

COURSE SYLLABUS

Video Storytelling

Course code: JRN 255 Term and year: Spring 2024 Day and time: Wednesday, February 2nd (Friday) – Wednesday, May 22nd | 14:45 – 17:30 Instructor: MA Björn Steinz Instructor contact: bjorn.steinz@aauni.edu Consultation hours: By appointment online or on Wednesday 17:30 - 18:00

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Intermediate
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	TOEFL iBT 71
Contact hours	42 hours		Elective: HSC el, PS el, JC req/el, CEA

1. Course Description

his introduction to reporting for electronic media incorporates weekly lectures, analysis of broadcast reporting and documentary production, both current and past, and, through practical exercises in electronic news gathering, students will learn the basic concepts of visual journalism. Because the course focuses on independent media production and there is a limited amount of equipment to borrow from the department, students are advised to use their own DSLR, video camera and MacBooks or PCs for editing your videos. This course is designed for working with DSLR cameras and the use of smart phones is not permitted.

Working in groups, we will produce a series of video exercises culminating in a short Final Project at the end of the semester, incorporating everything we've covered about finding, researching and reporting a story, gathering elements that may include documentation, archival material, interviews, sound and field footage. Technical considerations, such as lighting, composition, focus, audio, editing, and post-production enhancements, and formatting issues will be covered on the surface and every student is expected to educate him/herself with the help of the textbook and online video tutorials in depth.

The final project of this course will be a min. 4 min film piece related to a non-fiction and journalistic format. Examples from previous semesters here: <u>https://vimeo.com/showcase/10848957</u>

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop a shooting script that effectively incorporates visual storytelling techniques and sound/audio elements that add dimension and enhance the overall reporting of the story.
- Demonstrate proficiency in shooting and editing field footage into a form that is suitable for webcasting or other digital media platforms.

- Plan, research, report, record, and edit a short news story for broadcast that effectively utilizes visual storytelling and audio elements to convey the story's message and impact.
- Comprehend and articulate the principles and best practices of independent newsgathering for various media platforms.
- Analyze and evaluate news broadcasts and non-fiction films in terms of their form, content, style, and impact on the audience
- Create high-quality visual and audio elements that are necessary for effective visual storytelling, including framing, lighting, sound recording, and editing.
- Understand the ethical side of reporting, including the importance of accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and accountability in journalism

3. Reading Material

Required Materials

- Kobre, Kenneth Videojournalism: Multimedia Storytelling
- Taylor and Francis, 2012, Waltham, MA

Copies are available in the AAU Library for you to use during the semester.

Recommended Materials

- DSLR / Mirrorless camera which can record video and sound
- External microphone or audio recorder
- Laptop computer with video editing software (Davinci Resolve available for free download online, IMOVIE, Adobe Premiere etc.)

Videos - Recommended viewing:

- Field of Vision In the Absence
- Notes From Aleppo
- Living on Scrap on
- Standard Operating Procedure
- The Fight for Amazonia
- Scenes From a Dry City
- Five Broken Cameras
- Marielle and Monica
- God Grew Tired of Us
- Exit Through the Gift Shop
- <u>https://www.worldpressphoto.org/collection/storytelling/2017/29069/2017-Claressa</u>

Students should also keep up with current events and news in general. For further inspiration and to see professional work please view the New York Times & The Guardian video reports, along with those of Al Jazeera English, Der Spiegel and Der Stern and others. For Czech news: <u>https://english.radio.cz</u>, <u>https://praguemonitor.com</u>.

4. Teaching methodology

The class will be informal and interactive. Students will learn by doing. Their work will be discussed and critiqued in class by the instructor and by the students themselves. The instructor will also provide feedback to students individually about their work.

