



Course Syllabus: Foundations in Media Production

College of Fine Arts
MCOM 3313 Section 101
Fall 2026: FA D101, MW 9AM – 10:20AM

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course blends hands-on workshops with guided lectures to introduce the essential concepts and technical skills of media production. You'll explore the interplay between audio, visual design, video, film, broadcasting, and journalism—seeing how each shapes the stories we tell. Through a series of writing and production projects, you'll build a strong foundation in the craft of media-making while sharpening the creative and technical skills that prepare you for advanced production work.

Course Objectives:

- Demonstrate appropriate writing and editing skills in a visual media environment.
- Gather, analyze, organize and synthesize information on contemporary topics to develop a story.
- Demonstrate the application of contemporary technology, terminology and techniques of media production.
- Understand effective visual language and how to apply it to convey messages and enhance the communication process.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Required Materials: Class 10/UHS-I or UHS-II SD Card (64 or 128Gb)

- Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3cjhp32j>

Over the Ear Headphones: <https://tinyurl.com/4awxzxj6>

Recommended Texts: *In the Blink of an Eye* (2nd Edition), Walter Murch, 1995

Sight, Sound, Motion (7th ed.), Herbert Zettl, 2016

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Professor Quam offers assistance outside class hours through appointment and during scheduled office hours.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Productions: Each student will complete a variety of single and team productions designed to give a hands-on study of field production techniques including: short documentaries, interview projects, multitrack audio editing, news packages, and event/performance based projects. Talent: Students will have the option of becoming on-air talent, but it is not required.

Location Strike: Whenever an outside production is required; it will be the responsibility of all in the class to transport all needed gear to and from the location in a safe and timely manner. All items must be stored properly and returned in working order. If there is an issue with damage or malfunctioning equipment a proper report must be logged before you go out on location.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Percent
Podcast Project	15
Composition & Lens Mastery	10
Documentary Project	15
Quizzes	10
Writing Assignments	10
Social Media Project	10
Final Exam	20
Participation	10

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Percent
A	90
B	80 to 89
C	70 to 79
D	60 to 69
F	Less than 60

Homework

Late work will be accepted at a reduced grade. Projects are to be turned in at the beginning of class on the date they're due. Any late work will lose 15% of the assignment grade. Grading will be based on your comprehension and use of theory, methodology, and technique discussed in class. If you need an extension, please message me at least 24hrs in advance of a deadline.

Senior Portfolio Requirement: Please note that all mass communication majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their Internship course (Internship is a prerequisite to Senior Production). This requirement is a part of MSU¹s reaccreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is non-negotiable. Through the portfolio, students are required to demonstrate communication competence through the written word and visual communication; two examples of each competency are required.

As you go through this and other classes, you are responsible for saving course work that could be included in your senior portfolio.

Please see me, your adviser, the department chair or any mass communication faculty member for handouts with more information ("Mass Communication Portfolio Competencies" and "Mass Communication Portfolio FAQ"). These handouts are also available on our department web page: <http://finearts.mwsu.edu/masscomm/>.

Deadlines must be met. All missed deadlines result in a 25% loss on the project. Three missed deadlines will result in being dropped from the course. Deadlines will be handed out with assignments.

Quizzes

There will be 5 quizzes across the semester. The quizzes will be based on lecture materials and readings. Students will be notified when there will be a quiz.

Exams

The final exam is the only exam. It is worth 20% of your overall grade.

Projects Required

Your projects for this semester include: Podcast Storytelling Project, Camera Familiarization Exercise, Interview Storytelling Project, Social Media Project

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be offered at the discretion of the instructor.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: August 27
Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Deadline to file for graduation: September 21
Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"October 7
Check date on [Academic Calendar](#).
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Each student will be allowed 2 absences for any reason. If you are to be absent on the date a project is due, you must still turn your project in to me on time. Beyond these three absences, the student will lose 25% of their final semester grade for any absences for any reason that is not university approved. Missing a production day will result in a failing grade on that production.

- **THE INSTRUCTOR'S RECORDS REGARDING ABSCENCES ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT COUNT AND IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK IN IF LATE.**

Recording Classes

Recording is prohibited except in certain circumstances. The instructor will notify the class when they may record course lecture.

Instructor Class Policies

Course Conduct: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140.

Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Notice: Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Please understand that we will use D2L very heavily just in case there is a need to switch to online instruction. If that switch were to occur our equipment and software will change, but our projects and course goals will not. All projects will remain the same in case of a switch to online instruction.

Week 1 08/24 – 08/28	COURSE INTRODUCTION AUDIO UNIT Lecture: Essentials of Audio Recording Reading: Soundtrap – The Science of Audio Recording
Week 2 08/31 – 09/04	AUDIO UNIT Lecture: Storytelling with Audio Reading: Ira Glass – The Power of Sound Skills Unit: Field Recording and Intro to Audio Editing in Pro Tools

Week 3 09/07 – 09/11	AUDIO UNIT Skills Unit: A beginner’s lesson on ProTools In Class Practice
Week 4 09/14 – 09/18	In Class Worktime In Class Worktime
Week 5 09/22 – 09/26	VIDEO UNIT Lecture: Everything You Need to Know About Video Reading: Lemonlight – Video Production 101
Week 6 09/28 – 10/02	AUDIO PROJECT DUE 9/28 (9am) Lecture: The Language of Cinematography Reading: Studio Binder – Cinematography Framing and Techniques Lecture: An Introduction to Camera Lenses
Week 7 10/05 – 10/09	Skills Unit: Camera Operation & Audio Recording Reading: Film Audio Recording
Week 8 10/12 – 10/16	COMPOSITION PROJECT DUE 10/15 (9AM) Lecture: Introduction to Lighting Reading: No Film School – Three Point Lighting Lecture: Lighting Demonstration Reading: Interview Lighting

Week 9 10/19 – 10/23	Lecture: An Intro to Editing Theory Reading: Videomaker – The Language of Editing Lecture: An Intro to Editing Theory Reading: Walter Murch – In the Blink of an Eye
Week 10 10/26 – 10/30	Lecture: Editing in Media Composer Reading: Adobe’s Basics of Editing Media Composer Practice
Week 11 11/02 – 11/06	Lecture: Editing Your Documentary Reading: Documentary Editing Lecture: Story Development Reading: Bill Nichols – The Six Modes of Documentary
Week 12 11/09 – 11/13	In Class Worktime In Class Worktime
Week 13 11/16 – 11/20	DOCUMENTARY PROJECT DUE 11/19 (9AM) Lecture: Broadcast Leads Reading: Pressbooks Pub – Grammar and Style Reading: NBCU Academy – Tips from the pros Writing Continued

Week 14 11/23 – 11/27	Skills Unit: Social Media Production HALF WEEK/THANKSGIVING
Week 15 11/30 – 12/04	Lecture: Social Media Production <WORK DAY & FINAL REVIEW>
Week 16 12/07 – 12/11	FINALS WEEK SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECTS DUE 12/07 (5PM) Final: 12/07, 8AM-10AM