

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST  
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
 THE FACULTY SENATE

UNDERGRADUATE COURSE APPROVAL FORM  
 (Courses Numbered 001-599)

15 Copies Required for Courses Numbered 001-499  
 20 Copies Required for Courses Numbered 500-599

1. DEPARTMENT, COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: Journalism 435 (Journal 435) Web Design for Journalists
2. SCHOOL OR COLLEGE: Journalism Program, Communications Department, SBS
3. Proposer's Name, Telephone and Email: Brian McDermott, 545-1376, mcdermott@journ.umass.edu
4. Proposed Instructor: Brian McDermott
5. Course Credits: 3
6. Are there Prerequisites? yes If yes, please specify Students must take Journal 301, Introduction to Multimedia Reporting or Journal 397G, Multimedia Reporting, or have the instructor's consent to enroll.
7. What is the intended clientele? Lower Division \_\_\_\_\_ Upper Division XXXX  
 Department majors only XXXX Departmental/related majors \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Majors \_\_\_\_\_  
 If course is intended for majors, what role will it play in the curriculum? Required \_\_\_\_\_ Elective XXXX

8. Complete Course Catalog Description (30 Words):

Not long ago a journalist could get by with little more than a notebook, a pen, and his or her wits. Today, the new media demands that students know an assortment of web design and web building skills. By the end of the semester students will be able to build a website using Dreamweaver, create simple projects in Flash, navigate HTML and JavaScript, understand basic principles of graphic design, and fluently discuss different approaches to presenting journalism online. Students will create a personal portfolio website featuring work from previous classes. Beyond building the website over the course of the semester, assignments will include augmenting those stories with new multimedia reporting, experimenting with sharing those stories using social networking sites, and developing an entrepreneurial business plan for a website.

9. Please attach the following materials:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Week-by-week outline of topics covered in course (or syllabus)
- \_\_\_\_\_ List of Required readings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Description of required assignments (papers, exams, projects, reports, presentations, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Summary of course grade criteria
- \_\_\_\_\_ Selected bibliography of works used by instructor in developing course, especially recent works (as appropriate)
- \_\_\_\_\_ If the course number is above 200 and there are no prerequisites, please explain

10. If course has been offered as an experimental or special topics course, please comment (on an attached page) on its evolution.

*Upon approval of the course by the department head, one copy of this form shall be sent from the departmental office to the Faculty Senate Office to allow for the course to be published on the University's Web Site for comment.*

For courses numbered 500-599, the "Guidelines for Course Approval Form" from the Graduate Council must accompany the new course proposal.

## **The Evolution of Web Design for Journalists**

Web Design for Journalists has been taught under the course number Journal 394W, Web Design for Journalists. When the class is offered in the Fall 2011 semester, it will mark the fourth consecutive semester the class has been taught. The Journalism program plans to offer the class each Fall and Spring semester.

Because online technology changes rapidly, the syllabus has already grown to reflect the most current thinking in design and software skills. Students have always and will continue to learn how to code HTML and CSS and how to build a website using Adobe Dreamweaver. We also cover HTML 5, JQuery, and how to build interactive graphics with Flash CS5.

While the specific technologies of this class will evolve with the most current thinking, the main goals of the class remain the same. Every assignment is geared towards helping Journalism students report, augment, share, and publish their stories successfully online. Students spend the semester working on a personal portfolio website and enhance journalism work from previous semesters with interactive graphics.

# 394W Web Design for Journalists

Spring 2011 • Tu/Th 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. • Lederle GRC A127

Professor: Brian McDermott

E-mail: [mcdermott@journ.umass.edu](mailto:mcdermott@journ.umass.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30 to 1

Class Website: <http://webdesignforjournalists.pbworks.com/>

*I'm not good at math. What if not everybody can become a computer programmer? I'm not technical, maybe I can't learn it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Guess what? You're wrong. You CAN do it...No journalism student should be intimidated by the process of setting up and managing a website — it is well within your ability, and it can all be learned and practiced before you graduate.*

-Lisa Williams

To survive in this industry means continuously evolving along with it.

-Mark Luckie

## ABOUT THIS COURSE

Looking at HTML or ActionScript code for the first time can be like looking at an airplane engine: the plane flies, but as for how, you don't even know where to begin! Fortunately, designing and building websites and web graphics are skills well within your reach.

The purpose of this class is to provide you with a practical introduction to building well-designed websites and graphics. Foremost, it is a journalism class: each assignment will forward the goal of helping you learn vital new media skills so you can tell a better story. You will learn how to code HTML and CSS and build websites in Dreamweaver. You will use Flash to create motion graphics that augment your journalism work from other classes. Over the course of the semester you will put all of these skills together by building a personal portfolio website.

This class is not a computer science class. Understand we will not learn full programming languages like Javascript or Objective C. Instead, our focus will be on establishing the basic technical foundation with which you can pursue your journalism goals online. In class we will cover the basics: I strongly encourage you to experiment independently with more advanced features in Flash and Dreamweaver.

## TEXTS

No single textbook covers the scope of what we'll learn this semester, so you don't need to buy a book for this class. Instead, our text will be a combination of online readings, tutorials and full books available through the UMass Library's *Books 24/7* database. All the required readings will be posted on the class wiki, [webdesignforjournalists.pbworks.com](http://webdesignforjournalists.pbworks.com).

Here are a few good reference books available on *Books 24/7*.

