

# Digital Storytelling Lab

Spring 2020 Semester

**ETK 604**

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Educational Technology Program

School of Education

University of San Francisco

# The Essentials

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The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the essentials of good **educational storytelling** in a digital audio format. You get your hands e-dirty with the essence of audio production: recording, editing, mixing, and sharing. We start by identifying a set of presentations you want to create, then moving through the scripting, recording, editing, and mixing processes. At the end of the course you will have created 30+ minutes of audio presentations around a central topic.

**Note:** This PDF syllabus contains several links. They all work. Just click and you'll be taken to the relevant site. Of course if you are reading a paper copy of this syllabus the links don't work.

## Overview

Your first challenge will be to identify a topic you want to use for your presentations. That topic can be human biology, study skills, or any other topic that might be relevant to your audience. I realize not all of you are educators. But the central idea is: create short presentations, all of which address some aspect of a central topic you've chosen.

What's short? You have some flexibility, but my suggestion is to create six five-minute audio presentations. If you want to create 7 or 8 presentations, that's fine too. But you don't want to create long audio presentations for a variety of reasons. So I suggest each presentation be 7 minutes maximum. I would not suggest a presentation shorter than 3 minutes.

Once you have identified a central topic and set of presentations, then we'll explore how to create compelling story-like presentations, audio gear, how to record well, and a variety of other issues that will allow you to create high quality recordings.

## Course Website

This syllabus provides an introduction to the main issues and expectations of the course. You will find detailed information, plus all the learning materials, at the course website. The course website address is:

- [mathewusf.com/storylab2020](http://mathewusf.com/storylab2020)

Please bookmark the website in your browser. You will need to request login access to enter the website. I will email the complete class with details about the login form and getting formal access to the website.

The course website serves several purposes including:

- Providing a way to download/view/use all learning materials
- Links to essential software and other resources
- An easy way for all of us to interact electronically

Please be aware that I do **not** use Canvas (USF's learning management system). Instead I create my own websites and they include protection from "others" visiting or using the site. Before the beginning of the course you'll receive an email prompting you to register for my course website.

## Instructor

The instructor is Mathew Mitchell, Ph.D., Professor in the School of Education. He works in both the Learning & Instruction doctoral program and the Educational Technology master's program.

The best way to contact me is via an email form. Once I have that initial email from you then we can carry on a conversation via regular email. The form is important as it insures I gather key information from you regarding your issue or problem. Just click the link below to complete the form.

- [StoryLab email form](#)

You can expect a reply within 24 hours except during weekends and holidays.

I am on sabbatical this semester and thus don't have regular office hours as I will be traveling outside of the United States part of that time. However, there are three ways to meet with me:

1. **Teaching Weekends.** For those Saturdays when I am in San Francisco I will be offering office hours for the full day. Currently I expect to be in San Francisco for 8 of the 9 teaching weekends.
2. **Zoom Meetings.** These are 30 minute meetings you can schedule during the week. There are many hours available between 2 and 4 in the afternoons between Monday and Friday.
3. **Live Meetings.** These are also 30 minute meetings you can schedule during the week.

To schedule any of these 3 kinds of meetings use my Calendly account. Here's the link:

- [calendly.com/mathewmitchell](https://calendly.com/mathewmitchell)

Zoom is USF's video conferencing app. It's similar to Skype, only much better. You can download your own copy of Zoom (professional license for free) at:

- [usfca.zoom.us](https://usfca.zoom.us).

## Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes describe what knowledge, skills, or behaviors students are expected to be able to demonstrate by the end of the course.

In this course students will ...

1. Demonstrate reflective thinking by thoughtfully responding to the learning materials (both readings and presentations) via written reflections for each class module. These reflections should include what you learned (i.e. what stood out the most), what are potential connections to your practice, and any confusions/curiosities that remain after using the learning materials.
2. Demonstrate audio production skills by creating a set of 5-to-7 audio presentations revolving around a central topic. The end product will be a collection of audio files that are 30+ minutes of length in total.
3. Demonstrate audio mixing skills by creating an experimental mix of 4 minutes in length, plus a podcast-ready mix for one of the audio presentations.
4. Demonstrate audio publishing skills by creating a SoundCloud playlist that includes all of your audio presentations. The SoundCloud playlist can be personalized with photos, privacy settings, text descriptions, and more.

The course does **not** address the essential ideas behind creating stories: that is the purview of the **Made to Stick** course (**ETK 603**). Instead it focuses on practical techniques for creating good, nuanced, audio stories.

