

Digital Storytelling

Creative Media & Digital Culture (CMDC) 354.02

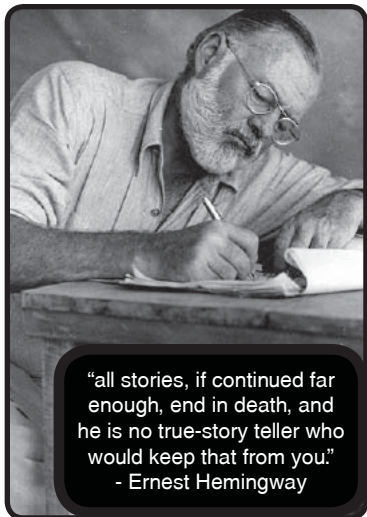
6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays, Aug. 25 through Dec. 8, 2010, in VMCC III

Professor: Brett Oppegaard
 brett.oppegaard@gmail.com / 360-521-8150 (cellular) / www.brettoppegaard.com
 Twitter: @profbrett / @brettoppegaard
 Office Hours: 30 minutes before and after each class / or by appointment

Scope

Storytelling has always been -- and always will be -- an integral part of our humanity. From the earliest cave paintings to the Twitterature of today, stories have proven to be the most powerful ways in which we share information, but they also are the paradigm through which we see our lives, and the lives of others, and construct our identities. Our focus in this course will be on analyzing and understanding various forms of digital storytelling. The best ways to gain that knowledge, I think, are to create stories of all types and examine them from the inside.

"I know only one thing about the technology that awaits us in the future: We will find ways to tell stories with it."
 - Jason Ohler



Ernest Hemingway, Look Magazine (1953)
 Courtesy of Library of Congress via Wikimedia.org

"all stories, if continued far enough, end in death, and he is no true-story teller who would keep that from you."
 - Ernest Hemingway

Attendance and participation

Every class counts. This course meets just 15 times. Students not only are expected to be in class but also to arrive on time, stay the entire session and participate. Some of the assignments will be pass / fail components of participation. If you do them at least adequately, you are participating and get the points. If not, you don't. Because this class is primarily about ideas and thinking and sharing those thoughts, attendance and participation are highly valued and worth a large portion of the overall grade (Woody Allen once said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." That seems hyperbolically high, but in this case, 20 percent of your grade is directly related to your "success," at least in terms of the assessment letter you earn). Because we all have busy outside lives, and get sick, and sometimes just can't make it to campus, one absence in this course has no penalty. These are not excused, or unexcused, they just are. You can miss a class, at your discretion. But assignments still are due when they are due, and participation points earned during the missed class are lost. If you miss more than one class -- again, there are no "excused" absences -- the second and third absences deduct 100 points each from the 200-point attendance total.

"Narrative is international, trans-historical, trans-cultural: it is simply there, like life itself"
 - Roland Barthes

Our forums

Class blog:
 digistoryfall2010.blogspot.com

Google group:
 groups.google.com/group/digistoryfall2010

To email the group:
 digistoryfall2010@googlegroups.com (invitation only)

Twitter hashtag:
 #digistory

Our culture

Respectful, prepared, thoughtful, compassionate and engaged in a lively exchange of ideas.

Class-related use of electronic devices is encouraged.

This syllabus is a living document, meaning dates, assignments and other information could change, depending on the flow of the course.

Expectations of writing quality

As upper-level university students at a Tier 1 research institution, your writing proficiency by now should reflect that status. Therefore, assignments submitted with spelling errors or basic grammatical errors simply will be marked "REDO" at the point in which the second of such mistakes appears. You will have one week to fix such errors throughout the document and resubmit to receive credit for the assignment. Resources for writing improvement include the WSUV Writing Center, WSUV tutoring, "Elements of Style" by Strunk and White, a free version of which can be found here: <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>, and Lynne Truss' "Eats, Shoots & Leaves." There are many more. Please review your work carefully before submitting.



