

Loyola University Chicago, Fall 2017
COMM 400-201: Introduction to Digital Media
Mondays, 7 to 9:30 p.m. in SOC 003
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Office hours: Mondays, 6 to 7 p.m.
Lewis Towers 900-C or by appointment

Course description: This course is about telling and understanding how new media stories are made. You'll learn how to tell your own stories through digital media, as well as analyze how others — the press, corporations, brands, academics and popular culture — use it for storytelling. By the end of the semester you will be able to understand and critique current approaches and tools for digital storytelling and develop an understanding of new media issues and ethics. You'll also produce several work samples and a digital media portfolio to showcase your skills and demonstrate your proficiency to future employers.

Course objectives: 1) Developing creative capacities; 2) Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course; 3) Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing.

Course materials: All of your readings will be provided to you or are available online. Most weeks you'll have assigned readings related to the coming week's discussion. You'll also have readings related to our guest speakers. Readings and homework assignments will be posted each week on our class page on Sakai.

Attendance: Absences may be excused due to emergencies, serious illness/injury, a religious observation or because you will be attending an event as a representative of Loyola.

Please make every effort to notify me at least 24 hours in advance of your absence. To be excused, you must provide documentation explaining your absence by your first day back in class. (Acceptable documentation depends on the circumstance. Examples include: note from doctor or nurse, receipt of medicine you purchased, obituary, copy of memorial program, etc.) If your excuse is valid, you may make up whatever you missed. Unexcused lateness or absences will result in a lower class participation grade, in addition to zeros on missed in-class assignments.

Deadlines: I will deduct 5 points (half a letter grade) for every 24 hours an assignment is late (i.e. from A- to B+). Assignments that are due on a class day must be turned in by the start of class to avoid losing points for lateness. Extensions may be granted in rare instances; you must discuss the terms of an extension with me at least 48 hours in advance of the due date.

Academic integrity: You cannot copy someone else's writing, audio, video or visuals from the internet or any other source without proper attribution. Any use of another person's work should be limited and clearly warranted in your story. At all times possible, a link to the original work should be provided. Make sure to consult with me and your other professor(s) before attempting

to submit work with similar or overlapping content. It may be permissible to cover a similar topic for more than one course if: 1) the work is in different formats (such as audio and print), and 2) the professors know about and approve of the arrangement.

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Committing plagiarism results in an automatic “F” for that assignment, though depending on the severity of the case it can also result in an “F” for the course. All instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the Dean of the School of Communication. Cheating will result in similar low grades. You cannot invent quotes, facts or other material.

Accommodations: If you have a special circumstance that may impact your coursework and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me as soon as you can so arrangements can be made with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). I will accommodate your needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of course content and processes. It is your responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet your own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, can be found on the [SSWD website](#).

Email: I try my best to respond to questions via email as quickly as I can, but please keep in mind I am a working journalist with a full-time job (and deadlines of my own!) Please allow up to 24 hours for a response, especially on weekdays. If it’s an emergency, you may call my cell phone (number listed at top of syllabus).

Professionalism: For this course you’ll be using your laptop, phone or tablet to do research, complete in-class assignments and take notes. For some assignments, you may be asked to use a computer in our classroom. Using technology for purposes unrelated to class will result in a lower class participation grade.

Presentations: Each week, one or two students will lead a **20-minute discussion** at the start of class about a unique or interesting use of digital media that’s relevant to our course. This presentation will factor into your participation grade.

Cases that raise questions about ethics, credibility, current events, recent innovations or digital media failures often make for good discussion. You are expected to email your corresponding materials, such as news articles, studies, journal articles, or video/audio stories, **one week in advance of your presentation (i.e. the Monday before)** to your classmates and I. Please keep total reading, viewing and listening time to 30 minutes or less.

In class, you’ll present a brief summary of your findings and facilitate discussion among your classmates on your chosen topic. Usually, coming prepared with three to five discussion questions will suffice. Using visual aids, such as a PowerPoint or short video, is encouraged.

Examples of sources to consult include, but are not limited to: [AdvertisingAge](#), [Adweek](#), [CNET](#), [Columbia Journalism Review](#), [Digiday](#), [Nieman Journalism Lab](#), [On the Media](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Poynter](#), [Recode](#), [Reply All](#), [The Verge](#) and [Wired](#).

Grading scale:

95-100 A	90-94 A-
87-89 B+	83-86 B
80-82 B-	77-79 C+
73-76 C	70-72 C-
67-69 D+	65-66 D
< 65 F	

Grade disputes: If you do not agree with your grade, you may write one to two paragraphs explaining why and set up a time to discuss the matter during my office hours or on the phone. I expect you to communicate grade disputes with me within 48 hours of receiving your graded assignment.

Grading breakdown:

Class participation	30%
Portfolio & four homework assignments	30%
Final project	40%

Class participation includes your attendance, contribution to class discussions, completion of in-class assignments and asking questions of guest speakers.

Your homework assignments will build on skills workshops and exercises we complete in class and allow you to create content for your online portfolio.

Your final project will include a proposal at midterm, the project itself and a final presentation.

Course schedule: I'll try my best to stick to this schedule, but there may be changes due to guest speaker availability, special circumstances, etc.

Week One: Aug 28 – Online portfolios

- Introductions
- Sample presentation
- Online portfolio assignment due by start of class 9/11

Week Two: Sept 4 - Labor Day, no class

Week Three: Sept 11 – A history of new media

- Weekly assignment #1 due by start of class, 9/18

Week Four: Sept 18 – Digital media and ethics

- Weekly assignment #2 due by start of class, 9/25

Week Five: Sept 25 – Digital journalism

- Weekly assignment #3 due by start of class, 10/16

Week Six: Oct 2 – Social media

- Final project proposal due by start of class 10/16

Week Seven: Oct 9 – Fall Break, no class

Week Eight: Oct. 16 – Branded and sponsored content

Week Nine: Oct. 23 – Building audiences, trust and brand loyalty

Week Ten: Oct. 30 – Politics and digital media

- Weekly assignment #4 due by start of class, 11/6

Week Eleven: Nov. 6 – Civic media and alternative publishing

Week Twelve: Nov. 13 – Guest speaker

Week Thirteen: Nov. 20 – Building your own brand

- Work on final projects: Presentations on 12/4, projects due 12/11

Week Fourteen: Nov. 27 – Future of digital media

- Work on final projects: Presentations on 12/4, projects due 12/11

Week Fifteen: Dec. 4 – Final project presentations

****FINALS WEEK Dec. 11 — Final project due by 9:30 p.m. (end of exam time)****