

Digital Documentation for the Arts

Fall 2010

Monday, 1:30pm-6pm
Hinds Hall, Room 011

Instructors

Anne Cofer and Jaime Snyder

Course website

ilms.syr.edu

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This studio-based course provides students with an opportunity to explore issues related to documenting and digitally presenting multimedia information. Multimedia content uses a combination of text, audio, still images, animation, video, and interactive content forms. Digital presentations could include web sites, digital video, galleries, eBooks, or blogs, among others. This course, co-taught by instructors from the iSchool and VPA, will be of interest to students in the visual and performing arts, as well as information students interested in working with or creating collections of diverse, multimedia information.

Course material covers three primary themes: 1) creating compelling and coherent visual narratives related to an image-based research topic or art practice of interest; 2) designing, building and maintaining digital presentations; 3) developing an ongoing practice of record-making and documentation, including capturing relevant aspects of work-in-progress or time-based events.

These themes will be taught in the context of hands-on projects, in-class discussions and some reading and writing assignments. Coursework will culminate with the creation of a digital presentation in the form of one or more of the following: open source web gallery; digital presentation using software such as PowerPoint or Keynote; interactive PDF; Adobe InDesign; HTML/CSS driven web site.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be exposed to conceptual issues related to visual documentation and narrative. During the semester long course, students will put these principles into practice through a series of hands-on activities based on image-based research topics (including those related to their own studio practices when applicable).

Specifically, student will:

- Be exposed to principles and techniques related to digital representation of visual artifacts that are traditionally created using non-digital formats
- Become well-versed in documenting time-based or ephemeral information
- Learn to construct coherent and compelling visual narratives
- Ground judgments about the relevance and effectiveness of documentation in a deeper understanding of issues related to multimodal communication
- Identify the most appropriate form and format for a digital presentation, including aims and objectives of the maker, material, intended venue and audience
- Embrace the inherently dynamic nature of digital presentations in an ongoing practice of documentation

TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS

- There is no required textbook. Readings will be distributed as needed.
- All students will need to have a large capacity portable storage device such as a portable hard drive or thumb drive.
- It is recommended that students have a laptop they can bring to class and a digital camera (still or video).

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course will be roughly divided into three segments:

- *Part 1: Documenting time-based or ephemeral information*
 - Constructing visual narratives
 - Multimodality
- *Part 2: Building a digital portfolio*
 - Interface design: usability, branding
 - Information architecture: organizing content for ease of use
 - Using social media
- *Part 3: Managing, maintaining and expanding your digital portfolio*
 - Adding content
 - Organizing archives
 - Meta-data
 - Building a practice of documentation

During the first portion of the semester, weekly assignments will be used to enhance understanding of conceptual issues and introduce students to technical skills. In most cases these assignments will be open-ended, enabling students to use their own interests and experiences to guide their work.

The second portion of the semester will be devoted to design, constructing, populating and evaluating a digital portfolio. Assignments due throughout this process will be cumulative, resulting in the iterative design and development of a digital presentation site (such as a blog, website, interactive digital presentation, etc). The final deliverable will be a functioning presentation vehicle of the student's choice that reflects coherent and compelling visual and information design, organization and documentation.

The third portion of the semester will focus on the ongoing maintenance and evolution of the digital portfolio. While many classes end with the construction of the "final product," an important objective of this course is to have students develop an ongoing practice of documenting work and maintaining the coherence of the portfolio. Therefore, the final portion of the semester will focus on adding to the portfolio, further optimizing and enhancing content, and responding to changes in situation and circumstances (i.e. requirements) brought on by requests from the instructors.

Guest lecturers will be invited to class periodically to share their expertise on various themes and topics covered during the course of the semester. Students will also be asked to make at least one informal presentation during the semester, on a topic assigned by the instructors.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment	Percentage of total grade
Five concept building assignments	25%
Four stages of portfolio development (concept, storyboards, content, mock-up)	20%
Functional digital portfolio	35%
Readings, discussions, participation	15%
Attendance and effort	5%

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

This is a preliminary schedule, subject to change.

Week	Topic	Assignment Due
1	What is digital documentation for the arts?	
2	Visual representation & narrative	Concept assignment #1
3	What is an image?	Concept assignment #2
4	Components of the art record	Concept assignment #3
5	Writing as documentation	Concept assignment #4
6	Websites	Concept assignment #5
7	Time-based & ephemeral art	
8	Defining your project	Portfolio development- Phase 1: Concepts
9	Technical work session	
10	Feedback on work-in-progress	Portfolio development- Phase 2: Storyboards
11	Professional documentation	
12	Social media	Portfolio development- Phase 3: Content and Organizations
13	Copyright and intellectual property	
14	When technology changes	Portfolio development- Phase 4: Mock-up
15	Work session	
16	Final presentations	Final Portfolio Completed, stand alone portfolio

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required and excused only for medical or special circumstances, with appropriate notes from doctors, etc. Each absence beyond **three** (including both excused and unexcused) during the semester will result in an automatic drop in your final grade of one whole letter (i.e., from a final grade of B to a C).

If you need to miss a class, email the instructors *****before***** the missed class to alert them. You are responsible for obtaining class notes, materials and assignments from a classmate.

Lateness is defined as coming in after roll call. After 4 “lates,” each subsequent “late” will result in your final grade being dropped one letter.

Failure to participate will also negatively impact your grade. Participation includes being present in class, voluntarily contributing to discussions, completing all assignments on time and actively engaging with team members during group assignments.

Homework Policy

Assignments are due by the start of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized. Because of the advantage of viewing and critiquing examples of work created for this class, some students' work will be shown to future classes.

Future Use of Student Work

This course may use course participation and documents created by students for educational purposes. In compliance with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, works in all media produced by students as part of their course participation at Syracuse University may be used for educational purposes, provided that the course syllabus makes clear that such use may occur. It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in a course where such use of student works is announced constitutes permission by the student. After such a course has been completed, any further use of student works will meet one of the following conditions: (1) the work will be rendered anonymous through the removal of all personal identification of the work's creator/originator(s); or (2) the creator/originator(s)' written permission will be secured. As generally accepted practice, honors theses, graduate theses, graduate research projects, dissertations, or other exit projects submitted in partial fulfillment of degree requirements are placed in the library, University Archives, or academic departments for public reference.

Academic Integrity

The academic community of Syracuse University and of the School of Information Studies requires the highest standards of professional ethics and personal integrity from all members of the community. Violations of these standards are violations of a mutual obligation characterized by trust, honesty, and personal honor. As a community, we commit ourselves to standards of academic conduct, impose sanctions against those who violate these standards, and keep appropriate records of violations. The academic integrity statement can be found at: http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/acad_integrity.htm

Students with Disabilities

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.