JOUR 500: Digital Media Tools

Fall 2018 Syllabus

Texts
Readings for each topic on Blackboard

Instructors
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Course description
In Digital Media Tools, you will learn the skills
needed in multiplatform newsrooms: online production, audience engagement, analytics,
social media account management and interactive multimedia storytelling. This course will
use the skills you have from JOUR 415, 419 and 550 and give you hands-on experience with
tools of modern digital journalism.

Course goals
The reporting and editing skills you've developed will be useful in nearly any journalism
job, but most newsrooms will want additional digital skills as well, which is where this
class comes in. When you successfully complete this course, you will:

- Be able to **use and understand digital terminology**: From CSS to SQL, what do all
  those abbreviations mean?
- Be able to **use digital tools** including common CMSs, database managers, analytics
  tools, social media management tools, GIF creators, photo and video editors,
  graphics builders.
- Understand **what makes a tool effective** and be able to **evaluate a new tool** to see
  whether it is useful for a specific purpose.
- Know how to **read analytics data** and how to **track the performance** of
  stories/multimedia elements, both on a website and on social media.
- Be able to **use basic HTML coding** to edit elements of a web page.
- Understand **why a journalist needs to be familiar with coding**.
- Understand **elements of effective design**, both web and mobile.
- Know how to **increase page views** by using SEO and SMO tactics, including how to
  effectively populate all fields used by search engines.
- Know how to **test headlines**.
- Effectively **reach audiences through other channels** such as email and push
  notifications.
- Be able to identify appropriate, engaging multimedia elements of a story.
- Be able to **curate information** and create broad, deep **multimedia packages**.
- Use analytics data to improve **content delivery** and **audience engagement.**
- Apply **social media best practices**: Track engagement through social media, use
  social media analytics, manage multiple social media accounts effectively, and
  engage with diverse audiences.

Meeting the goals

We will work toward the course goals in several ways:

- Hands-on practice: An opportunity to gain repeated experience headline testing, analyzing metrics, coding, and creating and managing online content, including social media. We'll have numerous small assignments and one large project.
- In-class discussions and exercises
- Relevant readings and analysis
- Professional development

Assignments

Exercises and/or responses to readings will be assigned regularly, and one longer project will be assigned to bring together your skills through the semester. These are due by class time on the due date. Late work will not be accepted.

Social media

Social media is a key part of journalism today: Many journalists manage multiple social media accounts for their news organizations, and all journalists should be using social media to follow news, trends and industry info, as well as to share their own content.
As part of this class, you will learn to use social media beyond just sharing content, so you will need to have accounts on **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram** and **Snapchat** that you can use for classwork. You may use existing accounts or create new ones to practice with.

In-class work and participation

During the class meetings, we will often discuss topics relevant to digital journalism and work on material in pairs or groups. So do the readings, keep up with the work and come prepared to participate. **Please don't be a distraction to your classmates: Turn your electronic devices' sound off during class and use devices only for class work.** Be respectful of others whose viewpoints and experiences may not be the same as your own.

Attendance

Approach this course as you would a job: you don't just fail to show up for work (not if you want to keep the job), so don't just fail to show up for class. If you cannot attend class or if you are going to be late, please call or e-mail. Absences from class will affect your grade.

Grading

A	A–	B+	B	B–	C+	C	C–	D+	D	D–	F
93+	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	59–

Your final grade will be determined according to this breakdown:

- Assignments (graded and pass/fail): **25 percent**
- Quizzes and midterm test: **25 percent**
- Final project: **40 percent**
- Participation: **10 percent**

The fine print

Academic misconduct

You are bound by the university rules on academic misconduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, please ask BEFORE your endeavor. In this class, and in all journalism classes, honesty and integrity are critical. Any work you do must be original and reflect your own ideas, thoughts and research. In a work setting, if you choose to violate professional standards, you will be fired. In this class, if you choose to violate the standards for academic integrity, you'll fail the course, and you may be expelled from or denied admission to the School of Journalism.