On HTML:

*Build Your Own Web Site The Right Way Using HTML & CSS, 2nd Edition*  
Ian Lloyd

*HTML, XHTML, and CSS Bible, Fourth Edition*  
Steven Schafer

*Beginning Web Programming with HTML, XHTML, and CSS, Second Edition*  
Jon Duckett

*HTML, XHTML & CSS for Dummies, 6th Edition*  
Ed Tittel and Jeff Noble

Dreamweaver:

*The Essential Guide to Dreamweaver CS4 with CSS, Ajax, and PHP*  
David Powers

*Dreamweaver CS4 All-in-One For Dummies*  
Sue Jenkins and Richard Wagner

Flash:

*The Essential Guide to Flash CS4 with ActionScript*  
Paul Milbourne, Michael Oliver and Chris Caplan

*Flash CS4 Professional Bible*  
Robert Reinhardt and Snow Dowd

## EQUIPMENT

Dreamweaver and Flash CS5 are installed in various OIT classrooms. To find out where and when you can access these computers, follow this link:  
<http://www.oit.umass.edu/classrooms/info/index.html>

In class, we will use a Mac platform, which you can access in the following classrooms: LGRC A127, FAC 444, Library 767 (7<sup>th</sup> floor), and in the Learning Commons on the Library's lower level. Windows computers also have Flash and Dreamweaver installed, but some of the commands may be slightly different from what we learn in class.

Digital cameras, video cameras, or audio recorders may be useful to augment your old stories for this class. All can be checked out from the journalism program.

## GRADING

Your grade will be calculated based on the following percentages:

Final Portfolio Website: 30 percent  
Website Checkpoint Assignments: 15 percent  
Tests (3): 20 percent  
Flash Graphics (2): 20 percent  
In-Class presentations and Class Participation: 15 percent

Please note that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable in both this class and professional journalism. Plagiarism will result in failure in this class and referral to the proper academic authorities. Plagiarism includes taking other people's work as your own, be it words, photos, or audio. Read more about plagiarism here:  
<http://www.comcol.umass.edu/academics/deansbookcourse/avoidingplagiarism.html>

## PROFESSIONALISM AND ATTENDANCE

To be a good journalist, you need to be dependable. In our class, being a good student requires showing up for all the class meetings on time. Catching up after missing a class will be tough.

Though I don't encourage it, you are allowed two unexcused absences from this class; any unexcused absence beyond that will cause you to lose one half-letter grade per missed class. If you are absent, excused or not, you are still responsible for turning in the work due in class on time. For a list of acceptable excused absences, visit <http://www.umass.edu/provost/admin/policies/absence.html>

Showing up late or leaving early three times equals one unexcused absence.

Please note that January 31 is the last day to drop this class with no record on your transcript.

## CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments will be discussed in class before they are due, and a detailed assignment description will be posted on our class wiki, [webdesignforjournalists.pbworks.com](http://webdesignforjournalists.pbworks.com).

Deadlines are important: you will lose one full letter grade on your assignment for each day it is late. There are no exceptions to this rule.

In-class participation matters: come ready to both talk about your own work and express an opinion on the work of your classmates and the web journalism we look at together.

On the next page, there is a broad outline of the topics and assignments for the semester. Check our class wiki for the most current information on assignments and in-class topics.

### DATE & TOPIC

### ASSIGNMENT DUE

January 18

Review Syllabus

Why Journalists Need

Web Skills to Succeed

January 20

Basic Web Design:

Fonts, Space, Hierarchy & Navigation

January 25

Journalism Portfolio Websites

In Class Presentation:

Portfolio Website

January 27

HTML: The Basics

February 1

HTML: More Basics, Tables, and Structures

February 3

Menus & CSS Basics

February 8

CSS: Inheritance and Hierarchy

HTML Test

February 10

CSS: Laying Out Pages

February 15

Working with Images

In Photoshop and Illustrator

Website Worksheet

February 17

Designing with Images and Graphics

CSS Test

February 22 (No class, Monday Schedule)

DATE & TOPIC

ASSIGNMENT DUE

February 24  
Introducing Flash:  
Simple Animation

Logo / Logotype Due

March 1  
Flash: Animation Effects  
& Tweens

Website Outline Due

March 3  
Flash: Movie Clips

March 8  
Flash: Creating Buttons

Menu Due

March 10  
Flash: Scripting Buttons

**\*\*\* Spring Break \*\*\***

March 22  
Flash: Navigating  
With Buttons

Flash Slideshow Due

March 24  
Flash: Scripting Buttons  
To Link

March 29  
Flash: Working With Audio & Video Files

Basic Flash Test

March 31  
No class meeting:  
Sign Up for 1-on-1

Website Checkpoint 1

DATE & TOPIC

ASSIGNMENT DUE

April 5  
Brainstorming Flash Graphics

In-class presentation:  
Flash Graphic

April 7  
Discuss Flash Graphics  
In-class Work Day

Flash Graphic Ideas Due

April 12  
In-class Work Day

April 14  
No class meeting:  
Sign Up for 1-on-1

Website Checkpoint 2

April 19  
jQuery and Other Plugins

April 21  
Flash Graphics and  
In-class Work Day

April 26  
Understanding Server-Side  
Functions and SEO

April 28  
Buying Domain Names  
and Using FTP

Flash Graphic Due

May 3  
Where to Go From Here

Portfolio Website Due