As part of a news team, students will work in groups to develop story ideas for segments to be part of the final report to air late in the semester. Students will pitch their ideas to the group and discuss how they can be effectively reported, researched, and written. The stories will be critiqued in class, and often the reporters will be asked to acquire more information or to do re-editing. As journalists, students will be expected to keep up with the news. Exercises will also acquaint students with common technical concerns and journalistic issues and problems to be worked out.

Date	Class Agenda
Class 1, Friday, February 2nd	Topic: Telling stories with video. Description: Meeting the pre-reqs for the course. Introduction to the course – review the syllabus, go over textbook needed and other resources. Discuss main structure and goals for the class. Review equipment needed for the next class: DSLR, Cord to download to
	computer, Headphones/ear buds, (tripod, external mic if available) editing software. Equipment available to check out from the library. Discuss possible subjects for final group projects.
	Reading: Read Ch 1 <i>Telling Stories</i> & Ch 5 <i>Camera Basics</i> - Kobre/ Videojournalism
	Assignments/deadlines: Due 07/02 Analyze the following video story (links to video can be found in NEO), Discuss: Length min. 1 page
	<u>My life after 44 years in prison.</u> In August 2014, Otis Johnson was released from prison after serving a 44- year sentence for the attempted murder of a police officer. He went to jail when he was 25 years old. By the time he came out, he was 69.
	1. Please analyze this video short using the Kobreguide checklist (download from NEO), Please answer all questions: Length min. 1 page
	Reminder: Bring your DSLR, laptop and other video equipment to class EACH WEEK.

5. Course Schedule

Class 2,	Topic: Interviews/Exposure & Sound
Wednesday, February 7th	 Description: View 'How to conduct an interview' video. Talk about Camera Exposure & Video Sound. Choose teams/groups to work in for projects. In class video assignment.
	Assignments/deadlines: Shooting Assignment#1 Due 14/02 Each group in the class will shoot a one-minute interview of another class member/someone on campus with their DSLR and download the footage to their computer and edit. • Interview in "silent" location • Use a tripod if available • Frame tightly • Leave the camera on auto focus and auto exposure • Download the clips to the computer • Transcribe interview • Edit in Word • Edit in software of your choice • Save the project • We will view and discuss in class.
	Reading: Ch 6 <i>Camera Exposure and Handling</i> & Ch 8 <i>Recording</i> <i>Sound</i> Kobre/Videojournalism
Class 3,	Topic: Finding a story to tell with video/multimedia.
Wednesday, February 14th	Description: Discuss what makes a good story and where to find to find them for your videos.
	Interview assignment due : Review and discuss video assignments from last week.
	Assignments/deadlines: Shooting Assignment #2 - Due 21/02 - Group project - using your DSLR, interview someone - interesting on campus or in town. Download the clip to your computer Type out a transcript of the whole interview (email to me or bring in copy to class next week). Edit in Resolve - 30 sec. short edited interview. Upload online (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc) and send me an invite link to view in class.

Class 4,	Topic: Five shot sequence – building a story using these basic shots.
Wednesday, February 21st	Description: Five basic shots for a sequence, avoiding the zoom and pan, using the tripod. <i>Editing</i> : Review which software you are using, tips, help, questions. Downloading to your computer, organizing your clips into folders for easy editing, the importance of backing up your files.
	Assignments/deadlines:
	Shooting Assignment #3 - Due 28/02 During the second half of the class we will break into groups and shoot a short 5-shot sequence video (45-60 sec.). Edit in class, view and discuss if time allows. Upload and send a link via NEO.
	Reading: Ch 10 Shooting a Sequence Kobre/Videojournalism
Class 5,	Topic: Successful Story Topics + Producing a story.
Wednesday, February 28th	Description: Successful Stories + Producing a Story. Break into working groups for final video project, discuss possible topics/story ideas. Review and discuss Shooting Assignment #3.
	Reading: Ch 2 <i>Finding and Evaluating a Story</i> , Ch 3 <i>Successful story topics</i> & Ch 4.
	Assignments/deadlines:
	Shooting Assignment #4 - Due 06/03 Tell a story on campus (or in town) using the five shot sequence and only candid footage and natural sound. 30 to 45 sec. Use only nat sound NO interviews .
	 Upload online (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc) and send me an invite link to view in class.

