



Multimedia Content Development COM 323

Dr. Brian Carroll
Syllabus | Fall 2026

T/TH 2-3:15

Laughlin 111
& other places

Berry Catalog course description

Design, development, management, and implementation of multimedia content for journalistic and public relations contexts. Emphases include storytelling, content strategy, and content creation for mobile, social, and other digital channels and platforms. PR: COM 250.

Introduction

The point-of-view taken in this course is that we all are content creators, writers, editors, and storytellers, and that we are members of the same storytelling team. The course's perspective or approach is journalistic (non-fiction, fact-based). This course does not assume, therefore, the point-of-view of development team members in graphic design, site architecture, computer coding or marketing, though we strive for knowledge in and sensitivity to those skill sets and contexts.

Throughout history humans have taught, learned, entertained and communicated with stories, and this has held constant across media. Stories transmit information and transfer experience. This course, therefore, emphasizes storytelling and upholds the value of narrative. This emphasis values a journalistic approach to information gathering, writing, editing and publishing. Journalism serves the journalist and non-journalist alike, especially in digital spaces, where the democracy of production and publishing have diminished such distinctions.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, my goal is for students to:

1. Put their audiences first by focusing attention on user experience, expectations, and practices.
2. Develop a strategy for engaging audiences by carefully thinking about goals, resources, and platforms.
3. Allow the story to determine media choices and story form rather than the other way around.
4. Become more experimental and adaptable in storytelling by learning skills, tools, and techniques in context.
5. Expertly use AI thoughtfully, ethically, and transparently with respect to disclosure

II. Stuff you need to know

Professor: Dr. Brian Carroll, Laughlin 100
Office phone: 706.368.6944 (anytime)

Email: bc@berry.edu

Home page: cubanxgiants.berry.edu

Course page: cubanxgiants.berry.edu/323

Office hours: T/TH 10am-2pm, with some days interrupted by meetings; walk-ins are also welcome outside of office hours

III. What you will need (required)

- *Writing & Editing for Digital Media*, 6th edition, by Brian Carroll (Oxford, England: Routledge, 2026)
- *Elements of Journalism*, 4th edition, Rosenstiel and Kovach (New York City: Three Rivers Press)
- Access to the Associated Stylebook (print or online)

IV. What you may want (not required, but recommended)

- Associated Press Stylebook

V. Class format

Discussion and participation are key components of this seminar-style course. Hands-on application is an emphasis. We will learn how to create content specifically for presentation in digital spaces and delivered by digital channels. These stories typically are themed or organized around a central idea, issue, or problem.

For the complete course calendar, visit <http://cubanxgiants.berry.edu/323>

VI. Policies

- **Attendance:** Be on time, just as you would for a job, surgery, or even a haircut. Everyone gets one unexcused absence or late arrival, maybe two, with no questions asked. Stuff happens. After that, unexcused and/or unexplained absences and/or lateness will result in point deductions from the "professionalism and participation" portion of your grade - one point for each unexcused absence and/or late arrival. And late is late, be it one minute or ten minutes. What is excused is at the instructor's discretion, so you are best served discussing situations and extraordinary circumstances prior to class whenever possible. Medical attention is typically excused. Weddings, family reunions, vacations, job interviews, grad school visits, Winshape retreats, and your roommate's birthday, to name some examples, are not typically excused. Save your free passes for these non-academic excursions and events.

- **Late submissions (deadlines):** Submit assigned work on time in the method prescribed. Sneaking an assignment into a comment on Canvas after deadline, for example, is meaningless; it will not count. Do not email the professor your work unless he asks for this. Late work may or may not be eligible for credit, depending on the nature of the assignment. Whether it is accepted or not is up to the discretion of the professor. In-class quizzes cannot be made up, regardless of the reason for missing. The instructor is very reasonable when consulted PRIOR TO deadlines, when there are options. After deadline? Variable. Please appreciate that deadlines are also

for instructors, so that we can move on, as well. In short, deadlines are real, they are our friends, and they will be enforced. It's part of the DNA of this course.

- **Email etiquette:** Related to the above, when emailing your instructor, please keep in mind that he is a person, not a vending machine for information, grades, etc. Begin each and every email with an address and a greeting, something like, "Dear Dr. Carroll. I hope this finds you well." It's courteous, and it doesn't take much time to write. It's also polite to thank someone for whatever was provided in response to your request, and yet so rarely do students take time for this courtesy. Speaking of email, it is the authorized communication channel for faculty and students at Berry, so you are responsible for checking your email and promptly responding to your instructors as needed.

- **Distractions:** The instructor needs your attention and your respect, and they are inter-related. Your peers seated near or around you need these, as well. Your instructor is easily distracted, so he needs your help. Practically, this means:

- o ZERO unauthorized device use of any kind, including laptops, iPads, smartphones, and Apple watches. Put your devices away (off your desk; unseen) and make sure they are either off or on silent. If you use a device without permission, even your Apple watch to check a text from Mom, you could be marked as "absent" for that class session.
- o Doing homework for other classes somewhere else, not in our classroom.
- o Avoiding the zipping up of backpacks and clearing off of desks prior to being dismissed.
- o Avoiding repetitive noisemaking, such as clicking pens, crinkling food wrappers, and clanging water bottles.
- o Speaking of water bottles, please prevent their rather loud and even dangerous toppling from desks onto the floor or onto classmates' feet or belongings.

