

# SJB 103 – Digital Storytelling

## **Professor:**

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**Class Location:** Course is Online

## **Course Description**

Details the history and methods of storytelling practices by identifying and enforcing the fundamentals-finding the story, assembling the story, and sharing the story in the digital age.

## **Mission**

Understanding the framework of telling compelling stories to diverse audiences - this is what journalists, filmmakers, and those in media marketing and communication aspire to do every day with relevance, context and emotion. However, without a fundamental understanding of how to identify a compelling narrative, how to assemble story components, and how to share a story with a diverse and distributed audience, these professionals cannot effectively do their work. Moreover, without a keen understanding of the potential for modern storytelling, they cannot effectively take advantage of all the tools and technology available. This course provides a map, illuminates the possibilities, and outlines a framework for crafting a narrative.

## **Knowledge**

Knowledge combines data from personal accounts, comments, observations, reports, documents, affidavits, testimony, photographs, audio recordings, video recordings, newspapers, pamphlets, journals, almanacs, diaries, etc. with analyses, translations, assumptions, perceptions, impressions, appraisals, links, conclusions, explanations, explications, descriptions, illustrations, comparisons, emphases, contrasts, debate, criticism, praise, synthesis, exposition, storytelling, etc. to provide a glimpse, albeit a limited and a subjective one, of events, persons, and/or singular or collective activity associated with a specific time, place, or object.

Scholars, at their very best, can tell only an incomplete story. And since knowledge often is a blend of selected facts (which are relative) and interpretations, the scholar, depending on his/her

intellectual curiosity, research sources, investigative expertise, intentions (and perhaps hidden agenda), presentation skills and medium, can search out and elaborate on fact, or he/she can perpetuate and even embellish misconceptions (factual errors).

Knowledge (or “truth”) is based on perspective – a very important component for prospective media professionals to grasp. To help add and refine society’s knowledge, and to help inform your own, you must learn to critically question even the most revered minds and the most absolute “facts.” We will see that many misperceptions and negative stereotypes were (and continue to be) communicated as “fact” via mainstream media. In terms of understanding social construction (the idea that “truth” is based on one’s perspective, subject to change, and not “absolute,” but rather meaningfully built by culture in a dynamic, fluid manner devoid, ideally, of hierarchy) is vital to fully grasping this course’s main objectives.

### **Grade Breakdown**

**-Reading Responses 40% of grade**

**-Critical Analyses 40% of grade**

**-Final Paper 20% of grade**

### **Grading Rubric**

(Grade A) Excellent: students clearly link response/analysis back to two or more key themes from the reading for each module

(Grade B) Good: students’ attempt to link posts and response/analysis back to two key themes for each module, but connections could have been articulated more clearly

(Grade C) Satisfactory: students’ link response/analysis back to less than two key themes for each module and overall connections could have been articulated more clearly

(Grade D or below) Unsatisfactory: students do not clearly link response/analysis responses back to the key themes of the module

### **Grade book**

**The online grade book is a courtesy to you. It is subject to updates as software may shift. The professor reserves the right to make grade book corrections to keep it consistent with**

**the syllabus. If you see something that you do not understand, please contact me immediately.**

**90-100% = A**

**80-89% = B**

**70-79% = C**

**60-69% = D**

**59 and Below = F**

**Last Day to Drop with a W: March 10, 2017**

### **Students with Disabilities**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270.745.5004 [270.745.5121 V/TDD] or email at [sarc@wku.edu](mailto:sarc@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation (LOA) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

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### **Academic Dishonesty**

**Cheating** or using others work as your own will NOT be allowed and will be reported to appropriate university officials.

**Plagiarism:** Cited from WKU Faculty Handbook, 19th ed. (p. 57)

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. *Student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.*

## REQUIRED TEXT

Wilson II, C. C., Gutiérrez, F., & Chao, L. (2013). *Racism, sexism, and the media: Multicultural Issues into the New Communications Age*, Sage, 4th edition.

## Reading Response Guidelines

For each module, you are required to write a reading response. The length requirement is two pages, double spaced, 12 font.

I *do not* expect summaries of the reading; rather, I want you to critically examine the material, ask questions, and answer those questions in your reading response. For instance, do you disagree with something the author says? Why? Raise questions about areas you feel the text ignored. What from the text was especially important to you? Discuss why?

For more concrete guidelines, or suggestions, please see the following on how to write a quality reading response:

Writing a quality reading response can be challenging. Instead of summarizing the reading, you should ask questions about the reading and use examples from the readings to work through the answer[s]. I've provided below a list of questions that should help you begin writing your response. Remember, quality writing is expected. I also teach writing, so I'm naturally hard on this area and *expect/demand* the response to be free of errors. I won't try tinkering with your voice/style; that is yours and you should claim it. However, there are certain grammatical axioms that can't be broken, regardless of your writing style; I will deduct the grade if these axioms are not followed.

**POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO BEGIN YOUR RESPONSE:** You don't have to answer all of these points; these are intended as guidelines to help you begin writing a quality response. A good rule of thumb is if you raise/answer/discuss at least two of these points, and relate them to the readings, and answer them, in your own critique, you are doing well.

- **You should raise at least two of the following questions/discussion points about the readings:**

- \*Something that puzzles you, something that bothers you, something you did not understand, or something you think you see at work in—or contradicted by—current events.**

- \* In what ways does the reading inform us about the future of media?**

**\*What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of the text?**

- Other “sub” questions to ask related to the main point of the chapter include:

What is the main problem or issue that the author is addressing?

What assumptions does the author make?

What evidence does the author present?

What are possible counterarguments to the text’s claims?

Why problem(s) and argument(s) are interesting or important?

“So what?” One way to approach this is to describe the main point of the text and then ask, so what? Why do we care? What do we learn from this? Why is this important as media professionals beginning to enter the field? Is it relevant today?

## **Module 1 – Demographics and Storytelling**

### **Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, January 30th**

Media Matters – Demographics and Storytelling

Read Chapter 1 in Wilson II, C. C., Gutiérrez, F., & Chao, L. (2013). *Racism, sexism, and the media: Multicultural Issues into the New Communications Age*, Sage, 4th edition.

1. Upload a two page reading response. See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

### **Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, February 6th**

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapter 1. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?
- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could’ve been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?

## **Module 2 “Other and Alternative Media”**

### **Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, February 13th**

Reading: Chapters 3 and 11– Disparaging the “Other” and Alternative Media

1. **Upload a two page reading response.** See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

### **Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, February 20th**

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapters 3 and 11. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?
- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could’ve been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?

## **Module 3 Racism and Sexism in American Entertainment**

### **Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, February 27th**

Reading: Chapters 4 and 5 – “Bamboozling” Stereotypes through the 20 Century and Race, Culture, and Gender in the New Media Age

**Upload a two page reading response.** See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

### **Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, March 6th**

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapters 4 and 5. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?

- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could've been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?

## **Module 4 Racism and Sexism in Public Communications**

### **Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, March 20th**

Reading: Chapters 6– The Press Whose (News) Media is it?

**Upload a two page reading response.** See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

### **Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, March 27th**

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapter 6. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?
- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could've been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?

## **Module 5 Marketing and PR**

### **Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, April 3rd**

Reading: Chapters 7 and 8 – Marketing and Advertising: The Media's Not So-Silent Partners and Public Relations: An Opportunity to Influence Media

**Upload a two page reading response.** See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

## Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, April 10th

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapters 7 and 8. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?
- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could've been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?

## Module 6 Overcoming Race and Gender Insecurity in Media

### Part One –Critical Analysis DUE by Midnight Monday, April 17th

Reading: Chapters 9 and 10 – Advocacy: Keeping their Feet to the Fire and Access: Equitable Hiring Principles Elude Media Employers

**Upload a two page reading response.** See suggestions within this syllabus reading response guidelines.

## Part Two–Digital Storytelling DUE by Midnight Monday, April 24th

**In a word document, submit two news related article links** that are related to what is discussed in chapters 9 and 10. Discuss within this document the following in terms of the two links you include:

- Who was included as sources within the stories? Who was left out?
- How did the headline, caption, images, hashtags, etc., all work together to tell the stories?
- How did you find your stories?
- How did you see the story assembled and shared as part of the digital age? Conduct a google search and see where the stories appear and look within the web sites you found your stories: how were your stories promoted online? What was done well and what could've been done better?
- Do you feel your stories are inclusive of the communities in which they are covering? How could they be more inclusive in terms of how the story was assembled?



**FINAL – Reminder SUBMIT UNDER “Final Paper” on the Navigation Bar on Blackboard**

**FINAL DUE Monday, May 8, 2017 at 6 PM Central Time**

Examining what you have learned in this course, please write a *five page* response to one or more sections of *Diversity that Works*.

Please note in your response ethics and what those reporting digitally you should think about in terms of digital storytelling practices: **finding the story, assembling the story, and sharing the story digitally.**

o You may find the book *Diversity that Works* at the following link:

<http://www.mediadiversityforum.lsu.edu/diversity-that-works.pdf>

o For more information on Diversity that Works: A web site that continues the goal of this document is the National Media Diversity Forum, <http://www.mediadiversityforum.lsu.edu/>

**Contact me:** As always, please do not hesitate to email, text, or call me: 502-500-8472 and email [victoria.lapoe@wku.edu](mailto:victoria.lapoe@wku.edu)