Class 6,	Topic: Writing your Script
Wednesday, March 6th	Description: We will discuss chapter 12 and how to put together a script for your video projects. Look at examples from past classes. Review Shooting Assignment #4
	Reading: Ch 12 Writing a Script Kobre/Videojournalism.
	Assignments/deadlines:
	Shooting Assignment #4 Due : Candid footage and sound story. View videos and discuss.
	Shooting Assignment #5 - Due 13/03 - 45 sec – 1min video report shot with your DSLR, edited with software of your choice. Include both A roll (interview) and B roll (candid footage). Use the five shot sequence and include an interview.
	 Upload online (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc) and send me an invite link to view in class.
	Reading: Ch 11 Conducting an Interview Kobre/Videojournalism
Class 7, Wednesday,	Topic: Conducting an Interview. Importance of Vox pop (Man on the Street MOS) field interviews.
March 13th	Description: Conducting an interview & adding Vox Pop interviews to your story. The importance of using the native language of respondents with translated subtitles - not just English - to give a sense of place and culture. Look at some Vox Pop examples.
	Assignments/deadlines:
	Shooting assignment #5 Due . View and discuss in class. Final video project research and shooting.
	 Shooting Assignment#6 - 20/03 - Group project. Produce a short, well edited 45 sec - 1 min Vox pop interview from the streets of Prague. Upload online (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc) and send me an invite link to view in class.

Class 8,	Topic: Editing the story - Final project meetings.
Wednesday, March 20th	Description: Critique of Final Project progress - meet with teams.
	Reading: Ch 13 Editing the Story Kobre/Videojournalism.
	Assignments/deadlines:
	Shooting Assignment #6 DUE - 03/04. View and discuss.
	Begin rough draft of your Final Project script.
Wednesday, March 27th	NO CLASS // Midterm BREAK
Class 9, Wednesday, April 3rd	Topic: Ethics. Story editing: Transitions – audio and video, computer-generated titles, subtitles for non-English speaking interviewees and their importance.
	Description: Class time (workshop) for final video project work review
	 Reading: Ch 14 Ethics Kobre/Videojournalism. Assignments/deadlines: Assignment#7: Final Video Project Script Due, Final video project research and shooting. Assignment#7: (Due 10/04) First rough cuts of Final Projects and Scripts for next week - screened. Discussion, critique. Class time for final project
	work/review.
Class 10, Wednesday, April 10th	Topic: Rough cuts of Final Projects and Scripts due - screened. Discussion, critique. Class time for final project work/review. Review and discuss Shooting Assignment#7.
	Assignments/deadlines: Final video project research and shooting. Assignment#8 (Due 17/04): Second rough cuts of Final Projects and Scripts due - screened. Discussion, critique.

Class 11, Wednesday, April 17th	Topic: Marketing your story. Description: Outlets to market your stories. Writing pitches to editors. Review and critique of Final Project progress. Class time for final project work/review. Review and discuss Shooting Assignment #8. Reading: Ch 16 Marketing a Story Kobre/Videojournalism. Assignments#9/deadlines (Due 24/04): Final video project research and shooting.
Class 12, Wednesday, April 24th	 Topic: New Media/The Future of Visual Journalism. Description: Independent Journalism. Working Freelance. Review and critique of Final video project progress. Class time (workshop) for final project work/review. Assignments#10/deadlines (Due 15/05): Final video project research and shooting.
Wednesday, May 1st	NO CLASS // State Holiday
Wednesday, May 8th	NO CLASS // State Holiday
Class 13, Wednesday, May 15th	 Topic: Review and critique of Final Project progress – rough/final cut. Description: Class time for final video project work/review. (final workshop) Assignments/deadlines: Final video project research and shooting. Final Video Rough Cut Due – view and discuss in class FINAL VIDEO PROJECT DUE (Due 17/05): Make sure to bring a copy of the file to class to turn in to me.
Class 14, Friday, May 17th	 Topic: Screening of the final film Review and critique of Final Project Description: Class time for final video project review. Assignments/deadlines: Final video project research and shooting. Final Video Rough Cut Due – view and discuss in class FINAL VIDEO PROJECT DUE (Due 17/05): Make sure to bring a copy of the file to class to turn in to me.

