

**COURSE SYLLABUS Digital Storytelling  
COMM 420-201  
Loyola University Chicago**

**FALL SEMESTER 2023**

**INSTRUCTOR  
JOHN C.P. GOHEEN**

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**CLASS LOCATION:** Water Tower - School of Communication - Room 003

**OFFICE LOCATION:** Lewis Towers 910A

**OFFICE HOURS:** By Appointment

**OFFICE PHONE:** Email Professor

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** [jgoheen@luc.edu](mailto:jgoheen@luc.edu)  
Email messages from students will be answered within 48 hours. An email on Friday may not receive a response until Monday.

**INSTRUCTOR WEB PAGE:** Sakai

**CLASS HOURS:** Wednesday 7:00 pm – 9:30 p.m.

**PREREQUISITE:** NONE

## **A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

COMM 420-201 is an entry-level graduate course that will serve as an introduction to basic video/audio /editing production. The goal of the course is for the student to develop the ability to capture video images and audio, and to be able to edit those elements together to tell a story using best practice methods and techniques.

**During the course each student will be taught:**

- The basic understanding of how to capture video for use in visual storytelling.
- The basic principles of how to capture great video and audio.
- How to edit video and audio.
- How to tell a story by combining video and audio.

## **B. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION**

The primary design of this course will be lecture, group discussion and individual participation. Homework assignments will require students to execute the basic fundamentals being taught in the classroom.

Building a good foundation is critical to success and a clear understanding of basic standards is essential before advancing to the next level. Everyone's work will be evaluated and critiqued and made available to all students. Constructive criticism should never be taken personally, understanding that storytelling is often a collaborative process.

Hands-on training is where each student develops the physical and mental skills necessary to perform each task successfully. This may require some students to put in more time and effort to be successful. Students should reach out to those in the class who may have more knowledge, skill and a willingness to help those with less natural skill or experience and have no hesitation to contact Professor Goheen for guidance.

## **C. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Learn to capture video for use in video storytelling.
- Capture well-composed video images.
- Capture great sound.
- Edit video and audio into a compelling story.

## **D. TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLIES REQUIRED**

**No textbook required for this course.**

## **Required Equipment**

- Headphones or earbuds for computer audio monitoring
- "AA" batteries
- Lens Cleaning Tissue
- 1 Roll of Clear Medical Tape
- 2 - Portable Hard Drives (1 recommended as a back-up drive)
- One Class 6 or Class 10 SDHC card
- External Wireless Microphone for Smartphone

## **Optional Equipment** (recommended students purchase these items if possible)

Tripod for Smart Phone  
Smartphone Mount  
(see guideline handout for suggested items to purchase)

You will need an external hard drive in order to edit your projects. It is recommended you get an SSD drive. These drives typically cost more but will last longer and work best with today's faster computers and software requirements.

### **SSDs Have a Long Lifespan**

Since SSDs don't have moving parts, they're very reliable. In fact, most SSDs can last over five years, while the most durable units exceed ten years. For most components, the measure is typically in thousands or even tens of thousands of hours between failures. For example, an HDD (your typical hard drive) may have a mean time between failures of 300,000 hours, while an SSD might have 1.5 million hours. You can use an HDD, but it will be slower than an SSD drive.

There are many different brands that will serve you well. Some brands to consider would be SanDisk, Samsung, and Western Digital.

Many online and local retailers provide these kinds of drives. Local stores such as Best Buy, Apple, OfficeMax, Office Depot, etc., are good places to consider a purchase as well.

If the drive is brand new, we will format in class.

## **Will your Computer work with Adobe Premiere Pro?**

As part of this class, you will be given an Adobe license that will allow you to have full access to programs such as Premiere Pro, the edit software you will be learning to use for this course. The computer you have may not be powerful enough to handle the most recent version of Adobe and Premiere Pro. Below you will find the minimum specs required to have for any personal computer you may want to download this software to. If you do not meet these requirements, you may find your computer runs very slow or other problems may occur that will keep you from efficiently editing your assignments. You will be able to access the school's computers with no problems whenever you edit an assignment.

