

# PHPJ 315

## CLASS / LAB

Thursdays 5:00–9:50 pm  
K-Lab GAN4090

## INSTRUCTOR

Josh Meltzer  
OFFICE: GAN2294  
jhmpmh@rit.edu

## OFFICE HOURS

Mondays Noon - 1:30pm  
Thursdays 2-4pm

*\* Whenever possible, make sure you email me in advance to set up office hours appointments.*

## CONTACTING ME

*I will reply to your emails as soon as I can, but will make every effort to answer all within 24 hours. If you email me the night before an assignment is due, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to get back to you quickly, so plan ahead.*

*Though you are welcome to connect with me on social media, please do NOT use those mediums to contact me about classwork.*

## IMPORTANT DATES

**Sept 3** – Last day Add/Drop

**Sept 20** – RITPJ @The Little

**Oct 24** – No Class (DC Trip)

**Oct 24-Nov 3** – Mtn. Workshops

**Nov 8** – Last day to drop w/ 'W'

**Nov 18** – Eric Maierson Lecture

**Nov 28** – Thanksgiving Break

**Dec 5** – Last day of this class

**Dec 10** – Reading Day

**Dec 11-18** – Final Exams

# NON-FICTION MULTIMEDIA

## MISSION

This course will continue your studies from previous and concurrent storytelling courses, including Elements of Photojournalism, Photojournalism I and Photo Editing, to learn to better tell non-fiction narratives on the linear form. We will explore the benefits of different types of mediums, including still images, audio, video and design as elements of multimedia journalism, and explore when and when not to choose video as a storytelling medium.

While the web is oversaturated with bad video, we will recognize that our audience has no patience for anything but top-notch production quality, story structure and visuals. Though I understand this may be your first time shooting and editing video stories, we must agree that subpar work in this medium just will not cut it. I will help you through this steep learning curve.

In addition to our own storytelling we will critique and examine other online video, short and feature-length documentary films and modern multimedia storytelling online.

## GOALS

1. Understand and put to use the classic narrative story arc structure into documentary visual and audio linear storytelling.
2. Develop your story research skills to allow you to find compelling narratives that work in a linear storytelling medium.
3. Learn to proficiently and efficiently operate a cinema, DSLR, mirrorless, mobile and/or action cameras as familiar tools which don't get in the way of your storytelling work.
4. Develop your audio gathering techniques and study of sound journalism.
5. Identify and examine current trends in online multimedia storytelling and critique online projects.
6. Find and develop characters that will become the primary voices in your stories.
7. Continued study of shooting stills for a linear narrative story structure.
8. Advanced knowledge of editing techniques
9. Working in teams to tell a story.
10. Writing for your online video stories.
11. To find, research and tell stories of diverse topics including those that foster understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

## DEADLINES

All assignments are due at the beginning of class of the due date. You must be present on assignment deadline classes to receive a grade at all. Failure to be present in person will be equivalent to a reduction of one letter grade.

Late work will receive a reduction of a letter grade for every 24 hours it's late starting immediately after the beginning of class.

Some assignments will have preliminary deadlines which must be adhered to as well, and will be explained fully in the assignment.

## CELL PHONES

Do not use your cell phones at all in class. Please leave them in your bag or pocket. You will be asked to leave if you are using them for non-class related activities. At some points I may ask you to view video content on your phone, and that will be the only time that you are permitted to use it. You will be given several breaks to check messages.

## LAPTOPS & LAB COMPUTERS

This will be a heavy computer use class, both in lecture class days and in lab. You are welcome to either use the lab computers or your personal laptop for work, but please completely refrain from doing non-class related work, including checking social media accounts, email or other course work, during our class time. The pace will be fast and you can fall behind quickly.

RIT provides you with adequate computer and software technology for class and homework projects, but if you choose to use your own computer or software (see below) it is your responsibility to acquire the software and keep your machine up and running, as well as use the same version as is in the labs.

