

# JOU 4930, Video Storytelling

Summer C, 2014: Study abroad for the College of Journalism and Communications in France



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Office hours: Spring in Gainesville: Periods 9-10 Mondays, periods 6-7 Tuesdays

## Course Objective

Produce a two-minute story, built around an interview and told in online journalism style of sufficient quality to persuade a potential employer to hire you to tell a video story.

## Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify the elements of a good interview-based video story.
2. Employ proper camera techniques and styles to create an interesting story.
3. Use editing software (Adobe Premiere Pro or Final Cut) to edit and polish the story.

## Required Equipment (between you and partner; see below; also see my [website](#))

- Laptop: Mac or Windows loaded with Adobe Premiere Pro (not Premiere Elements), which you can get through a student Adobe Creative Cloud subscription. Or, a Mac laptop with any version of Final Cut: FC Express, FCP 7 or FCP X (but not iMovie).
- Camera: Any camera (not a cellphone) with 720p or better video; a point-and-shoot is fine.
- Sound: A \$20 [lavaliere mic](#) if camera accepts; [digital recorder](#) optional.
- Tripod: Any will do; Best Buy has several; here's a \$65 [Manfrotto](#) I like.

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Per study-abroad policy, anyone coming late (after a 5-minute grace period) loses a half-letter grade for the course and anyone who misses a class loses a full letter grade for the course. The only exception is if you are truly ill and you let me know ahead of time.

## Course Requirements

The entire course has a single grade point: the quality of the two-minute interview video, which must be completed and shown in class while overseas, per the class schedule (below). The interview subject must be an adult (not a student) resident (not a visitor).

## Grading

See rubric below. The UF grading policy can be found in the undergraduate catalog [online](#).

|    | Percent |    | Percent |    | Percent |    | Percent |
|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
|    |         | B+ | 89-87%  | C+ | 79-77%  | D+ | 69-67%  |
| A  | 100-93% | B  | 86-83%  | C  | 76-73%  | D  | 66-63%  |
| A- | 92-90%  | B- | 82-80%  | C- | 72-80%  | D- | 62-60%  |

### **Solo or With a Partner**

You can either produce your own project or create one video with a partner. Given the number of students enrolled in this course and our short time together, I hope most of you will pair up and create a joint project. The choice, however, is yours.

If you partner on a joint project, your contributions should be roughly equal in terms of shooting and editing. In other words, I don't want to see one person do all the shooting and the other do all the editing, because you'll get only half of what you want to learn in this class. So if you do a joint project, I will ask for evidence that each of you contributed to both shooting and editing.

Our March 12 meeting (see below) will allow you to find a partner.

### **Paris or London**

Although the "tale of two cities" makes this year's study-abroad trip especially attractive, it also complicates this video class. It means you'll have to pick one of two scenarios for your video story.

**1. Paris in Springtime.** This scenario requires you to attend a five-hour training session in Gainesville in April (date TBA) so that you can hit the ground running. You can then try to find an English-speaking subject in Paris and complete all your filming before we leave Paris. Then you can edit at a leisurely pace in London. If you cannot find a good subject in Paris, you won't have lost anything – but you will have to find, record and edit a story in a week in London. If you take the five-hour training session in Gainesville, you can skip the Paris classes and spend that time finding and filming your story.

**2. London Calling.** This scenario is for those who cannot attend the five-hour training session in Gainesville in April or who want to wait until London to find an interview subject. You will come to the five video classes while we're in Paris, which will cover the same material in the five-hour Gainesville training session. The down side to this scenario is that you have a week to find, record and edit a story in London.

Which to do? The first option offers you the most opportunity for success. So if you can attend the five-hour training session in April, do so.

### **First Gainesville Meeting: March 12**

Dr. Weigold has already called a meeting for all study-abroad participants for 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 12. Because you have to be there anyway, the first meeting for the video storytelling class will be right thereafter, about 7:15 p.m. in Weimer 1078. Unless you already have a class at that time, attendance is mandatory because that's when you will get a sense of what's required and you will pick a partner. It is also when we will ...

### **April Training Session**

... choose the date to hold the five-hour training session in April. So bring your calendars to the March 12 meeting.

### **How to Find Your Video Story**

- Start with someone *doing* something interesting.
- Then look for someone *interesting*.
- Explore guidebooks such as Lonely Planet before we leave to glean ideas.
- Wander streets and surroundings for ideas.
- Safety first. Don't agree to see someone's etchings in his loft. Even if you're producing a solo project, work with a friend to help you film and be safe.

### **How to First Approach a Potential Subject**

1. Put the camera away at first.
2. Look for someone with an interesting story to tell. If it bores you, move on.
3. Strike up a conversation: "What made you decide to do that?"
4. If the person seems interesting, ask if you can do a film interview for a class project.

### **Academic Integrity**

University of Florida students pledge to abide by an [honor code](#) that prohibits academic dishonesty such as fabrication, plagiarism and cheating. You have an affirmative obligation to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. You also must report to appropriate personnel any condition that facilitates academic misconduct. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

When I discover cheating, my default policy is to fail all involved for the entire course and report the details to the Dean of Students Office.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you would benefit from disability-related accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) as early in the semester as possible. The center will provide documentation so appropriate accommodations can be made. The center is in Reid Hall, 392-8565.

### **Help With Coping**

The UF [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575.

If you need assistance while we're in Europe, call on any faculty member or AIFS staff member.

### **Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online [evaluations](#). You will be notified by email when the evaluations are open, near the end of Summer C. Summary [results](#) are available to you and the general public.