**\*The minimum specifications for Windows devices are:**

- An Intel 6thGen or newer CPU - or an AMD Ryzen 1000 series or newer CPU.
- Microsoft Windows 10 (64-bit) version 1909 or later.
- 16 GB of Ram.
- 2 GB of GPU memory.
- 8 GB of hard disk space for installation.
- 1920 x 1080 display.
- An ASIO-compatible sound card.
- Internet connection

**\*For MacOS, the minimum system requirements users need is:**

- An Intel 6thGen or newer CPU.
- MacOS v10.
- 16 GB of Ram.
- 8 GB of unified memory on Apple Silicon GPUs or 2 GB of unified memory on Intel GPUs.
- 8 GB of hard disk space for installation (though you'll need much more than that to actually edit videos on your system)

## E. Grading Plan

- In-class participation accounts for 10% of overall grade – this includes attendance, quizzes, exams and classroom involvement in critique and question and answer sessions.
- Individual projects account for 60% of grade.
- Final project accounts for 30% of grade.

### GRADING SCALE

A 4.0  
A- 3.67

B+ 3.33  
B 3.0  
B- 2.67

C+ 2.33  
C 2.0  
C - 1.67

**Non-Passing**

### NUMERICAL VALUE

**A**  
96-100 = A  
90-95 = A-

**B**  
86-89 = B+  
83-85 = B  
80-82 = B-

**C**  
76-79 = C+  
73-75 = C  
70-72 = C-

**D**

D+ 1.33  
D 1.0  
D- .67

67-69 = D+  
64-66 = D  
61-63 = D-

**F**

0-60 = F

- **A, A-** Indicates well-executed assignments and full understanding of the subject. The letter A is reserved for extraordinary distinction.
- **B+, B, B-** Indicates a good comprehension of course requirements to include a good understanding of the skills needed to adequately function in this area of study.
- **C+, C, C-** Indicates a basic comprehension of the course material and has met the requirements for completing assigned work and participating in class activities.
- **D+, D, D-** Work is unsatisfactory.

## **F. CAUSE FOR DEFICIENCIES**

### **Attendance**

Regular and on time attendance is essential for the educational process to work. Loyola University expects all students to attend every scheduled class on time. Exceptions may be made for University sponsored or work-related activities, illness or valid emergency situations.

You should make every effort to inform Professor Goheen as soon as possible of any absence or inability to turn an assignment in on time. If you know of a conflict, please don't wait to inform his at the last minute. Remember, we are in the School of Communication...so please make an effort to communicate. Due to the short time frame for this course, it is imperative to keep up with all assignments.

### **Late work or failure to complete assignment(s)**

Any work turned in after the designated due date will receive a 10-point grade reduction for each week it is late, even if by one day. No work will be accepted after two weeks have passed from the due date and that assignment will receive a 0 or incomplete grade. The Final assignment must be turned in on time and if not turned in on time, there will only be a one-week grace period for acceptance with a 15-point penalty for late turn-in. If not received, this assignment will receive a grade of 0 for incomplete.

## **G. COURSE COMPONENT SPECIFICS**

Students will be given multiple homework assignments to be completed outside the normal scheduled classroom.

### **Class Participation**

Participation is always valued and is expected of all students. Each student should make an effort to contribute in all classroom discussions. Class participation will be considered as grading criteria for your Final course grade.

## **Grading Components**

The following are the major areas by which each assignment may be reviewed and graded:

- Pacing
- Content
- Framing
- Jump-cuts
- Sequencing
- Storytelling
- Use of audio
- Audio quality
- Tri-pod usage
- Video stability
- Hand-held shots
- Screen Direction
- Use of proper settings on camera
- Following directions of assignment

## **H. LOYOLA'S POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

The basic commitment of a university is to search for and to communicate the truth as it is honestly perceived. The university could not accomplish its purpose in the absence of this demanding standard. To the extent that this standard is respected, a genuine learning community can exist. Students at this university are called upon to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Plagiarism is a serious form of violation of this standard. Plagiarism is the appropriation for gain of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the deliberate taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources.

