

# JMS 550 Multimedia News Lab Syllabus & Calendar

Spring 2012

**Prof. Schmitz Weiss**

Email: [aschmitz@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:aschmitz@mail.sdsu.edu)

**Prof. Joseph Lewis**

Email: [lewis@cs.sdsu.edu](mailto:lewis@cs.sdsu.edu)

NOTE: Please read this syllabus carefully and by accepting this document, you acknowledge that it serves a social contract regarding your expected obligations and responsibilities in this course.

## Course Catalog Description

Prerequisites: Journalism and Media Studies 300, 310W, 420 and three units selected from Journalism and Media Studies 315, 430, 445 with grades of C (2.0) or better in each course. Proof of completion of prerequisites required: Copy of transcript. Capstone course using skills and knowledge acquired in critical thinking, writing, reporting, editing, production, and design courses. Teams prepare multimedia news content. Field and laboratory experience. Completion of course with grade of C or better is required for majors and minors.

## Course Overview

This course provides an opportunity for journalism seniors and graduate students (along with students from computer science) to build a mobile news application. The course will entail weekly discussions, guest lecturers and lab activities on the creation of and implementation of this mobile application. The emphasis of the course is on strengthening students' abilities to identify newsworthy issues, gather information, practice news verification and effectively communicate their findings across media platforms. The students will also learn web development and mobile application skills. The course is designed to promote learning through working in interdisciplinary teams as well as participation in class discussions/lab activities. Students will work together to create the mobile application, which will be launched by the end of the semester.

**Course website:** This course has a website on blackboard. Please visit it often as announcements and related course materials will be posted on the site throughout the semester: <http://blackboard.sdsu.edu>

## Objectives

This course will help you:

- Decipher and know when to use mobile and web terminology;
- Articulate what is mobile journalism;
- How to critique and verify the content you view online;
- Articulate the role of objectivity in data;
- Identify and apply the principles of design to mobile devices and mobile apps;
- Define the principles and ethics of journalism and how they are applied in mobile media;
- Detect when to apply specific writing techniques to journalistic work;
- Write news stories that encompass the principles discussed;
- Learn and apply the basics of web development and mobile application skills to the creation of a mobile app;

## Required Materials (Available at the campus bookstore and via online bookstores)

- Fling, B. (2009). *Mobile Design and Development*. CA: O'Reilly Media
- Barr, C. (2010) *The Yahoo! Style Guide*. New York: St. Martin Griffin
- Readings on Blackboard as assigned

## Optional Materials

- *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law*. (2011). Basic Books. Or online version available via subscription: <http://www.apstylebook.com/>

## Supplies and Equipment

- **You will need to have a smartphone or mobile device that has access to apps.** You will be required during the semester to download certain apps (free ones only) for the various stages of mobile development and testing done during the semester.
- **Students should have access to an email account and Blackboard** because communication and information about the course will be sent via these methods.
- **You should purchase a /USB key/drive AND/OR portable hard drives for your classwork so you can save your work to it as a backup and in case you want to work on your class assignments outside of class and lab time.** DO NOT KEEP YOUR ONLY COPY OF CLASS PROJECTS ON THE LAB COMPUTERS – KEEP A BACKUP COPY IN ANOTHER LOCATION.
- Other supplies will be determined and discussed during the semester. Please see the course site on Blackboard frequently.

## Grading

Writing Assignments	30%
Lab Assignments	20%
Participation	10%
Final Project	40%
Total	100%

## Grading scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

If at any time during the semester you are concerned with your progress in the course, please make an appointment to see me or stop by during my office hours. If you miss class for some reason, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

## Deadlines

In this class, deadlines are firm. There is the expectation that you will manage your time accordingly and complete all assignments on time. **No late assignments will be accepted under any circumstances.** If an assignment is not turned in on time a zero will be assigned. Treat deadlines as you would in the real world as they have real world implications. You would not miss a business meeting you are leading or not to turn in a story to your editor when it is due or forget to turn in a report to your boss - would you? The same goes for this class – **all deadlines are strictly enforced.**

## Lab Assignments (points vary for each)

Throughout the semester you will have a variety of lab activities that will help you learn how to write and design journalistic stories for presentation on the web. These assignments will be due usually at the end of the lab session unless otherwise noted. No late lab assignments will be accepted.