## Program Learning Outcomes

The Educational Technology master's program has six program outcomes that describe what students will be able to do upon completion of the M.A. in Educational Technology. The Digital Storytelling Lab course directly contributes directly to PLOs #1 and #2. In addition the course partially contributes to PLO #6. The PLOs are:

1. Using knowledge of human cognition, multimedia learning theory, and digital design principles, students will plan and create multimedia instructional materials that enhance their professional or educational practice.
2. Students will create products (radio-style audio story and a multimedia screencast) that demonstrate their skills at multimedia production.

3. Create a ready-to-implement course or unit re-design based on a blueprint plan that details scope and sequence, formative and summative assessments, plans for feedback, and a clear protocol for communication and workflow via an LMS. The re-design must transfer a traditional course, unit, or program to a flipped, blended, 1:1, or completely online environment.
4. Students will design and create a professional website that will serve as their connection hub with other educational professionals. The website will include a blog, a multimedia gallery, a teaching philosophy statement, teaching/professional background, and relevant social sharing links.
5. Students will apply design-thinking to address issues of social justice within the field of educational technology.
6. Students will create their professional identity, connect with other educational technology leaders, and reflect on their learning and practice as an educator in the digital age.

## The Details

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In this section you'll find details about the online learning structure, class learning modules, assignments/grading, plus the various learning materials you will be using.

### Online Learning Structure

This course is completely online. If you are in a typical USF master's or doctoral course then you meet 9 teaching weekends over a semester. We do something very similar in this class but there are some differences. Specifically:

1. A learning module **begins** on a Teaching Weekend Saturday and lasts until the Friday of the next Teaching Weekend.
2. The first module officially begins on January 18. However that module is only one short week long. You will be given the opportunity to start before January 18 if you'd like more time to complete the first module.
3. The ninth and last module **begins** on Saturday May 2 and ends Friday May 15. Some may complain as the regular live classes typically end on May 2. You will have the opportunity to finish on May 2 or a few days later: but that's up to you. However the last date for submitting your final materials is May 15.
4. About half of your allotted learning time will be taken up with various exercises. These are not challenges you want to work on at the last moment: you simply won't succeed.

Each learning module contains:

1. A short text introduction to the module including an estimation of time hours needed for various components and an online checklist to keep track of your progress
2. Videos: this will be a primary learning approach for many modules.
3. Audio: there are not audio presentations for all modules. In a few cases there are lots of audio presentations.
4. Readings: these are mainly web articles with a small number of PDFs
5. Exercises: these give you the opportunity to test out, fail, regroup, and refine your skills. All exercises will result in a product that you upload to the **Share section** of the course website.

## Learning Modules

We explore several topics in this course. All the specific learning materials will be posted on the relevant page in the course website's **Module section**. Learning materials include research articles (in PDF format), audiobooks, videos, other documents, and web articles.

The learning modules are:

#	Module	Begin	End	Length
1	Scripts	Jan 18	Jan 24	<b>1 week</b>
2	Stories	Jan 25	Feb 7	2 weeks
3	Gear	Feb 8	Feb 21	2 weeks
4	Record	Feb 22	Mar 6	2 weeks
5	Repair & Clean	Mar 7	Mar 20	2 weeks
6	Edit	Mar 21	Apr 3	2 weeks
7	Mix	Apr 4	Apr 24	<b>3 weeks</b>
8	EQ & Effects	Apr 25	May 1	<b>1 week</b>
9	Publish	May 2	May 15	2 weeks

## Assignments & Grading

The course outcomes guide the assignments and grading for this course. You will be given a scaffolded set of assignments that will help develop and deepen your ability to create effective audio presentations. Here is a summary of the course assignments and their grading weights:

1. Participation & Timeliness: **10%**
2. Audio Presentation collection: **50%**
3. Reflections: **20%**
4. Mixing Products: **10%**
5. SoundCloud Playlist: **10%**

There are 100 points total for the course, thus grading weight (i.e. percentage) and points are exactly the same.

Participation and timeliness have to do with punctuality and participation for all activities. Timelines are incredibly important in this course. Missed timelines will tend to hurt you both in terms of timeliness but also in terms of quality of the expected work.

Assignment submittals include draft work on your audio presentations. In order for these to get full points you need to turn them in by the stated due date. The purpose of draft work is so you can get timely feedback from other students or the instructor. Draft work is not graded for quality or correctness, but on completeness of the assigned work and timely submittal.

A grade of A requires a point total of 93 or more. A- = 90–92 points. B+ = 87–89 points. B = 82–86, and B- = 80–81 points.

# Learning Materials

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There are several different learning materials you'll be using in this course. The most common learning materials are described below.

## **Out on the Wire**

This graphic-novel, written by Jessica Abel, is the textbook used in this course. The book can be bought for \$14 at Amazon. Purchase this book well in advance of January 18 as you'll need it during the short first module of the semester. Buy the regular paperback version as the book is in a graphic-novel format and likely won't read all that well on a Kindle device. Here's the direct link:

- [Out on the Wire @ Amazon](#)
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## **Web Articles**

You will have a number of articles posted on various websites to read. You will need to consult the course website to see the specific readings for each module.

