (including two experts). Students may use one or two of the same sources in the multimedia pieces as long as information is not repeated. (Length 750 - 1200 words.)
One multimedia edited package (2:30 – 3:30 in length) with audio, video and still photos
OR one audio slideshow and one video.
Headline, bullet points, subheads, still photos with captions
Other elements as appropriate (timeline, interactive graphic, poll, etc.)

All stories must take place in the greater San Diego area and NOT on the SDSU campus. The goal of this course is to get students comfortable with reporting and gathering
information off campus. Grading criteria and further instructions for the practice assignments and multimedia package will be given in class and are in the course reader.

On the last day few days of class, the instructor will individually review each student’s work that the student has posted on the JMS Reports website. Students are required to make any mandatory revisions or modifications before being excused from the class. **NOTE:** Students not receiving instructor’s approval to be excused from the class will receive an incomplete in the class.

**Practice Assignments**
Because students will be working with cameras and software with which they are unfamiliar, class time will be given for students to produce one practice audio slideshow and one practice video package. Although students will be working in pairs, each student must produce his or her own practice assignment.
**Students will not be allowed to check out equipment until the practice assignment is completed.**
Specific requirements and grading criteria for the practice assignments will be provided in class.

**Participation Points**
Short quizzes or other participation points will be available at the beginning of each class as noted in the syllabus. The quizzes will cover assigned reading, and course material from the previous class. On some days, class activities will be assigned instead of quizzes. **Participation points cannot be made up for any reason, even if the student arrives late.** A total of 55 points will be available, with only 45 counting toward the final grade. Therefore, students can miss two mandatory classes or quizzes without penalty.

**V. Attendance and Deadline Policies**

Unless otherwise indicated, attendance is mandatory and expected on time on Mondays and Wednesdays. Some days will be production days (as indicated on the syllabus). The lab will be open for editing on those days and no participation points will be available on those days. **Please only attend the lab on the day and time of your class (do not switch sections).** Switching sections has a negative impact on other students and the instructor.

If an extended illness or family emergency prohibits the student from missing more than **two non-production classes in the semester, or two consecutive classes,** the student must communicate with the instructor by email immediately before the missed class and provide documentation of the absence within one week. Otherwise, the student risks failing the class.

**DEADLINES** – All deadlines will be strictly enforced. Students are responsible for scheduling their production and reporting time outside of class, or during class production periods, to ensure they meet the deadlines. Plan for the unexpected (bad audio, no show interview subjects, dead batteries, illness, and other emergencies). Students must return equipment they have checked out during the next class period, either at the beginning of class or prior to the last 10 minutes of class. Failure to meet a
deadline, for any reason, will result in the lowering of the grade for the project by one full letter grade for each class period that the assignment is late. No multimedia assignment will be accepted more than 1 week after it is due. All text story deadlines are final. Note: Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the class.

***STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO SHOW THE INSTRUCTOR THEIR JMS REPORTS VIDEO AND SLIDESHOWS BEFORE COMPRESSING AND EXPORTING TO YOUTUBE***. If a project is not publishable, no credit will be given.

**VI. Equipment Policies**

**CHECKING IN AND OUT** -- Equipment will be checked out to students at the instructor’s discretion. Since two sections will be checking equipment out at the same time, students will not be able to have the equipment longer than one period (M –W or W – M). A reservation/signup sheet will be provided. Students will need to demonstrate competency with the equipment to qualify to check it out by performing at or above average on practice projects. **All equipment must be checked in or out during class time only, at the beginning of class or 10 minutes prior to the end of class.** We do not have the staff to check in/out equipment at other times.

**LIABILITY** -- Students are liable for damaged or missing equipment and must reimburse the School of Journalism and Media Studies immediately with payment for replacement costs.

**PENALTY** -- Students will lose 20 points off their project grade for each day they have video equipment out without permission. Equipment will be considered missing if it is out for one week without permission and students will be asked to reimburse the School for the missing equipment.

**VIII. More detailed information for these projects are in the course guide and will be discussed in class. Grading comments are provided in the grade center (notes to user). Assignments and due dates**

**Points Possible**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation points, projects and quizzes</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>(more points will be available than counted)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JMS Reports proposal</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>JMS Reports text story</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice audio slideshow</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Practice video</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>JMS Reports text story revision</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>JMS Reports multimedia package</td>
<td>250</td>
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<td>Overall quality of project</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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Point-to-Grade Conversion
A = 930-1000; A- 900-929;
B+ 870 – 899; B 800-829; B- 770-799;
C+  730-769; C 700-729;
STUDENTS MUST RECEIVE A C OR BETTER IN THE CLASS TO PASS THE CLASS AND GRADUATE. STUDENTS NOT RECEIVING A C OR BETTER WILL NEED TO REPEAT THE CLASS.

Policy regarding incompletes:
The instructor will strictly adhere to the University policy regarding the authorization of an Incomplete grade:
I (incomplete authorized) indicates that a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. It is your responsibility to bring pertinent information to the instructor and to reach agreement on the means by which the remaining course requirements will be satisfied.
-SDSU Catalog, Part Six, p. 462

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students will immediately be reported to the Center for Student Rights & Responsibilities if the instructor suspects any type of plagiarism, whether on a formal assignment or in a discussion board post.
From the SDSU Library (http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/what.cfm?p=graphic):
Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words, sentences, or ideas and passing them off as your own without giving credit by citing the original source.
You might be plagiarizing if you:
Submit someone else's work as your own.
Buy a paper from a papermill, website or other source.
Copy sentences, phrases, paragraphs, or ideas from someone else's work, published or unpublished, without giving the original author credit.
Replace select words from a passage without giving the original author credit.
Copy any type of multimedia (graphics, audio, video, internet streams), computer programs, music compositions, graphs, or charts from someone else's work without giving the original author credit.
Piece together phrases, ideas, and sentences from a variety of sources to write an essay.
Build on someone else's idea or phrase to write your paper without giving the original author credit.
Submit your own paper in more than one course.

San Diego State University regards plagiarism as academic dishonesty. Consequences of plagiarism may include failing an assignment, receiving a lower course grade, and even failing a course.
Read SDSU’s policy on Academic Dishonesty: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/academics1.html

Students with Disabilities
Students who need accommodation of their disabilities should contact me privately in person, to discuss specific accommodations for which they have received authorization. If you need accommodation due to a disability, but have not registered with Student Disability Services at 619-594-6473 (Calpulli Center, Suite 3101), please do so before making an appointment to see me.