INFO 5442 | Digital Storytelling
Course Syllabus

Dr. Tonda Bone

"Those who tell the stories rule the world."
~ Hopi American Indian proverb

Hi, everyone, and welcome to the course! My name is Dr. Tonda Bone, but you'll see me refer to myself as Dr. T. Feel free to do the same! I am thrilled you have elected to take this course. The focus of the course is to introduce you to digital storytelling and its production in order to use this tool to enhance communication, teaching and learning, and information sharing.

Course Description

We live storied lives. We remember in story, and we communicate in story. Digital storytelling is a method of combining images, text, music, and the spoken word to create a story presentation that supports teaching, learning, self-expression, marketing, and other communication and community-building objectives. In this course, students will study storytelling tenets and will apply the developmental and technical aspects of creating a digital storytelling presentation. Students will explore theoretical and empirical literature supporting digital storytelling projects and strategies for information seeking and sharing, and they will demonstrate practical approaches for creating digital storytelling projects, for using digital storytelling for classroom projects, and for leading digital storytelling workshops for community-building events.

Pre-Requisites

There are no pre-requisites to take this course.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the psychological impact of communicating through story sharing and story telling.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the origins and structure of digital storytelling.
- Describe methods for using digital storytelling for specific audiences and purposes.
- Employ storyboarding techniques to frame digital storytelling projects.
- Demonstrate basic proficiency with media tools required to create a digital story file.
- Demonstrate an understanding of choosing media (images, video clips, music, and text) for digital storytelling projects.
- Describe important copyright considerations, including use of Creative Commons licensing.
- Create and publish a digital storytelling project focused on a specific learning, informational, or persuasive objective.
- Demonstrate an understanding of reflective techniques to support learning.

Course Overview

The primary focus in this course is on how we can use story and storytelling tenets in combination with digital media to create effective digital storytelling productions to achieve specific goals and objectives. We consider this from 2 primary angles:

1. Storytelling as a mode of communication, learning, and information sharing, and
2. Hands-on application of best practices in creating digital storytelling objects.

The course is structured along a framework for creating a digital storytelling project, but each module also focuses on a theoretical and/or practical aspect of storytelling and digital storytelling application. In addition to weekly discussion and participation, assignments are centered upon developing and implementing a digital storytelling project. You will select the audience and goal for the digital storytelling production you develop; your project may be focused on a classroom learning objective, information sharing, persuastion, etc. The only stipulation is that the project have a concrete goal and objective -- the digital storytelling project cannot merely be creative for entertainment purposes. I urge you to begin thinking about this soon!

Professor Information

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Dr. T's Accessibility and Responsiveness Parameters:

I think you will find me highly accessible and responsive to you in both discussion and via email. Please use the discussion boards as much as possible for questions and problem solving so that I and your peers can all deliver assistance. Please also use discretion with email and consult with me as needed for real problems you cannot otherwise solve via assistance in the boards. For example, assignment-related questions should go in the Assignment/Peer Help forum; questions about your specific grade should be directed to me privately via course messaging.

I generally will be actively in the class every day Monday - Friday. I generally will take off all day on Saturday and Sunday, so if you have questions about assignments, please catch me during business days. For rare occasions that I am away at a conference or doing consulting, I will post messages to the class.

To ensure same-day response to questions, please post them before 5 pm Central Time.

Course Access

This course instructional content is presented online via Canvas learning management system technology. The course begins the first official day of classes in the semesters in which it is offered. Registered students will be uploaded into the student database and can access the course using their UNT EUID and password beginning on the first day.

If this is your first Canvas course, you may find the Canvas Student Guides to be a helpful "got to" resource.

Course Requirements

Overview:

You'll create a 2-4 minute digital story presentation that is a personal story (based upon a personal narrative/experience), a story designed to inform or instruct, or a story that examines a historical or current event. Major production steps of the process (story crafting, storyboard boarding, and publishing) will be accompanied by a written narrative reflecting on the process.

You also will review and respond to each other's published digital storytelling project using a coaching framework.