## SOFTWARE

If you choose to use your own laptop, we will be using parts of the Adobe Suite, in particular, Premiere, Photoshop, Photo Mechanic and Media Encoder. If using your own machine, please make sure you are running the same version as in the labs to avoid compatibility problems.

## GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Journey	10 points
2. Moving Postcard	15 points
3. Musician (audio)	10 points
4. Character	15 points
5. Trailer Edit	10 points
6. Listening Exercises (x2)	10 points (@5 each)
7. Two Truths & A Lie	5 points
8. Team Doc Project	20 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95 points</b>

## PARTICIPATION (5 POINTS)

Q: What I will count for participation?

A: Discussing work in class, providing feedback to fellow students, asking questions that you have based on readings or assignments and commenting on work that you find on your own. Taking good notes, being an active listener and leader in promoting friendly discussion in class and labs.

Q: What does not count for participation?

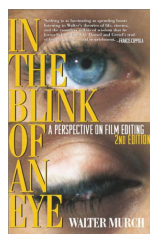
A: Simply showing up for class, showing up on time, only speaking when prompted, or in general, being a passive student.

## LAB

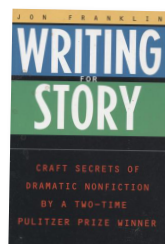
Our lab time is for you so that you will have adequate supervised access to facilities as well as individual assistance with your work. You are expected to bring your camera gear and required materials to every class. Sometimes I'll use the time to demonstrate a technique, concept or gear and other times I will allow you time to work on editing projects, but don't count on that time being the only time you'll be given to work on projects – homework is primarily to be done outside of class and lab. Lab time is, however, a GREAT place to bring in progress work with questions for me, so come to lab prepared with work to critique, with questions to ask or tutorials to complete. I will let you know each week whether we will have lab time for homework, for lecture or for group project work. We will use all of every lab, so, just as you would for class time, show up on time and follow respect rules to your instructor and classmates.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

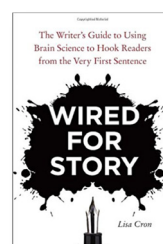
- These are not textbooks but have amazing anecdotes and suggestions for telling stories that connect with audiences, which is the main goal of this semester.
- I would recommend buying these used on Amazon or other places, as there are a ton of them. Each is less than \$10.
- You will have required reading in each throughout the semester.



In the Blink of an Eye  
by: Walter Murch



Writing for Story  
by: Jon Franklin



Wired for Story  
by: Lisa Cron

## GRADING SCALES

94-100 pts = A 77-79 pts = C+  
 90-93 pts = A- 73-76 pts = C  
 87-89 pts = B+ 70-72 pts = C-  
 83-86 pts = B 60-69 pts = D  
 80-82 pts = B- 0-59 pts = F

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

You can expect that I will always offer constructive and timely feedback and encourage and expect you to do your best and put full effort into your work as I will do for you as your teacher. I will be on time and prepared for each class and expect that you will as well. I always welcome your constructive feedback about the course, assignments and my presentations at any point in the semester.

Leave excuses at the door, be ready to learn, which means overcoming some failures and learning from those mistakes, which we all make. Be open to constructive feedback from me, your classmates and other faculty on your work.

## TITLE IX

RIT is committed to providing a safe learning environment, free of harassment and discrimination as articulated in our university policies located here <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d190-interim-policy-student-gender-based-and-sexual-misconduct-policy-title-ix>

## GRADING LEVELS

[ A ] The work has exceptional merit: superior vision, creativity, initiative in problem solving, thoughtfulness and effort, and fulfills all assignment requirements and goals in an exceptional and significant manner. Technical quality of work is excellent. It follows assignment instructions. The assignment is complete, (all specifications of the assignment - amount, content, etc. have been adhered to) and shows no technical flaws in exposure, nor printing. Not only is the student able to communicate a clear idea or intent, but also is able to do so in an inventive, engaging manner effectively using formal and technical decisions. The work not only responds appropriately to the assignment, but it pushes it in innovative, and unexpected positive directions.