- **Decorum:** Related to the distractions described above, please remember that the classroom is the professor's and your fellow students' workspace and our shared learning space. It's not your living room or den. Be respectful, avoid going to the bathroom during class sessions unless nature is SCREAMING, and change out of those PJs into something appropriate. Repeated exits for the restroom could result in deductions from the professionalism and participation portion of the course grade. In short, you are not permitted to simply exit the room whenever you might like.

- **Academic integrity:** Because academic integrity is the foundation of college life at Berry, academic dishonesty will have consequences. You are invited to consult the Berry Catalog for an articulation of the College's policies with respect to academic integrity. Specific to this course, academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: unauthorized collaboration, fabrication, submitting the same work in multiple courses, hiring a ghostwriter, asking an AI generator to write something for you that you later submit as if you wrote it yourself, failing to cite sources or AI tools for your research and writing, consulting non-authorized sources or texts during an exam or test period, and aiding and abetting academic dishonesty by another student. Students who are sanctioned for violating the academic integrity policy forfeit the right to withdraw from the class with a grade of "W."

- **Class recording (Zoom):** Per Berry policy, students are required to attend class in-person. Classes will not be available for remote learning, at least not regularly or without advance warning and authorization. Any recordings will only be available to students registered for this class and cannot be retransmitted, distributed, or otherwise shared without the expressed, written consent of the instructor.

- **Use of genAI:** We will responsibly collaborate with generative AI, including LLMs, and you will receive instruction on what that looks like. We will collaborate with AI in all the phases and stages of our reporting and storytelling projects, and we will be transparent about how we use AI tools. The general rule is to treat AI as a research assistant, to collaborate with but not substitute or surrender authorship and ownership. We must prevent any AI tool from becoming a co-author of our submitted, copyright-protected work. AI tools are powerful, wonderful collaborators when we know what we are doing and of what we are writing; AI tools are garbage as substitutes for that knowledge.

VII. How you will be graded

Collaborative storytelling project	50%
Weekly activities	35%
Professionalism & participation	15%
	<hr/> 100%

To compute your final grade, add up your point totals, apply the appropriate percentages, then refer to the Berry College Communication Department grading system, summarized here:

A = 93-100	A-= 90-92	B+=88-89	B=83-87
B- = 80-82	C+= 78-79	C=73-77	C-=70-72
D+= 60-69	F=59 and below		

Definitions of the grades can be found in the Berry College Catalog. “A” students will demonstrate an outstanding mastery of course material and will perform **far above** that required for credit in the course and **far above** that usually seen in the course. The “A” grade should be awarded sparingly and should identify student performance that is relatively unusual in the course.

VIII. Assignments

There are no exams in this course, although students may be quizzed from time to time. Deadline pressure is an important dimension to the rigor of the course. Our primary deliverable is a theme- or topic-based package of related content that includes and involves everyone in the room in different ways. Weekly projects and activities will be explained in detail well before any deadline, including word count targets. Discussion and participation will be critically important as we plan and do our work as a team. Note that professionalism is weighted at 15%, signaling its importance to and in our work.

IX. Accommodation Statement & Academic Resources

The Academic Success Center in Berry's Memorial Library provides accessibility resources, including academic accommodations, to students with diagnosed differences and/or disabilities. If you need accommodations for this or other classes, please visit berry.edu/asc for information and resources. You may also reach out at 706-233-40480. The ASC also provides free peer tutoring and individual academic consultations to all Berry College students. The ASC Session schedule is available on ASC website. The goal of these meetings is to help students study smarter, not harder.

Consultants at the Berry College Writing Center, also in Memorial Library, are available to assist students with all stages of the writing process. To schedule an appointment, visit berry.mywconline.com.

Finally, I believe we are here for a good time, not a long time, so let's have some fun.

Pledge of Academic Integrity

As a member of the Berry College academic community, I recognize the importance of honesty, integrity, and respect for knowledge in all academic endeavors. I hereby pledge to uphold the following principles of academic integrity:

1. Honesty: I will be truthful in all my academic pursuits, including coursework, exams, research, and any other academic activities.
2. Originality: I will submit only my original work, ideas, and creations, acknowledging and appropriately citing the contributions of others.
3. Attribution: I will give proper credit to all sources used in my academic work, whether they are written, visual, oral, or electronic.
4. Independence: I will complete all assignments and exams on my own, unless expressly permitted to collaborate with others by the instructor.
5. Respect: I will respect the intellectual property rights of others, including copyright and fair use principles, in all academic materials.
6. Ethical Use of Technology: I will not use AI or software that employ it (ChatGPT and Grammarly, for ex.) without BEFORE obtaining specific authorization from my instructor. Furthermore, I will not use any software or technology to engage in academic dishonesty, including but not limited to:
 - Unauthorized assistance in completing assignments.
 - Plagiarism or other forms of intellectual dishonesty.
 - Altering or falsifying academic records or credentials.
7. Accountability: I understand that academic integrity is my personal responsibility, and I will accept the consequences of any violations of this pledge. These consequences likely mean earning a zero ('0') for any assignment or activity for which I violated this pledge. Depending on the degree of the infraction, I understand I could earn a failing grade for the course or even expulsion from the College. Lastly, I understand that ignorance is no defense against charges of academic dishonesty.

By affixing my signature below, I commit to upholding the principles of academic integrity and maintaining the highest standards of honesty and ethical conduct in all my academic endeavors.

Name

Date