As well, you will respond to weekly discussion topics related to, for example, theory, practical application, implementation, and self-reflection.

Assignments are designed for theory, design, and application.

Grading is on a point scale based upon a goal of 100 points. Thus, the point value for each assignment/task also represents its percentage of your total grade.

Assignments:

Assignment	Points Possible
Story Script Assignment	10
Scripting Narrative Assignment	10
Storyboard Assignment	10
Digital Storytelling Project File Assignment	15
Peer Digital Story Response Assignment	10
Participation --8 Discussion Forums @ 5 points each	40
Special Discussion Post: Digital Story Focus	5
Total Possible Points:	**100**

Course Evaluation Scale

A = 90 - 100 points

B = 80 - 85 points

C = 70 - 79 points

D = 60 - 69 points

F = 59 points or below

Required Texts

Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community. Lambert, Joe. 2018. 5th Edition. NY: Routledge. Paperback ISBN: 9781138577664. Purchase through the bookstore or directly: https://www.routledge.com/Digital-Storytelling-Capturing-Lives-Creating-Community/Lambert/p/book/9780415627030

Other readings will be provided in the course or via the UNT Library's electronic resources.

Software will be free or trial versions. Student will need to create accounts to download and or use the respective software.

Required Course Technology

The course is offered via the Canvas platform, but we also utilize other social media and Web 2.0 technologies as described below.

Reliable Internet access is required. Please do NOT take this course if you do not have access to reliable high-speed Internet in order to perform your stories and watch related videos.

Other specifications:

1. **Hardware**. Your system's hardware must support Canvas. See the Canvas Technical Requirements page to evaluate your system.

2. **Streaming media player**. The majority of videos in this course are streamed, but you may need to download a media player for the occasional file. I suggest the VLC media player by VideoLAN.

3. **Speakers**. Obviously, you also will need speakers in order to hear audio.

4. **Microphone**. You will need a microphone to record your storytelling performances and other audio files. **Please note**: Occasionally, integrated microphones (i.e., built into the laptop) pick up so much of the computer's internal noise that the quality of the audio is not acceptable for your presentation. In those cases, you may need to borrow or purchase an external microphone.

5. **Digital camera (optional)**. Depending upon your approach to your project, you MAY need a digital camera/recorder to create images and/or video clips to use in your digital storytelling production. The camera/recorder on a smart phone generally provides sufficient quality.

6. **Other software**. We use various technologies and software applications in the course (YouTube, wikis, etc.). You will not be required to purchase software, but you may need to create an account with the provider in order to use the software and participate in the course.

Technical Skill Requirements

Students should possess general computer skills, including how to download and move files, including graphic and audio files.

Technical Support

Student Helpdesk:

> UIT Helpdesk
> Sage Hall, Room 130
> 940-565-2324
> helpdesk@unt.edu

Course Participation Policy & Expectations

This is an online class, not a self-paced course. Assignments and discussion have due dates to which students must adhere. The entire course is available to you, and you are free to work ahead. However, discussion and other collaborative work in the class must follow the due dates listed on the course calendar in order to maintain the class flow.

Participation occurs through your discussion posts and other activities submitted via the discussion forums. Work should emphasize content and the student's assimilation of knowledge; thus, discussion posts, written assignments, and other projects/tasks should be substantive, and statements and arguments should be supported by examples and/or relevent citations. Feedback will be provided to help the student recognize strengths and improve any weaker areas.

Discussion activities require frequent and timely interaction on your part. Students are required to visit the class on a regular basis to read and respond to communications, course material, and course activities/assignments.

Course business is conducted through the Main discussion forum. You are required to read this forum regularly to keep aprised of changes and additional information related to the course, its structure, and its operation.

I foster a course culture of support, mentorship, and collaboration. I provide several areas in the forums where you can share course-related and professional information, as well having social interaction and sharing. These forums are strictly optional.

Student Information Notification

Blackboard enables faculty to track where and when students visit various areas of the course site, times of first and last logins, and number of conference postings. This information is used, in part, in determining the participation grade for the course.