Android G1 phone. Courtesy of Mobilizy.com via Wikimedia.org

Does mobile technology push us apart, or bring us together? Can storytelling with mobile devices create new, beneficial communities?

Textbook? Final? Extra Credit?

The readings for this course will be provided in an anthology-like packet produced by University Readers, universityreaders.com. On that site, click on the "Student Store" button, register and then buy. This is a required text. / Since this class is primarily project based, no final exam will be held during finals week. / Any student work created for this class, or directly related to this class, that gets wider distribution could be eligible for extra credit. Extra credit projects must be cleared in advance and documented through a proposal process. The maximum per term is 100 extra credit points.

Learning objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to demonstrate that you can:

- [] Competently design and distribute digital stories in various media through effective human-computer interactions.
- [] Synthesize media forms for multimedia contexts.
- [] Think critically about digital media and the ways in which humans engage with various forms of it, especially mobile media.
- [] Understand the production and assessment of media objects.
- [] Question the way digital media functions in multiple cultural contexts.
- [] Recognize various forms of language processing and their implications for media authoring.
- [] Appreciate the history of technological development, from local to global perspectives, and its implications for a variety of media.
- [] Be conversant in storytelling terminology and techniques.
- [] Be a practiced and capable communicator in all media.

"Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it."
 - Hannah Arendt

A S S E S S M E N T

A K A G R A D E S

C LEVEL

F LEVEL

699 or lower = F

B LEVEL

800-829 = B- / 830-869 = B / 870-899 = B+

A LEVEL

900-929 = A- / 930+ = A

Sept. 1 (Week 2) Class meets at Fort Vancouver DUE: 6-word autobiography Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____ Reading: Miller, p. 3-38	Sept. 8 (Week 3) Class meets at Fort Vancouver DUE: Prompt 1 - Mind Map Points possible: _____ / Earned: _____ Reading: Meadows, 37-62	Sept. 15 (Week 4) DUE: Prompt 2 - 10-step list Points possible: 20 / Earned: _____ Reading: Miller, p. 183-205	Sept. 22 (Week 5) DUE: Mobile project plan Points possible: 100 / Earned: _____ Reading: Research your project	Sept. 29 (Week 6) DUE: Prompt 3 - TBA Points possible: 20 / Earned: _____ Reading: Murray, 185-213	Oct. 6 (Week 7) Class meets at Fort Vancouver Midterm checkpoint	Oct. 13 (Week 8) DUE: Mobile iteration 1 Points possible: 50 / Earned: _____ Reading: Murray, 97-153	Oct. 20 (Week 9) DUE: Prompt 4 - TBA Points possible: 20 / Earned: _____ Reading: Neilson, 1-8; Kurlavsky, 9-15	Oct. 27 (Week 10) DUE: Mobile iteration 2 Points possible: 75 / Earned: _____ Reading: Schnell, 75-95	Nov. 3 (Week 11) DUE: 5-image story Points possible: 50 / Earned: _____ Reading: Shirky, 1-29	Nov. 10 (Week 12) DUE: 10-Tweet story Points possible: 50 / Earned: _____ Reading: Jenkins, 135-173	Nov. 17 (Week 13) DUE: Prompt 5 - TBA Points possible: 20 / Earned: _____ Reading: Schnell, 389-401	Nov. 24 (Holiday) No class this week	Dec. 1 (Week 14) DUE: Mobile iteration 3 Points possible: 150 / Earned: _____ Reading: Review	Dec. 8 (Week 15) DUE: Client presentation Points possible: 100 / Earned: _____
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Who are the authors?

Carolyn Handler Miller

Miller teaches courses in interactive narrative, such as "Activating Digital Space," and video game development at the University of New Mexico as well as online for De Montfort University in the UK, for its master's degree program in Creative Writing and New Media.

Mark Stephen Meadows

Meadows notes that he has "written several books on culture, technology, terrorists, and robots." He also was a researcher / artist-in-residence at Xerox-PARC and creative director for a venture of Stanford Research Institute.

