INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL JOURNALISM – Fall 2015
Monday and Wednesday, 12:00-1:15 p.m.
Weinstein Hall, Room 418
Robert Hodierne, instructor
Office: 424 Weinstein Hall
Office hours: 11:00 a.m. – noon Monday and Wednesday. Other times by appointment
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No text
No prerequisites

Required equipment:

An external hard drive of at least 250 GB capacity. It must be Mac compatible. The Macs in the journalism lab have USB ports and a Firewire 800 port. They do not have a Firewire 400 port (go figure). So it is important that whatever drive you pick has either a USB port or a Firewire 800 port. Also, you want a drive with a high data transfer rate. In excess of 500 mps is good. I have had good luck with the G-Technology G-DRIVE mini high-speed portable drives. A 500 BG drive sells for $80 from B & H Photo, an online store the university uses to buy most of its photographic equipment. But any drive that meets the requirements listed above will be fine. This is a piece of equipment that will be useful to you beyond this class. And they are easy to sell used.

All other gear, including still and video cameras, will be loaned to you by the journalism department. You will check them out and be held responsible for their care. If you break or lose the gear you will be expected to replace or repair it.

The course:

The course will be divided into two segments: The first half of the semester will be devoted to digital still photography; the second half to video.

By the end of this course you should feel confident that you could produce still photos suitable for publication either in print or online. You should also feel confident that you could produce short Web videos.

In the still photo sequence, you will learn the basics of what makes a good news photo, the ethics of news photography and something of its history and traditions. But most of the effort will go towards learning basic digital camera operation, composition and exposure. You also will learn the basics of PhotoShop: importing photos, cropping, sizing and adjusting brightness, contrast and color balance. You will learn how to export photos either for Web use or for print publication. Exercises will put an emphasis on photographing people in real world situations with each exercise focused on a particular technical or artistic challenge. For example, you may be sent to photograph someone giving a speech, the most boring and unimaginative sort of photo assignment but one that in the real world you will be
expected to do. We will learn ways to bring some life to such an assignment. There will be about 10 graded exercises in the still photo sequence.

Exercises that accomplish the technical goals with originality and creativity will earn As. Exercises that accomplish the technical goals in an unimaginative manner will get Cs. Make no mistake, your grade will rise with the amount of effort and creativity you put into each assignment. Late assignments fail.

In the video sequence, you will learn the video story telling vocabulary including how to shoot a sequence and how to shoot an interview. Video will be edited in Adobe Premiere. You will learn the basics of importing video to Premiere, cutting it into clips, stringing clips together and exporting either to DVDs or the Web. A typical assignment in this sequence might be to produce a 60-second story about a student with an off campus job. There will be about 10 graded exercises in the video sequence. You will typically work in teams of two on these projects.

As in the still photo sequence, exercises that accomplish the technical goals with originality and creativity will earn As. Exercises that accomplish the technical goals in an unimaginative manner will get Cs. Late assignments fail.

There will be no final exam. In lieu of that each student must produce either a picture story or a video story suitable for posting on The Collegian Web site. That project will constitute 25 percent of the final grade. The exercises will constitute the other 75 percent.

You are expected to attend each class. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. If you miss more than one class without an adequate excuse your grade will be lowered half a grade for each class missed.

**Attendance:** Missing a class is not an excuse for failing to do the work assigned in that class. Ask your classmates or ask me what the assignment was. If there’s a good reason you missed the class, talk to me. But it had better be good. More than one absence will start counting against your final grade.

**Punctuality:** Be in class on time. Each class will start promptly. The door will be closed at the start of class and you will not be allowed to enter.

**Cell Phones:** No cell phone use, either voice or text, is allowed during class. If your cell phone goes off, you will be asked to leave the class.

**Reaching me:** Feel free to call me at 804-484-4759 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. any day of the week. If you need me in person at other times, that can be arranged by appointment. You may e-mail me at rhodiern@richmond.edu. A special note about e-mails to me: Treat them like the business communication they are. Begin with a conventional salutation (Dear. Prof. Hodierne) and end with a polite closing (Sincerely, Jane Doe). Write in complete sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation. I don’t think emoticons are cute. Finally, I don’t respond to text messages.
Workload: To be successful in this course, you should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week.