"Attendance"

The instructor reserves the right to request of the Registrar that a student be dropped from the course (W or WF) due to unsatisfactory progress. All students are expected to fully pariticpate in all class activities. Full participation includes web-based activities.

Information about the University of North Texas' Attendance Policy may be found here.

Late Work Policy

All work is due at Midnight, Central time, on the date stated on the course calendar. Late work may be excused and accepted only by prior arrangement with the instructor or in the case of a documented illness or emergency. Any other late work receives an automatic 11% deduction for each 24 hours late. No unexcused work will be accepted after 48 hours past the original due date.

Students are advised that it is better to submit partial work for some credit rather than submitting nothing. Please plan accordingly.

Incomplete Grades

The Graduate Catalog located at http://www.unt.edu/catalogs/ describes and explains grading policies. A grade of Incomplete (I) will be given only for a justifiable reason and only if the student is passing the course. The student is responsible for contacting the instructor to request an incomplete and discuss requirements for completing the course if an approval is agreed upon. If an incomplete is not removed within the time frame agreed upon by instructor and student, the instructor may assign a grade of F.

Withdrawal from the Course

The Graduate Catalog located at http://www.unt.edu/catalogs/ describes and explains withdrawal policies and deadlines. The UNT semester course schedule lists specific deadlines. A grade of Withdraw (W) or Withdraw-Failing (WF) will be given depending on a student's participation and grades to date. Please note that a student who simply stops participating and does not file a UNT withdrawal form may receive an F.

Effort Expected

This is a three-credit-hour course. Students can expect to work 3 - 4 hours per week for each credit hour. This means students may spend about 9 - 12 hours a week on readings, assignments, discussions, and assignment preparation.

Netiquette

I foster a collaborative and supportive environment in this course. And, this is a professionaly oriented course. I welcome all viewpoints on the course material and the course structure as long as those thoughts and comments are presented thoughtfully and constructively. Participants are expected to treat each other with professional and friendly courtesy.

Policies

UNT takes a strong stance against plagiariasm and holds its students to high standards of ethics.

Academic Integrity

Plagiariasm offenses can result in immediate course failure and/or removal from the University. Please review the UNT's plagiarism policy: https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/academic-integrity

ADA Information

Any student with a disability that will require accommodation under the terms of federal regulations should register with the Office of Disability Accommodation. The student also must let the instructor know of accommodations on the first day of class and present a written accommodations request to the instructor by the second week of class. Information concerning specific accommodations to provide equal opportunities is available from the Office of Disability Accommodation.

Dr. T's Philosophy of Hope for Good Work by All

I will give you 100% of my best as your teacher and will incorporate into my work in this class all that I ask of you: Be who you are. Do your best. Use good judgment. Trust your instincts. Participate fairly. Help others. Be kind and generous in thought and deed. Give credit where credit is due. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

Course Content

Module 1 | Introduction to the Course

"Story is the vehicle we use to make sense of our lives in a world that often defies logic." ~ Jim Trelease

In Module 1, you consider the goals and objectives of the course, how you'll meet those objectives, what you can achieve with your new knowledge, and how you can apply digital storytelling in your personal and professional life. You'll also be introduced to differences in storytelling and digital storytelling, including key definitions and concepts.

Assignments:

Discussion post

Module 2 | Storytelling

"Those who tell the stories rule the world." ~ Hopi American Indian proverb

In Module 2, you explore the storytelling tradition, the role of story in our psyches, and the fundamental elements of a good story. You also will be introduced to the primary components and tasks of a digital storytelling project, including copyright and ethical considerations.

Assignments:

Discussion post

Module 3 | Finding Your Story

"There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories." ~ Ursula K. LeGuin

In Module 3, the focus is on developing a story for a digital storytelling project. You'll review digital storytelling examples across a range of contexts and explore methods for "discovering" and creating a story.