Janet H. Murray

Murray is "an internationally recognized interactive designer, the director of Georgia Tech's Masters and PhD Program in Digital Media, and a member of Georgia Tech's interdisciplinary GVU Center."

Jakob Nielsen / Mike Kuniavsky

Nielsen "founded the 'discount usability engineering' movement for fast and cheap improvements of user interfaces" and has invented several usability methods. Kuniavsky is a San Francisco-based consultant, designer, researcher, author, etc., focused on the relationships people have to digital technology.

Jesse Schell

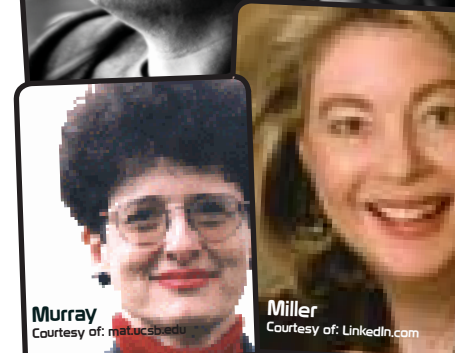
Schell is on the faculty of the Entertainment Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon University, where he teaches classes in Game Design. Before that, he was the Creative Director of the Disney Imagineering Virtual Reality Studio.

Clay Shirky

Shirky is "an adjunct professor in NYU's graduate Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP), where he teaches courses on the interrelated effects of social and technological network topology -- how our networks shape culture and vice-versa."

Henry Jenkins

Jenkins is the "Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, and Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California." Before that, he spent a decade as director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program.



My teaching style?

The most important element of our "classroom" isn't the desks or the dry-erase boards or even the walls. My vision of this socially constructed space -- however that might physically appear -- revolves around you, the student, and the connections and insights we can create together in informing our understanding of the field of digital storytelling.

I hope to inspire you to set and achieve goals, to invest in the course in meaningful ways, individually and collectively, within the framework of the overall themes. During that process, I want you to value questions as much as answers, to interrogate our sources, pick apart evidence and bring ideologies to the surface for inspection.

Along the way, we will spend a significant amount of time building our classroom community, breaking down social barriers among students and helping you feel like you are among supportive colleagues, rather than distant acquaintances or even strangers.

Meanwhile, I want to nurture in you a highly adaptive and adventurous and entrepreneurial ethic.

"Every truth has four corners. As a teacher, I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three."
- Confucius

"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
- William Butler Yeats

"Most people are doing jobs that did not exist when they were born. The most important skill determining a person's life pattern has already become the ability to learn new skills, to take in new concepts, to assess new situations, to deal with the unexpected. This will be increasingly true in the future: The competitive ability is the ability to learn."
- Seymour Papert

"After you climb the ladder, you can throw it away."
- Ludwig Wittgenstein

Core policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism (claiming another person's work as your own) / fabricating research will not be tolerated. Anyone who submits false work, violates the academic integrity policy or cheats in any other way, will fail the assignment in question and possibly the course as well as be reported to the school's administration, the Office of Student Conduct, for further discipline, including possible expulsion. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university and will be strongly enforced in this course. For additional information about WSUV's Academic Integrity policy / procedures contact 360-546-9781.

ASSESSMENT

A detailed assessment form will be provided for each graded component of this course to ensure our goals are aligned and expectations are met.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Accommodations may be available if you need them in order to fully participate in this class because of a disability. Accommodations may take some time to implement, so it is critical that you contact Disability Services as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services, located in the Student Resource Center on the lower level of the Student Services Center 360-546-9138.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

WSU has made an emergency notification system available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes on RONet. In the event of a building evacuation, a map at each classroom entrance shows the evacuation point for each building. Please refer to it. Finally, in case of class cancellation campus-wide, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page and/or <http://www.flashalert.net/>. Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Each individual is expected to make the best decision for their personal circumstances, taking safety into account.

METHODOLOGY

This course will offer its material in a combination of hands-on activities, small and large group sessions, one-on-one interactions, independent study and lectures, all punctuated by vigorous discussions about such material.