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## **Video and Audio Presentations**

You will use several video and audio presentations. Some of these will be combined with PDF handouts. Most of the videos are in either a Vimeo or YouTube format. All of the video presentations can be viewed at the course website. Audio presentations can either be downloaded as either MP3 files or played at a linked-to website.

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## **Shared Hardware Gear**

The list below covers the gear that you will likely use, including some items you will need to purchase. In most cases you can share costs between two of you in a "shared pair". Please note that the two most expensive bits of gear are provided by the instructor.

### **Instructor Provided Gear**

1. [iRig Pre HD 2](#). \$99. Instructor provided
  2. [Shure SM58 microphone](#). \$99. Some students will use Sennheiser MD 46 mics. Instructor provided.
  3. [Sennheiser MZQ 800 Microphone Clamp](#). \$12.50. Instructor provided.
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## Student Purchased Gear

1. [XLR cables](#). \$16 for a package of 2. You can get cables at either 3 or 6 feet long
  2. [Mudder 5 pack windscreens](#). \$8. Very basic, but work well with both the Shure & Sennheiser mics
  3. [iRig to Mac cable for USB-C](#). \$7. For computers that only accept USB-C
  4. [Adjustable Desktop Stand](#). \$17. Simple and very good, desktop stand
  5. Storage Bag. This should be free. One of the people in the pair should have some sort of bag that can safely store all the gear equipment.
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## Audacity

Audacity is an impressive software product and it is free. It works on both Macs and Windows. We will use this software for recording and editing. It can also do mixing and some repair/cleaning but we will use more powerful software for those capabilities.

One disadvantage of free software is that it typically is not updated frequently: especially when there are OS upgrades. Currently this is true if you have upgraded your Mac to Catalina (10.15). In that case make sure to read this article:

- [How to put Audacity in your dock and use microphone in 10.15 Catalina - Audacity Forum](#). Unfortunately if you are using Mac OS Catalina (i.e. 10.15) then you may run into problems using Audacity. (That's also true with RX7.) This discussion thread link describes a way that some folks have gotten Audacity to work correctly on OS 10.15

Below are links to Audacity for downloading and general support:

1. [Audacity](#). Free recording and editing software for Macs and Windows.
2. [Audacity Manual](#)
3. [Audacity Website](#)

If you have problems using Audacity due to Catalina or other problems then there are other products you can use. You might want to consider the free only TwistedWave. This online editor and recorder will only work for 5 minutes of recording. (Note: you need to pay for longer recording and editing of audio.) I use the paid-for TwistedWave but it only works on Mac OS. To learn more about the online and free version of TwistedWave use this link:

- [Twisted Wave online editor](#).

## **iZotope RX7**

iZotope RX7 is fantastic software for cleaning and repairing audio files. Most iZotope products have 10 day trials, except RX 7 which has a 30 day trial (though not officially advertised). You won't start using this product until March 7. I recommend **not** installing it until that time: otherwise you may run out of time to use it for the full 30 days when you really need it. Currently RX7 is also not compatible with Mac OS Catalina, but it should be fine by March.

- [iZotope RX7 information](#)
  - [Mac RX7 download](#)
  - [Windows RX7 download](#)
  - [RX7 Guide to Repairs](#)
  - [iZotope Mac OS Catalina news re: products](#)
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## **Hindenburg Journalist**

Hindenburg Journalist is fantastic software for creating audio mixes. It works on Macs and Windows. You will download a 30-day trial version. We will start using it in April. Like with RX7, don't install before April as you want to take full advantage of the full 30 days once you start learning about mixing. If you want to purchase Hindenburg for yourself then it will cost \$85. Use the links below to learn more about Hindenburg:

- [Hindenburg Journalist](#)
- [Hindenburg Journalist support page](#)

## The Sharing Process

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Most folks in the class will share hardware gear with one other person. In cases where students already have suitable hardware then they will be granted an exception. You will need to email me the details of the gear you have before I can give an exception.

Here's how it works:

1. Based on the responses to the form I asked folks to complete I will pair up students to share one set of equipment
2. I will provide the iRig Pre HD plus a microphone and mic clips. In many cases I can supply a cable that goes from the iRig to your computer ... but not in all. So you may need to buy a relevant cable.
3. You will need to purchase (between the 2 of you): mic XLR cable, desktop stand, windscreen, and provide some sort of bag for storing and safeguarding the equipment.
4. Total costs across 2 people should always be less than \$50 (or \$25 each)

You will need to share the equipment back and forth. Ideally you would switch equipment with the other person **every week**. In some cases you may need to switch every two weeks. No matter what the switching routine is, the two of you need to make sure that each person gets access to the equipment for about 50% of the course.