The faculty and administration of Loyola University Chicago wish to make it clear that the following acts are regarded as serious violations of personal honesty and the academic ideal that binds the university into a learning community:

Submitting as one's own:

- Material copied from a published source: print, internet, CD, audio, still photos, video, etc.
- Another person's unpublished work or examination material.
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper, capture video or edit a video for one's own benefit.

- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper or video story or project.

The critical issue is to give proper recognition to other sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty.

Plagiarism on the part of a student in academic work or dishonest examination behavior will result minimally in the instructor assigning the grade of “F” for the assignment or examination. In addition, all instances of academic dishonesty must be reported to the chairperson of the department involved. The chairperson may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct.

Academic cheating is another serious act that violates academic integrity. Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher; providing information to or obtaining information from another student during the examination; attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted; and falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences all are violations of the integrity and honesty standards of the examination process.

## **I. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)**

**Diversity** is the representation of different and unique identities, characteristics, experiences and perspectives.

**Equity** gives everyone what they need to succeed by increasing access, resources, and opportunities for all; especially for those who are underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged.

**Inclusion** is a welcoming culture in which differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential

At Loyola we strive to create and maintain a working and learning environment that is inclusive, equitable and welcoming to all. The power of diversity enriches each of us by exposing us to a range of ways to understand and engage with the world, identify challenges that enable us to discover, design, deliver solutions and create content that reflects these ideals.

The School of Communication is committed to working to build and sustain an equitable and inclusive environment where cultural diversity is celebrated and valued. We believe diversity benefits and enrich the development of all of our students and community. It is important for everyone to recognize they have a responsibility to develop and create content that does not reinforce, support or perpetuate stereotypes, untruths or other callus representations of any person, group or subject matter.

## **J. ILLEGAL ACTIVITY**

Documenting with either audio or video, being present at an illegal activity or knowingly violation of any local, state, or federal laws related to the execution of any assignment will automatically exclude it from being accepted for a grade. In addition, the same exclusion applies if you learn after the fact that your actions were of an illegal nature.

Incorporating the use of inappropriate or socially unacceptable images or audio into your work will automatically exclude it from being accepted for a grade.

## **K. SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students are urged to contact Professor Goheen should they have questions concerning course materials and procedures. If you have a special circumstance that may have some impact on your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact Professor Goheen early in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD). Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SSWD website: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/index.shtml>

## **L. LIABILITY ISSUES**

Students will be instructed prior to their first assignment on the general nature of privacy and trespassing laws. From time-to-time students may find themselves in a position where someone may not approve of them capturing their image. In cases such as this, it is best to honor the wishes of this person. Even though you may very well be within your rights to gather this information to include both audio and video, it would be best if students “walk away” from the situation before it escalates.

In the event something does occur, please do the following:

- Contact faculty advisor
- Contact the department head

## **Guidelines for Recording Students During Online Classes**

- To act in accordance with Illinois Eavesdropping Statute, students are hereby notified they may be subject to being recorded during course activities such as synchronous ZOOM or other sessions during instruction of this course.
- **Block Video Downloads by Students:**

To limit the circulation of recordings of students (e.g. recorded synchronous sessions, student presentations) beyond the classroom, and their possible use for “commercial purposes” as described in the Illinois Publicity Act, students’ ability to download video recordings will be restricted. All systems currently used by Loyola for recording (Panopto, VoiceThread, and Zoom) will be set to prevent students from downloading



videos. This will not impact students' ability to view the recordings when the student has an internet connection. If there is a need for students to download specific recordings, please contact the Office of Online Learning for guidance (online@luc.edu). Faculty retain the ability to download recordings.

- **Written Consent of Students:**

In alignment with Illinois law and the University Privacy Statement (above), instructors who wish to use an online class recording that includes student activity beyond the class in which it was recorded may do so only with the informed written consent of the students involved or if all student activity is removed from the recording. A release form created by the Office of the General Counsel must be signed by students.

- **Recording Guidelines for Online Faculty:**

- Only store recordings on Loyola-approved systems that restrict access to class members (ITRS can provide instructions).

