

MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION & STORYTELLING

AR240 (TC) | FALL 2014

About the Course

When: Wednesday 6-9 p.m.
Where: Spiro Mac Lab

Professor: Anna Mulé
Office: Reynolds House, 3rd floor
Office hours: By appointment —I work on campus, so just email me first
Contact: anna.mule@wagner.edu (best)
718 420 4468
[@mulemedia](#)

Texts & Equipment

Required: Around-ear headphones
External harddrive, at least 100GB
Additional PDFs & links on course blog: faculty.wagner.edu/storytelling

Suggested: *The Online Journalism Handbook*, Bradshaw & Rohumaa

Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling, Kenneth Kobre

If interested in building your own multimedia kit, please talk to me.

There are six multimedia kits available from the Art Dept. You may check them out for one day at a time. Kits include video camera, microphone, tripod, and accessories. Check out procedure details are posted on the course website.

Course Description & Expectations

For many hours every day, we consume multimedia content. From radio shows to Twitter feeds, Tumblr posts, YouTube videos, digital advertising, and TV shows, our lives are saturated with digital information. We repost and retweet, forward and like. But do you know how to actually create that content? We consume and respond without thinking critically about the impact of this media and without taking the time and care to produce it ourselves. That's about to change. This bootcamp is all about understanding and producing that multimedia content. You'll get on the other side of the video camera and learn to shoot your own frames and edit your own stories. You'll learn how to take complicated interviews and ideas and produce a piece that is publicly accessible.

Of course, first you'll need a platform to publish your work. We'll start the course with an introduction to WordPress and creating your own website portfolio. Then we'll move into audio, photography, videography, and editing. We'll also discuss how to conduct a great interview and interpret interview themes, examine methods and shapes of storytelling, the implications of representing another person or community, and the impact of your own presence on the people and places within your frame.

This course moves quickly and your active attendance and participation is required. The first weeks of class time will focus on lecture and class discussion, but as the course progresses, class time will be used for critiquing one another's work. Instead of turning in papers, you will publish entries and comments on your website. Multimedia pieces will be uploaded to Vimeo or YouTube and embedded on your site. The final will be a showcase of class projects—a movie premiere of sorts—open to the campus community.

Course Policies

Attendance & participation

Class participation is essential in this class. You are allowed one unexcused absence; beyond that, your participation grade will slide by a letter point for each class you miss unexcused. Being more than 20 min. late or leaving early constitutes a missed class. If you miss more than three classes, you risk failing the course. Participating in class means actively contributing to class discussions, turning in assignments on time, and engaging in class material both online and in class.

Grading Criteria

Specific grading rubrics for each project will be distributed along with assignment details, but in general, I grade on 1) correct completion of assignment, 2) technical proficiency, 3) storyline, 4) reflection.

Class participation	15%
Website & posts	20%
Audio newscast	10%
Photo work	10%
How-to video	10%
Promo video	15%
Feature video (final project)	20%

All assignments are due at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, unless otherwise noted. The grade for late assignments will be lowered a letter grade for each day late. You should contact me if a family emergency arises or if you need extra time. It is better to communicate about what is happening, then to turn in an assignment late with no explanation. Requests for extra time must be submitted for consideration by Monday at 5 p.m. for that week's assignments.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and I expect you to follow the Wagner College Student Honor Code. If I'm concerned that you have acted dishonestly with your academic work, I will turn the case over to the Academic Honesty Committee for investigation. Read the student honor code and the policies of the AHC at wagner.edu/academics/provost/committees/ahc. If you have questions about these guidelines, just ask.

Accommodations

If you have a disability needing special accommodations, contact me and/or Dina Assante in the Center for Academic and Career Engagement at 390-3278.

If you have privacy concerns with posting course material online, please speak to me.

About Professor Anna Mulé

Here at Wagner College, I am the director of digital marketing in the Office of Communications and Marketing. I curate the Wagner website, meaning I oversee the information architecture, site design, content, and user experience. I also work with faculty to develop research and class sites, and work with students on the HawkTalk blog. I manage Wagner's social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Flickr. Lastly, I photograph activities and portraits on campus and produce multimedia stories about the College.

Outside of Wagner College, I freelance as "Media Folk: Community-Based Media & Training" (mediafolk.org), working with community-centered non-profits to create and improve their websites, producing multimedia pieces about traditional artists and musicians, and documenting traditional communities and art forms.

I studied music at Wheaton College, and have a dual masters in Folklore/Ethnomusicology and Journalism from Indiana University. I've worked and traveled around the world — a photojournalist for a national newspaper in Uganda, an urban non-profit in Vietnam, Traditional Arts Indiana and the Archives of Traditional Music, StoryCorps, the Brooklyn Arts Council, and so on. I've made a lot of great connections and am happy to share if you are looking for internships or professional opportunities.

Course Schedule & Assignments

— WEBSITES —

Aug 27

TOPIC: Course intro, student intros with photos; set up websites, video platform, social media; using the web professionally (online reputation management).

ASSIGNMENTS (due Sept 3)*:

- 1) Customize your website — must have “about” page with the three photos from your introduction, a clear goal, and two categories set up: “production” and “reflection.”
- 2) Set up your YouTube/Vimeo and social media account (TBD in class).
- 3) Read “Understanding Multimedia” by V. Costello. Then on your website, write a three paragraph reflection to the reading: how do you interact with multimedia? What changes have you seen over your lifetime?