[ B ] Work is well done. Work exhibits good vision, creativity, initiative in problem solving, thoughtfulness and effort, and fulfills assignment requirements and goals in a better-than-average manner; however, vision, storytelling, and/or aesthetic quality could be improved. The assignment is complete and shows very few technical flaws. The student is able to communicate a clear intent in as much as the work engages viewer attention through good use of formal and technical tools. The work respond appropriately to the assignment.

[ C ] Work is of average quality. Work exhibits acceptable but average vision, creativity, storytelling, thoughtfulness and effort, and fulfills assignment requirements and goals in an average manner. The assignment is complete, though there may be some technical problems. The work responds appropriately to the assignment.

[ D ] Work shows a barely adequate effort. Work demonstrates some effort to fulfill the assignment requirements and goals but is unacceptable and poorly executed. The work demonstrates that the student tried to fulfill the assignment but had serious technical problems or did not carry through with enough effort to produce a usable assignment. The assignment is incomplete, and/or there exist significant errors. The work expresses the intent of the student in a confused, ineffective manner. Little serious attempt is made to use formal and technical tools to communicate clear, intended meaning. The work fails to respond to the central problems posed by the assignment.

[ F ] Student turned in something, but the work is unacceptable. Work does not fulfill assignment requirements and goals and demonstrates unacceptable effort.

## GRADING CRITERIA

Grading your assignments will be based on the following criteria.

- Vision and planning to meet and exceed the needs of each assignment
- Creativity
- Research
- Technical superiority
- Editing
- Written components
- Deadline met

## ATTENDANCE

Your attendance in every class is absolutely critical, as each lesson builds upon the previous one, and I will not be able to go back and repeat missed material. This course only meets weekly so missing one day is a whole week of class. Please do not come late or miss class, as it's disruptive to everyone.

If you know you must be absent some time in the future, you should let me know as far in advance as possible so that I can help you find ways to get caught up. I'll be happy to help you get caught up for things like SERIOUS health issues, family emergencies and religious holidays. If you are too sick to attend class, please email me before the start of class time and connect with classmates or the TA for missed material. Simply waking up tired or with a headache does not indicate a serious health issue. <http://www.rit.edu/~w-policy/sectionD/D4.html>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his or her own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used.

To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism. Disposition of Offenses - Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.

As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. The university encourages all students to become familiar with the RIT Honor Code <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/p030> and with RIT's Academic Honesty Policy <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080>.

That said, taking ideas and examples from others and using those to inspire your work is NOT plagiarism and should be encouraged. This is an important distinction, however crediting from where you received inspiration always helps.

## CRITIQUES

One reminder about critiques in class. I want involvement from everyone. The critiques need to be honest and constructive. You can be tough without tearing people apart. A thin line often separates what is perceived to be constructive versus destructive feedback. Find the balance, and when in doubt, take the higher road.

Likewise, feedback that is full of hot air and praise does little to help one another grow. Speak positively when you really feel something is great, and critique when you have constructive feedback and suggestions. Participate, participate, participate. This will be part of your grade.

When receiving a critique, you need a similar balance. There is a fine line between defending your position and making excuses. Be a good listener. Don't be so connected to your work that you lose sight of how it could be better. You need to develop a thick skin and an open mind. We will use our time to focus on solutions instead of problems. I want you all to be successful. Asking questions is never wrong.

Harsh and honest critiques aren't easy, and I understand that, but we have a limited time together and I want to use this time to make our work stronger. Liken it to an athlete who has to suffer through training in order to perform at his or her best. My word is only one person's opinion (though I write your grade) so please don't take it as the only way.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

### HARD DRIVE(S)

- Two Mac-formatted external hard drives (one will be a mirror backup). Each should have at least 500GB of free space. Video can easily take up a LOT of space, so be prepared.
- Leave second drive in your room when not copying in case you lose drive
- Drives can be formatted for PC, MACs or for both PC and MACs. When you purchase a new drive, you'll likely need to format it. This can be done through the program Disk Utility or if you're unsure, bring it to the IT specialists on campus and let them know you need to format it for PC, MAC or BOTH. This process will also allow you to name your drive. I'd recommend naming it with your last name so it can be returned to you if you leave it in the lab.