Some exceptions to the above process of sharing may exist in the course. This will most likely exist with people who live outside the Bay Area. In those cases I will need to create a special sharing routine, or the out-of-towners can swap equipment at every teaching weekend when they are present at USF.

## Time Management

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When doing any course time management is important. But in this course it is triply important because ...

1. learning audio production is cumulative and you will quickly fall way behind if you don't keep up with the learning content and exercises
2. online learning tends to demand more self-discipline from learners. For procrastinators (you know who you are) and those with poor self-discipline online courses can be frustrating, even miserable.

So what to do? Well for each person it's different. I would develop a weekly timeline so you know exactly which days and times you will work on the course content. In general a learning module will require 15 hours of work from you: watching, listening, reading, and doing. So plan out where you will find those 15 hours for about every 2 weeks. (That's 7.5 hours a week.)

## **When to Start**

Every module begins on a teaching weekend Saturday. While it's not required you start on that Saturday you definitely do not want to start any later than the Sunday following a teaching weekend. You choose Saturday or Sunday as your start day, but starting later will get you into trouble soon enough.

Generally speaking there are 4 sections each learning module:

1. Videos
2. Audio
3. Readings
4. Exercises

It's not terribly important which section you begin with except that Exercises should always be done last! Use videos, audio, and readings in any order that suits your fancy.

Within the Exercise section (there's usually 3 to 7 of them) you are free to complete them in whatever order you want.

## **Pace Yourself**

The easiest way to think about this is that typically doing the Exercises will be the most demanding of you. In some cases it may take less time, but you will make a lot of mistakes in this course (and that's fine) so the Exercises will tend to be more difficult and frustrating to you. Thus plan on doing the Exercises (all or part of them) at times where you feel relaxed and have more time to "fool around" with things.

As for the content ... make sure to take good notes. Even if you spend an hour a day on the course that will work fine: as long as you can remember what you've learned. Notes are important!

The one thing you likely don't want to do is try to do everything in 1 or 2 days. That tends to be a recipe for disaster. However, scheduling in 3 or 4 or 6 hour chunks can work fine for many people.

## Use Checklists

Some of you may already bullet journal or use some other time management app or approach. That's great! Use whatever is helpful to you. But at the very least you want to create an ongoing outline or checklist of the things you have completed within each module. For instance, you may not want to watch all the videos at one sitting. That's understandable! But you'll confuse yourself if you don't maintain some sort of checklist or outline of things you have completed.

In addition, each module comes with its very own task checklist functionality! It has individual checks you can enter for the Exercises section, but not for the other sections. (It would be too hard for me to keep up to date as I may swap some videos or audios or readings as the course progresses.) So use the handy checklist feature within each module, but **also** maintain your own detailed checklist. Whether it's electronic or paper doesn't matter.

## For Your Consideration

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Below find some key issues to consider, and services to use, so that you maximize your effectiveness in this course. Not all of these will apply to you personally, but make sure you are aware of the opportunities for support with regards to writing, disabilities, and the expectations for academic honesty.

### Writing Center

Some students may wish to obtain editorial assistance with grammar, syntax, and style, which is acceptable. Editorial assistance for content is unacceptable. If you need help with the former, the Writing Center is located in Gleeson Library on the lower level at the main campus. Phone 415-422-6713 to arrange an appointment. The Writing Center will arrange for a writing coach to work with you at no cost. Help is also available online. You can find out more here:

- [myusf.usfca.edu/lwsc/writing-center](https://myusf.usfca.edu/lwsc/writing-center)

## **Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability or disabling condition, or if you think you may have a disability please contact USF Student Disability Services (SDS) at 415-422-2613 within the first week of class, or immediately upon onset of disability, to speak with a disability specialist. If you are determined eligible for reasonable accommodations, please meet with your disability specialist so they can arrange to have your accommodation letter sent to me, and we will discuss your needs for this course. For more information, please call (415) 422-2613 or visit:

- [usfca.edu/student-disability-services](https://usfca.edu/student-disability-services)

## **Academic Honesty**

Whenever you quote from, make reference to, or use ideas attributable to others in your writing, you must identify these sources in citations or references or both. If you do not identify the source, whether deliberately or accidentally, then you have committed plagiarism. Plagiarism, defined as the act of stealing or using as one's own the ideas of another, is not permitted in work submitted for courses at USF or in any published writing. Please read the complete text related to academic honesty in the Fogcutter Student Handbook under "Student Conduct, University Standards, Policies and Procedures:

- [myusf.usfca.edu/fogcutter](https://myusf.usfca.edu/fogcutter)

University faculty may use internet-based services to identify those portions of the person's written assignments that might not meet the full standards of academic integrity.