Assignment	Workload (hours)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	20%	Actively joining in class assignments, discussion, debate and analysis, asking questions and expressing opinions about material and issues covered. Contributing to the Instagram feed with a thematically 3 image edit showcasing work in progress (at least once).	
Photographic & Written Assignments	35	35%	Proper research and context is critical to good reporting, which is the basis of broadcast news worth airing. Preparation pre-production is essential. There will be 10 assignments and each is 5% of the assignment grade.	1, 2, 3
Final Photo journalistic Essay Book	50	35%	Working to develop a telling and cohesive visual story, editing and writing for effective impact.	2, 3
Final Exam	23	10%	Analytical paper related to a photojournalistic topic	1, 2
TOTAL	150	100%		

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Attendance and class participation

Assessed area	Percentage
Attending class each week	50%
Contributing your own ideas, thoughts and questions and discussing	30%
with classmates during class	
Completing the in class exercises in the allotted timeframe and applying	20%
the specified techniques and instructions.	

Written assignment (Due 07/02) Analyze two video stories from using the Kobreguide checklist (Download from NEO) Discuss: Length min. 1 page for each.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to critically review the three videos and put forth a thoughtful	100%
analysis using the assigned checklist and corresponding questions as a	
guide.	

Shooting assignment #1 (Due 14/02) Group project - using your DSLR, interview someone (60 sec) - interesting on campus or in town.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the assignment (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment#2 (Due 21/02) Group project - using your DSLR, interview someone - interesting on campus or in town, transcript and reduce for the essence of the interview to 30 sec.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment#3 (Due 28/02): Break into groups and shoot a short 5- shot sequence video (45-60 sec.). Edit in class, view and discuss if time allows.

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment#4 (Due 06/03): Tell a story on campus (or in town) using the five shot sequence and only candid footage and natural sound. 30 to 45 sec. Use only nat sound...NO interviews.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment #5 (Due 13/03): Video report (short - edited - interview) shot with your DSLR, edited with software of your choice. Include both A roll (interview) and B roll (candid footage). Use the five shot sequence and include an interview.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment #6 (Due 20/03): Vox pop interview on the streets of Prague or on campus.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage		
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%		
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%		
deadline to review in class.			
Video and sound quality.	20%		

Shooting assignment #7 (Due 03/04): Final Video Project Script Due, Rough cuts of Final Projects

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	20%

Shooting assignment #8 (Due 10/04): First rough cuts of Final Projects and Scripts due - screened. Discussion, critique. Class time for final project work/ review.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage		
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%		
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%		
deadline to review in class.			
Video and sound quality.	20%		

Shooting assignment #9 (Due 17/04): Second rough cuts of Final Projects and Scripts due - screened. Discussion, critique. Class time for final project work/ review.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage		
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	50%		
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	30%		
deadline to review in class.			
Video and sound quality.	20%		

Shooting assignment #10 (Due 24/04): Review and critique of Final Project progress – rough/final cut.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	30%
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given	20%
deadline to review in class.	
Video and sound quality.	40%
Using allotted class time efficiently to work on final project.	10%

Final screening of the 4 min film (Due 17/05): Review and critique of Final Project

Assessed area	Percentage		
Ability to follow instructions and apply the techniques outlined in class.	30%		
Ability to turn in the project (and upload online) within the given 20%			
deadline to review in class.			
Video and sound quality.	40%		
Using allotted class time efficiently to work on final project.	10%		

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, at AAU courses is default mandatory; however, it is not graded as such. (Grades may be impacted by missed assignments or lack of participation.) Still, students must attend at least two thirds of classes to complete the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are excused, they will be administratively withdrawn from the course. If they do not meet this condition and most of their absences are not excused, they will receive a grade of "FW" (Failure to Withdraw). Students may also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (for example by arriving late or leaving early).