Assignments:

Discussion post

Module 4 | Digital Storytelling in Teaching and Learning

"Emotions have to be aroused. The more you wonder what will happen next, the more you pay attention. And the more attention you pay, the more you hear, notice, and retain." ~ Peter Gruber, *Tell to Win*, p. 30

In module 4, we consider the use of digital storytelling to support teaching and learning, such as using a digital story to present a lesson and using a digital storytelling project as an in-class learning tool. As well, we take a "big picture" view of the creative and technical aspects of putting together any digital storytelling project file.

Assignments:

Discussion post

Module 5 | Leading a Digital Storytelling Workshop

"If you're going to pass on ideas and influence people, you have to be able to tell a story." ~ Michael Wesch, in Peter Gruber's *Tell to Win*, p. 46

In Module 5, we consider theoretical objectives and practical logistics involved in developing and leading a digital storytelling workshop. We also consider approaches for presenting workshops geared toward specific groups (e.g., youth, the critically ill) and objectives (e.g., awareness, instruction).

Assignments:

- Discussion post
- Special Discussion Post: Digital Story Contract

Module 6 | Story and Scripting

"Experience is the best teacher. A compelling story is a close second." ~ Paul Smith, *Lead with a Story*, p. 2

In Module 6, you will explore and demonstrate the steps in developing and writing the script for your digital storytelling project. This will include elements such as introduction, character development, tension, and resolution.

Assignments:

- Story Script
- Story Crafting Narrative

Module 7 | Storyboarding Your Story

"Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it". ~ Hannah Arendt

In Modules 7 & 8, you'll learn how to create a storyboard to help frame your digital story. You'll consider the impact of selecting appropriate images and of creating meaningful text as part of your project. In addition, you'll consider methods for choosing images such as taking your own digital photos; using software to create graphs, images, and text; and finding and downloading images from the web using size, type, quality, and usage rights parameters.

Assignments:

- Discussion post

Module 8 | Storyboarding 2

Stories help people "know me, trust me, like me and support me in some way -- maybe directly as a customer or indirectly as an advocate." ~ Marcus Sheridan

Module 8 continues your Storyboarding and framing work for your digital storytelling project.

Assignments:

- Storyboard

Module 9 | Voice and Audio

"The process of putting your life into order with a beginning, middle, and end forces you to see cause and effect." ~ Catherine Burns, *The Moth*

In Module 9, we'll consider how to add your voice to your digital story. You'll learn how to use common features of audio recording software to create narrative for your project. You'll also learn basic methods to improve its quality using editing tools. You'll also discover how to find and download appropriate music that is in the public domain or is free of copyright restrictions.

Assignments:

- Discussion post

Module 10 | Build and Publish Your Digital File

"Tell me a fact and I'll learn. Tell me a truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever." ~ Native American proverb

In Module 10, you'll learn to use WeVideo to assemble all of the elements (narration, images, text, and music) to create and publish the full version of your digital storytelling project. As well, you'll explore basic editing techniques to improve your digital story file so that all of your components fit together to create a pleasing digital storytelling project.

Assignments:

- Discussion post (Ungraded - for project questions)
- Digital Story Project File

Module 11 | Review and Edit

"Long before I wrote stories, I listened for stories. Listening for them is something more acute than listening to them. I suppose it's an early form of participation in what goes on. Listening children know stories are there. When their elders sit and begin, children are just waiting and hoping for one to come out, like a mouse from its hole. ~ Eudora Welty, "One Writer's Beginnings"

In Module 11, you'll watch your peers' digital stories. You'll consider how storytelling coaching can be used

to help people develop and express an idea through story, and you'll demonstrate this by applying a storytelling coaching framework review to the digital stories created in the class. You also will apply this framework to your own story to help you consider revisions.

Assignments:

- Peer Digital Story Response

Module 12 | Reflect

"Stories are the only enchantment possible, for when we begin to see our suffering as a story, we are saved."
~ Anaïs Nin

Module 12 is all about reflection. You'll discuss how your digital story reflects what you now know about digital storytelling, and you'll consider how you could apply digital storytelling in your work, your professional life, or in your personal life. You'll reflect on the digital storytelling process and on challenges you faced during the process, how you dealt with those challenges, and the most significant things you learned during the course.

Assignments:

- Discussion post