## Assignments and Work Plan

|    | Where       | When                | Class topic   | Assignment  |
|----|-------------|---------------------|---|---|
| 1  | Gainesville | Wednesday, March 12 | Choosing a partner; choosing a topic  |   |
| 2  | Gainesville | TBD                 | Five-hour training session on how to shoot a video story and how to edit video. (If you attend this, you can skip the Paris video classes – or attend as you wish.) | Bring all the required equipment with you, including cords or card readers to transfer video into your laptop |
| 3  | Paris       | Thursday, May 8     | Training 1: Identifying the key elements of a good video story  | Bring your required equipment   |
| 4  | Paris       | Friday, May 9       | Training 2: How to get good sound   | Bring your required equipment   |
| 5  | Paris       | Monday, May 12      | Training 3: How to operate your camera  | Bring your required equipment   |
| 6  | Paris       | Wednesday, May 14   | Training 4: How to use your video editing software, part 1  | Bring your required equipment   |
| 7  | Paris       | Thursday, May 15    | Training 5: How to use your video editing software, part 2  | Bring your required equipment   |
| 8  | London      | Wednesday, May 21   | Workshop sessions; see note below for details   |   |
| 9  | London      | Thursday, May 22    | Workshop sessions; see note below for details   |   |
| 10 | London      | Tuesday, May 27     | Workshop sessions; see note below for details   |   |
| 11 | London      | Wednesday, May 28   | Workshop sessions; see note below for details   |   |
| 12 | London      | Thursday, May 29    | Class presentations: Half of class shows finished video to everyone   |   |
| 13 | London      | Friday, May 30      | Class presentations: Rest of class shows finished video to everyone   |   |

### Workshop Sessions

Our first four meetings in London are workshop sessions. These are times for you to show me what you've got so I can help you improve your video or help you solve problems.

Because these are workshop sessions, I won't take attendance. However, good students will attend at least two or three of these sessions so they can get coaching. And the best students will do so sooner rather than later. If you wait until May 28 to get feedback on your video and it needs a lot of work, you won't have time to fix it before you show it in class, and your grade will suffer.

### Class Presentations

Your grade will be based on the finished video you show to class on May 29 or May 30. No extensions will be granted.

## Grading Rubric

Baseline expectation: A 2-minute ( $\pm 30$  seconds) video story (90% of which is b-roll with no clips reused) built around an interview conducted in English and told in online journalism style (without voiceover). If camera allows, video resolution should be HD (at least 720p) and the format should be 16:9 (widescreen).

|                           | A (excellent)   | B (very good)  | C (acceptable)   | D (unacceptable)  |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Story topic (20%)         | Topic is so interesting that 90% chance it would appear on a local news website   | Topic is interesting; 75% chance it would appear on a local news website   | Point of story is fuzzy or only 50% chance topic would appear on a local news website                                    | Point of story hard to discern; little chance topic would be on a local news website                                      |
| Narrative arc (5%)        | Story has a beginning, middle and end: opening scenes quickly establish point; middle stays on track; a true ending seals the story   | Beginning scenes quickly establish point and middle maintains it but narrative ending may be lacking                     | Beginning scenes slow to establish story or narrative ending lacking   | Story lacks a narrative beginning, middle and end   |
| Sound (25%)               | Crisp and clear; no distracting sounds; Levels consistent across clips and peaks at -6db; audio transitions seamless                  | Audible; other sounds not distracting; levels consistent across clips and peaks at -6db; audio transitions a bit jumpy   | Audible but listening is sometimes strained and requires effort; levels vary but do not impede listener comprehension    | At least 25% of video is Inaudible without considerable effort; levels are sufficiently inconsistent as to be distracting |
| Camera movement (5%)      | Camera generally stays still because a tripod was used  | Camera movement is infrequent and not distracting  | Camera movement is frequent but not distracting  | Camera movement is distracting  |
| Focus and lighting (10%)  | All but one clip is in focus and lighted properly   | All but two clips are in focus and lighted properly  | All but three clips are in focus and lighted properly  | Four or more clips are out of focus or not lighted properly   |
| Filming composition (10%) | 90% of shots use space, framing, rule of thirds, lines and foreground effectively   | 80% of shots are effectively composed  | 70% of shots are effectively composed  | Less than 70% of shots are effectively composed   |
| Interview mechanics (5%)  | All 4 met: 1) Apply rule of thirds; 2) subject eyes open; 3) subject looks just off camera; 4) background isn't distracting           | 3 of 4: 1) Apply rule of thirds; 2) subject eyes open; 3) subject looks just off camera; 4) background isn't distracting | 2 of 4: 1) Apply rule of thirds; 2) subject eyes open; 3) subject looks just off camera; 4) background isn't distracting | 1 of 4: 1) Apply rule of thirds; 2) subject eyes open; 3) subject looks just off camera; 4) background isn't distracting  |
| B-roll mixture (15%)      | Mix shots (wide, medium and tight), angles (high, eye-level, low and over the shoulder) and clip length (2-7 sec.); faces predominate | Shots vary but rely a little too much on one type, angle or length; may be 15 seconds or more between faces              | Film overly dependent on one or two types of shots; or only half of clips feature faces                                  | Film is essentially a single type of shot at eye-level; or only a quarter of clips feature faces                          |
| B-roll matching (5%)      | Specific b-roll when possible; when not, generic b-roll used  | B-roll matches but is mostly generic   | B-roll matches but specific b-roll missing   | At times, b-roll clashes visually with a-roll   |

Extra points can be earned for using natural sound and using a second interview, such as with a customer.