

# LOST STORIES

## *JN 430 COURSE SYLLABUS*

The University of Alabama, Fall 2015  
Classroom: Reese Phifer 338  
Class time: Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30-9:45 a.m.  
Office hours: available by appointment

Instructor: Chip Brantley  
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### **Course description**

Lost Stories is an interdisciplinary digital storytelling course in collaboration with Alabama Media Group and al.com. Working with journalists at al.com, students will be assigned photos from the Alabama Media Group archives and then research and tell the stories behind the photos using text, photos, video and other visuals. Students will meet regularly with al.com reporters and editors – in person and via Skype/Hangouts, and student work will be published on the al.com platform.

### **Student learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will have developed the skills necessary to research, report, write and visualize compelling stories based on archival images. You will have learned to work in a professional setting on deadline and collaborate with each other and AMG editors through cloud-based editing platforms.

### **Topics covered in this class**

Reporting and editing; collaborating; project management; thinking critically about photography and photo journalism; using the Internet to find stories/sources; crowdsourcing photos, stories and information about archival images; data scraping; online mapping; design thinking; visual storytelling; photo editing.

### **Required texts**

All reading material will be distributed by instructor in class.

### **Class schedule**

We will meet in Tuscaloosa for most of our classes, but for one class session, we will meet at Alabama Media Group's headquarters in Birmingham. We'll discuss this early in the semester and figure out the Birmingham date.

You will be expected to attend all classes in Tuscaloosa. Any absence not cleared with me ahead of time or accompanied with a verifiably dire excuse after the fact will bring down your class citizenship grade and drop your final grade down half a letter grade.

### **Breakdown of your final grade in this class**

Your final letter grade in this class will be determined as follows:

- 30% of your grade will be based on your three team project grades (10% each).
- 30% of your grade will be based on your individual final project.
- 25% of your grade will be based on your citizenship grade, which includes attendance, participation, discussion, critiques and team meetings.
- 15% of your grade will be based on the presentation of your final project at Alabama Media Group.

## Assignments

You will work in teams on three main assignments from August through October and one final assignment in November. These assignments will be published on al.com and credited to you. See attached course schedule for details on your assignments.

## Grading scale

A+ = 97-100, A = 93-96, A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62

F = 59 or lower. (If you're given only a letter grade "F," this will be calculated as a 55.)

Note: Graduate students receive only straight-up letter grades (no +/-).

## Class policies: Absences and tardiness

Attendance is required unless you have a verifiably dire excuse. For an absence to be excused, you must have a note from a doctor (in the event of a medical absence) or a note from a family member in the event of a family emergency. Doctor or dentist visits that are routine or scheduled in advance will not be excused. Plan these around your classes. Flat tires, deadlines in other classes (or with student media), etc. will not be excused. You get two unexcused absences. After that, the 40% citizenship grade is lowered half a letter grade each time you have an unexcused absence. Being late is also unacceptable. Two tardy arrivals at class (past a 5-minute grace period) will count as an unexcused absence. You have very little time to waste in order to get your assignments done, and you will face many of the same issues as your classmates, so it is important that you see them to check in, compare notes, talk face-to-face in front of the project. This class will be used primarily as lab time for you to work on your project, and while there are things you'll need to do outside of class, the time during this class is the only guaranteed time you have to work on your projects.

## Policy on academic misconduct

**Academic Honor Code:** All students in attendance at The University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Alabama expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academic or related matter and any knowing or intentional help, attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following acts, when performed in any type of academic or academically related matter, exercise, or activity:

- **Cheating:** using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, study aids, or computer-related information.
- **Plagiarism:** representing the words, data, works, ideas, computer programs or output, or anything not generated in an authorized fashion, as one's own. In this class, if you borrow any material from another publication (even a press release) or a website, you must attribute it clearly and fully. It is not acceptable to borrow large passages (more than a sentence or two) from other printed works, even with full attribution. You are producing ORIGINAL writing in this class.
- **Fabrication:** presenting as genuine any invented or falsified citation or material
- **Misrepresentation:** falsifying, altering, or misstating the contents of documents or other materials related to academic matters, including schedules, prerequisites, and transcripts

In the event of academic misconduct, the judicial procedures spelled out in Article V of the Code of Student Conduct will be followed.

## **Disability statement**

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit 1000 Houser Hall to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 1000 Houser Hall, before receiving academic adjustments.

## **Statement on diversity**

The University of Alabama and the College of Communication and Information Sciences are intentionally inclusive communities that strive to have faculty, staff, students and course instruction that reflect the diversity of our society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

## **Severe weather protocol**

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar; sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. If you are in a building, please move immediately to the lowest level and toward the center of the building away from windows (interior classrooms, offices, or corridors) and remain there until the tornado warning has expired. Classes in session when the tornado warning is issued can resume immediately after the warning has expired at the discretion of the instructor. Classes that have not yet begun will resume 30 minutes after the tornado warning has expired provided at least half of the class period remains.

UA is a residential campus with many students living on or near campus. In general classes will remain in session until the National Weather Service issues safety warnings for the city of Tuscaloosa. Clearly, some students and faculty commute from adjacent counties. These counties may experience weather related problems not encountered in Tuscaloosa. Individuals should follow the advice of the National Weather Service for that area taking the necessary precautions to ensure personal safety. Whenever the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Agency issue a warning, people in the path of the storm (tornado or severe thunderstorm) should take immediate life saving actions.

When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the National Weather Service at <http://www.weather.gov/> and to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take. The Office of Public Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways:

- Weather advisory posted on the UA homepage
- Weather advisory sent out through Connect-ED-faculty, staff and students (sign up at myBama)
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA 7. WVUA 7 Storm Watch provides a free service you can subscribe to that allows you to receive weather warnings for Tuscaloosa via e-mail, pager or cell phone. Check <http://www.wvua7.com/stormwatch.html> for details.