## Writing Assignments (points vary for each)

Throughout the semester you will have a variety of writing activities that will help you to learn how to write and design a mobile application as well as use it for journalistic purposes. These assignments will be due usually at the end of the class session unless otherwise noted. No late writing assignments will be accepted.

### **Ushahidi Report (worth 200 points)**

For this class, we will be using the open-source platform, Ushahidi for creating our mobile news application. To help you become acclimated to the platform, you will be required to download the app to your mobile device and complete specific tasks as part of the report.

### **Competitive Analysis (worth 200 points)**

For this class, you will need to conduct a competitive analysis of the mobile app landscape. This will entail downloading and reviewing several (free) apps to see how they compare to the features and functions of the mobile app prototype for this class.

### **Focus Group Reports (worth 100 points each)**

As part of the class, there will be several focus groups held with the community to determine the kinds of features and functions they would like in a mobile app. You will be required to attend at least two of the four focus groups and write up a report about each focus group meeting and what the participants stated.

### **Weekly Blog Posts**

On a weekly basis, you will be jotting down your impressions of the class topic for that week related to mobile app development and/or mobile journalism. The blog posts should be no longer than four paragraphs. These weekly blog posts will help to contribute to your final project essay that is due at the end of the semester. Failure to post weekly will result in 25 points being deducted from your final grade for each post missed.

### **News Event Simulation Writing (points vary for each)**

For this class, you will be writing news stories based off of information that is submitted through the mobile application (real news and simulated information). You will need to identify strategies of how to verify the information submitted through the system and write a story related to the information provided. The stories should be written in AP style and will be uploaded to a specific internal website for review by the professor.

### **Sustainability Report (worth 200 points)**

For this class, you will need to identify a strategy of how this mobile application could be sustainable beyond the class. Based on the information gained from the semester, you will provide a report of how you see this mobile app being used in other contexts. More details about this assignment will be provided in class.

### **Final Project (worth 350 points)**

Based on the class lectures, readings, guest speakers, lab activities, and weekly blog posts you will have the opportunity to put together a final project that is the culmination of your learning in this course. This final project will be an essay that captures your experiences in this course in understanding the role of mobile apps and journalism. You will be required to provide a presentation of this essay at the end of the semester.

### **Participation**

In this class, participation will be counted based on your class activities. You may be called on in class, so always be prepared to talk and contribute thoughtfully and critically about the readings and class work. Attendance is important in this course and will be taken for each class and lab. Those who have perfect or near perfect attendance (less than three absences) will receive extra points toward their final grade. Excused absences will not be accepted, an absence is an absence. So it is to your benefit to come to all classes and labs.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have any form of learning, physical or other disability, please let the instructor know as soon as possible so that your learning needs can be discussed and met appropriately.

### **Academic Dishonesty - Plagiarism and Cheating**

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy (<http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html>). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by Student Affairs.

### **Examples of Plagiarism include but are not limited to:**

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
- Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
- Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
- Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

If you have questions on what is plagiarism, please consult the policy (<http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html>) and this helpful guide from the Library: ([http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard\\_5/plagiarism.pdf](http://infodome.sdsu.edu/infolit/exploratorium/Standard_5/plagiarism.pdf))

### **Time Management Tip**

In this course, you will be asked to complete several assignments that may be done outside of the classroom, in lab or during class. It is in your best interest to stay on top of the readings and lectures as well as be aware of the class assignment due dates. No grievances will be made for late assignments. Give yourself plenty of time for your assignments – from thinking about the idea to its development to its implementation. Think early about the next assignment due so you can be as prepared as possible. If you have questions, please contact me anytime. Ask questions – all questions are good questions!