### CAMERA EQUIPMENT & ACCESSORIES

- DSLR, mirrorless or cinema camera capable of recording 1080p with full manual video and audio control. Selection of lenses (wide, medium, telephoto). Access to shotgun microphone and wireless lavalier microphone.
- Expectation of good standing with Cage checkout
- Tripod with fluid video head
- At least two (32 gb minimum each) SD or CF cards (whichever fit the camera you want to use). Also, one SD card for audio recorder (2gb-8gb recommended, as large cards often do not work well in the audio recorders)
- A pair of headphones which isolate the sound from the ambient sound, such as over the ear or very snug fitting ear buds. Do Not use headphones that have a built in microphone for making calls (these SHOULD be listening-only headphones and not microphone-equipped headphones).
  - Sony MDR-7506 is a great pair of over the ear
  - Etymotic Research hf5 In-Ear is a great pair of noise isolating ear buds

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

RIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.

Students with Disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Disability Services Office Student Alumni Union. It is located in the Student Alumni Union, Room 1150; the Web site is [www.rit.edu/dso](http://www.rit.edu/dso).

After you receive accommodation approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Disability Services Office Student Alumni Union.

<http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/c120>

## CAD SERVER

You will have access to the CAD server where you can store some files and turn in your work. This area NOT large enough for you to backup large amounts of data, but it can be a place to backup in-progress projects, or some smaller files should you need a 2nd or third place to back up your work. It fills up quickly and should not be considered a replacement for your external hard drive(s) or your own cloud storage. Please remember that though connecting to the server from off campus is technically possible, it is very slow, so cannot be relied upon for turning in work at the last minute efficiently.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

### WEEK 1 • 8/29

Course overview / Equipment overview / What is good storytelling? / Ambient sound / Adobe Premiere review / Journey & Postcard Assignments

### WEEK 2 • 9/5

Characters & Interviews / Story Plots / Tech settings for video / File organization / Listening to narratives / Discuss Postcard ideas

### WEEK 3 • 9/12

Narratives / Transcripts / Sequence shooting / Critique Journey Assignment

### WEEK 4 • 9/19

Editing & Pacing / Mixing interviews with ambient sound / advanced timeline organization / Musician Assignment / Critique Postcard Rough Draft

### WEEK 5 • 9/26

Writing for Video / Idea Generation / 2 camera interview & Premiere Multiclip / Character Assignment / Critique Postcard Assignment

### WEEK 6 • 10/3

Shooting scenes and matched action / Introduction and strategies for proposal writing / Review Character Pitches / Critique Musician Assignment / Critique 2 Camera Interviews

### WEEK 7 • 10/10

Data and people / Editing techniques for problem solving / Color correction / Critique Character Radio Edit / Trailer Edit Assignment

### WEEK 8 • 10/17

Discuss Issue Assignment / Critique Character Rough Draft Assignment

### WEEK 9 • 10/24

NYC TRIP - No Class

### WEEK 10 • 10/31 (The Mountain Workshops)

Planning for Bigger Projects / Critique Character Assignment / Review Issue Assignment pitches

### WEEK 11 • 11/7

The MULTI in multimedia / Critique Trailer Assignment / Critique Issue Proposal

### WEEK 12 • 11/14

Nontraditional Narratives / Issue Assignment Radio Edit

### WEEK 13 • 11/21

THANKSGIVING BREAK - No Class

### WEEK 14 • 11/28

Feedback to changes / Critique Issue Assignment Rough Draft 1

### WEEK 15 • 12/5

Looking forward to Advanced techniques / Critique Issue Assignment Rough Draft 2

### EXAM WEEK • 12/TBA (scheduled exam day and time)

Critique Issue Assignment