Sept 3

TOPIC: Websites part II — examining the elements of a website; how to customize your site with graphics and multimedia. Basic intro to HTML. Intro to story genres and how to find a good story.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Sept 10):

- 1) Sign up for an account at codeacademy.com, then go to bit.ly/wagner-code and complete the “About You” lesson. Email proof to Prof. Mulé.
- 2) Read “Interface Design and Usability” by Q. Xu (V. Costello) and “Telling Stories” by K. Kobre.
- 3) On your website post an audit of multimedia content you consume in one day.

If you're interested: Explore alistapart.com, smashingmagazine.com.

— AUDIO —

Sept 10

TOPIC: All about audio. Why use different mics? What goes into good audio? Intro to listening and micing techniques (also, how to wrap a cable).

ASSIGNMENTS (due Sept 17):

- 1) Transcribe a podcast from Third Coast International Shortdocs; write three things you like and three you don't — post all this on your blog. See details on faculty.wagner.edu/storytelling/category/assignments.
- 2) Go to an event as a reporter and record three types of audio: a short interview with someone at the event (use the wireless lav), targeted environmental sound (use the shotgun/boom), and general ambiance (use camera mic). Details on course website.
- 3) Read “The Digital Reporter’s Notebook” p 39-68.
- 4) Read lib guide on copyright and fair use and come to class next week ready to discuss it.

If you're interested: Listen to great podcasts like This American Life, Third Coast International Audio Festival, Radio Lab, transom.org.

**More details on each of these assignments will be given in class and online and are subject to change with due notification.*

Sept 17

TOPIC: Guest Dorothy Davison on copyright and fair use. Intro to audio production — storyboarding, workflow, audio levels, multitrack, adding music, voiceovers, normalizing, etc. Quiz on mic types and wrapping cable.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Sept 24):

- 1) Produce the audio from your event into a nice little story. Use narration and music only as needed (please don't smother your beautiful recordings), like an intro and an outro.
- 2) Post the final audio file and a brief reflection on your blog.
- 3) Post a podcast or vodcast that you find interesting on SM — why do you like it?

— PHOTOGRAPHY —

Sept 24

TOPIC: Audio masterclass. Intro to photography — exposure and composition.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Oct 1):

- 1) Photo hunt — post best photo from each category on your blog.
- 2) Photo story — make five images that tell a story.
- 3) Reading TBD.

If you're interested: Check out strobist.com, nppa.org. Watch "The Bang Bang Club."

Oct 1

TOPIC: Photo editing and management. Interview techniques.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Oct 8):

- 1) Edit and tone five photos using Photoshop — post "before" and "after" on your blog.
- 2) Create and post an animated GIF from a stop-motion series.
- 3) Explore photography portfolio websites and post your favorite on SM — what makes those images compelling?

— VIDEO —

Oct 8

TOPIC: Hands-on with video cameras — learning iris, focus, lighting 101, etc.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Oct 15):

- 1) Shoot a how-to video with your group. Include short interview, b-roll, close-ups, etc. Make sure you bring all your footage to class next week.
- 2) Post a how-to video that you find compelling on SM. What do you like about it?
- 3) Reading TBD.

If you're interested: Check out filmmakermagazine.com, dslrvideoshooter.com, vimeo.com/videoschool.

Oct 15

TOPIC: Intro to iMovie. Production workshop with how-to videos. Adding titles and transitions, managing files.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Oct 22):

- 1) Post final how-to video on your blog with a brief reflection.
- 2) Have an idea for a promotional piece. Write it up in a short blog post. Make any contacts needed.
- 3) On SM, post two examples of promotional video stories that you like.

— POST PRODUCTION —

Oct 22

TOPIC: Video masterclass and story workshop. Crafting your story effectively and ethically. Advanced lighting and shooting on the move.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Oct 29):

- 1) Shoot interview and b-roll for your promo piece.
- 2) Reading TBD.

Oct 29

TOPIC: Video masterclass. Advanced production skills, including storyboarding, graphics, etc. Other ways to tell digital stories (maps, graphs, web, etc).

ASSIGNMENTS (due Nov 5):

- 1) Produce rough draft of your promo piece and bring it to class next week.
- 2) Start planning for your final feature video. This will be a 3-5 min piece of your choice of genre and topic, and it should pull in concepts from English 230. It can be fictional. It can be documentary. You can (and should) help each other, but ultimately everyone is responsible for a unique piece. I encourage you to get off campus. The important thing here is a compelling story that is shot and produced professionally. So start making contacts. Spend 4 or 5 hours at the primary location. Talk to people, get a sense of lighting and layout, research your topic, come up with a plan. Post your general plan and storyboard on the blog.

Nov 5

TOPIC: Video masterclass. Class discussion on feature pieces. Guest speaker: Using social media in professional life (Barbara Bellisi).

ASSIGNMENTS (due Nov 12):

- 1) Finalize promo piece and post on your blog along with a reflection.
- 2) Shoot primary footage and start on the b-roll for your feature video.
- 3) Post two short feature videos on SM and explain why you like them.

Nov 12

TOPIC: Production workshop. The business of storytelling.

ASSIGNMENTS (due Dec 10):

1) Finish shooting your footage and edit the video. The final video is due on Dec 10. You're on your own at this point, but use your classmates and me for work-in-progress feedback. Work in your groups to critique yourselves. Bring a draft to my office if you'd like.

Nov 19

TOPIC: Individual meetings with Prof. Mulé.

Nov 26: Thanksgiving break

Dec 10

Roll out the red carpet! The final is a premiere of your feature video. Location TBD.