Here's some clarification:
If you use or attempt to use any unauthorized materials during a test, or if you give any unauthorized materials to someone else during a test, this is cheating. Unauthorized materials include written materials, such as notes, as well as nonverbal or electronic communication.

Plagiarism is stealing.
The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications does not tolerate plagiarism, fabrication of evidence and falsification of evidence. Penalties for plagiarism, fabrication or falsification can include a failing grade for the course and expulsion from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, please consult the professor of the course.
The following definitions are from Article II, Section 6, of the University Senate Rules and Regulations, revised FY98.
Plagiarism: Knowingly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the information or ideas are common knowledge.
Fabrication and Falsification: Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Content "recycling": The expectation in this class is that you've come to learn, to be creative, to stretch your imagination, and expand your skills. Therefore, all the work you do in this class must be original. That means no "recycling" of your previous interviews, assignments, stories or work from other classes. The journalism school regards any efforts to recycle material from previous coursework as academic dishonesty.

Disability accommodation

The Office of Disability Resources (DR), 22 Strong Hall, 785-864-2620 (V/TTY) , coordinates accommodations and services for KU students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Please also contact me privately in regard to this course.

Journalism School and financial aid policy on classroom attendance

No student may add a journalism class after the 20th day of a semester.
Students must attend their classes and laboratory periods. Instructors may take attendance into account in assessing a student's performance and may require a certain level of attendance for passing a course. Instructors may choose to drop students from a course, based on attendance, without consent.
The School of Journalism reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of students who fail to attend the first class or laboratory meeting.

The KU Office of Student Financial Aid is required by federal law to determine whether students who receive aid are attending each class in which they are enrolled. Instructors are required to report to that office absences of students who have stopped attending and names of those who have enrolled but never have attended. Students who do not attend classes may be required to repay federal and/or state financial aid." Students who receive any form of financial aid should learn all requirements including minimum hours of enrollment and grades to qualify for and retain that aid.

Inclement weather

In the event of bad weather, the decision to cancel classes is made by KU officials. To determine whether snow or icy conditions have canceled classes, call 785-864-7669.

Recording of classroom lectures

Course materials prepared by the instructor, as well as content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the instructor's property. Video and audio recording of lectures without instructor consent is prohibited.

Pursuant to the University of Kansas' Policy on Commercial Note-Taking Ventures, commercial note-taking is not permitted in J419. Lecture notes and course materials may be taken for personal use and may not be sold to any person or entity in any form.
However: Note-taking provided by a student volunteer for a student with a disability, as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA, is **not the same** as commercial note-taking and is allowed.

JOUR 500: Fall 2018 Course Schedule

Units 1-3: Overview
Unit 1
Terms and concepts: Gaining a common vocabulary; common tools, what they do and how to evaluate them; why you should use multimedia tools
Unit 2
Information technology: Analytics at a glance; what you should know about coding
Unit 3
Audience engagement: Social media best practices; what SEO and SMO are; why use email, push notifications and curation

Units 4-12: Digging In
Unit 4
Reaching audiences: Using email and push notifications to get content to your audience
Social media: Tracking engagement and content performance through analytics
Unit 5
Analytics: What data is collected? How do you read it? How do you use that data to learn more about your audience and your content? Using analytics data to improve content delivery and audience engagement. Looking beyond page views.
Unit 6
SEO and SMO: Writing effective display type and using digital-only fields such as metatags, open grafs, and hashtags to boost views and engagement
Which is better? Testing headlines to see which draws more interest
Unit 7
Multimedia storytelling: What multimedia elements will make a story more effective and engaging?
Unit 8
Multimedia tools: A closer look at specific multimedia storytelling tools such as Timelines, Storymap, Tableau, and mapping
Unit 9
In-class work on projects
Unit 10
Multimedia tools: Curating information to create better multimedia packages
Unit 11
HTML coding: What it is, why you need it and how to use it to edit a web page.
Unit 12
Digital navigation and design: Web and mobile. The importance of load time and responsive design.

Final Weeks:
Wrap-up: More practice, pulling it all together, final project presentations