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), and the student wishes to request that the absence be excused, the student should submit an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence to the Dean of Students within one week of the absence. Each student may excuse up to two sick days per term without any supporting documentation; however, an Absence Excuse Request Form must still be submitted for these instances. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the student's Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the student will fail the exam or assignment and be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism obscures the authorship of a work or the degree of its originality. Students are expected to create and submit works of which they are the author. Plagiarism can apply to all works of authorship – verbal, audiovisual, visual, computer programs, etc. Examples are:

- **Verbatim plagiarism**: verbatim use of another's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source and designation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism**: paraphrasing someone else's work or part of it without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **Data plagiarism**: use of other people's data without proper acknowledgement of the source,
- **False quotation**: publishing a text that is not a verbatim quotation as a verbatim quotation,
- **Fictious citation**: quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to an incorrect or a non-existent work,
- **Inaccurate citation**: citing sources in such a way that they cannot be found and verified,
- **Ghostwriting**: commissioning work from others and passing it off as one's own,
- **Patchwriting**: using someone else's work or works (albeit with proper acknowledgement of sources and proper attribution) to such an extent that the output contains almost no original contribution,
- **Self-plagiarism**: unacknowledged reuse of one's own work (or part of it) that has been produced or submitted as part of another course of study or that has been published in the past,
- **Collaborative plagiarism**: delivering the result of collective collaboration as one's own individual output.

At minimum, plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the student's Dean. A mitigating circumstance may be the case of novice students, and the benefit of the doubt may be given if it is reasonable to assume that the small-scale plagiarism was the result of ignorance rather than intent. An aggravating circumstance in plagiarism is an act intended to make the plagiarism more difficult to detect. Such conduct includes, for example, the additional modification of individual words or phrases, the creation of typos, the use of machine translation tools or the creation of synonymous text, etc. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Intentional or repeated plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Tutoring Center

The use of artificial intelligence tools to search sources, to process, analyze and summarize data, and to provide suggestions or feedback in order to improve content, structure, or style, defined here as AI-assisted writing, is not in itself plagiarism. However, it is plagiarism if, as a result, it obscures the authorship of the work produced or the degree of its originality (see the examples above).

AAU acknowledges prudent and honest use of AI-assisted writing, that is, the use of AI for orientation, consultation, and practice is allowed. For some courses and assignments, however, the use of AI is counterproductive to learning outcomes; therefore, the course syllabus may prohibit AI assistance. A work (text, image, video, sound, code, etc.) generated by artificial intelligence based on a mass of existing data, defined here as AI-generated work, is not considered a work of authorship. Therefore, if an AI-generated work (e.g. text) is part of the author's work, it must be marked as AI-generated. Otherwise, it obscures the authorship and/or the degree of originality, and thus constitutes plagiarism. Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, submission of AI-generated work is prohibited. If unsure about technical aspects of writing, and to improve their academic writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities should contact the Dean of Students to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
А	95-100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and
A-	90-94	displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
B+	87-89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material,
В	83-86	understands the subject well and has shown some originality of
B-	80-82	thought and/or considerable effort.

9. Grading Scale

C+	77-79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable
С	73-76	understanding of the material and essential subject matter of
C-	70-72	the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
D+	65-69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the
D	60-64	material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
F	0–59	Fail . The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Björn Steinz Date: 6th of November 2022 Approved by: Seth Rogoff Date: 13.11.2023