Access to recordings is only for students enrolled in that class and that all recordings will be unavailable to students in the class when the Sakai course is unpublished (i.e. shortly after the course ends, per the Sakai administrative schedule)

- Video recordings cannot be downloaded and can only be viewed when the student has an internet connection.
- Students should share any concerns they may have about being recorded privately with the instructor prior to the first recording (e.g. the first synchronous session).

## **M. EQUIPMENT USE**

Loyola University prides itself on providing state-of-the-art equipment for its students to learn the craft of visual story telling.

The School of Communication provides cameras, tripods, microphones, lighting and editing equipment that can be checked out from the Equipment Room (OWL Lab) in SOC 004.

This equipment passes through the hands of many students and in order to assure that the equipment remains in good working order, treat it like your own. **You** are financially responsible for all of the equipment you use and should treat it with great care. This kind of equipment is not indestructible, and it is susceptible to various environmental situations such as a dirt, dust, rain, snow, water, and heat. Caution should be taken when transporting all equipment as this equipment is fragile and can easily be damaged. Be aware of your environment and where you are at all times. This type of equipment is popular with thieves and can easily be pilfered if you are not paying attention. Do not rely on others to be the one responsible for “watching” the equipment.

In the event something should happen, everyone in the group will be considered a responsible party.

Do not leave equipment in a parked vehicle where it can easily be stolen from the backseat. If you do have to leave equipment in your car, do so by placing in the trunk. But again, as a reminder, do not let the equipment roll around uncontrollably when in motion.

You may use your own equipment, but first clear this with Professor Goheen before any assignment.

Additional information can be obtained from the Production Coordinator:

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION - PRODUCTION FACILITIES WATER TOWER  
CAMPUS SOC 51 E. PEARSON Audio and Visual Production Coordinator:

**Paul Quinn** [pquinn3@luc.edu](mailto:pquinn3@luc.edu)  
OWL Lab (SOC 004 - 312.915.8830)

## N. CLASS SCHEDULE – Wednesday 12:35 p.m. – 3:05 p.m.

**\* Assignment Given \* Due Assignment Footage \* Due Assignment Fully Edited**

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### Week 1

#### August 30

First Day of Class – Introduction of Course – What’s your story?

**Purchase – At least 1 Class 6 or 10, 8 Gig (or larger) - SD card (2 preferred).  
Avoid getting anything larger than 16 gigs.**



**Purchase – iPhone wireless mic**

<https://tinyurl.com/3bv4yd43>

**Purchase – Android wireless mic**

<https://tinyurl.com/pwv9mbuw>



You will need a hard drive for editing. Make sure the drive is clean of any other material and is properly formatted for MAC or PC or there is a separate folder for this class. For those who purchase a new drive, we will format in class. It is highly recommended to have an SSD drive.

**WEEK 2**  
**September 6**

**DUE** – Come to class with hard drive to edit on.

Register Equipment for OWL LAB.

Do's and Don'ts.

Learn the basics – lecture on composition – rule of thirds – screen direction – the nose rule – framing – light elements – tri-pod use – wireless mic - Lecture on capturing audio in the field.

Reading Assignment - Camera manual and screen Video Tutorial (Quiz next week on this).

**Learn to edit. Walking with Sopo.**

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**Week 3**  
**September 13**

**Due Fully Edited Walking with Sopo - Editing Assignment #1 Learn to convert a video project. Assign second part of Editing with Sopo Exercise.**

**Come to class with – Smartphone wireless mic**

**Lecture on Smartphone technology – Video and Audio capture with a smartphone**

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**Week 4**  
**September 20**

**DUE - Editing Assignment #1 Walking with Sopo to include screen grab.**

**Pick-up equipment from OWL LAB. Learn the equipment – In-class lecture and presentations. Take equipment outside to get familiar with it.**

**Bring to class – 1 Class 6 or 10, 8 Gig or larger - SD card, AA batteries, tape.**

The purpose of this exercise is for you to demonstrate your ability to compose interviews, proper use of a level and steady tripod, proper color balance, focus, exposure, and good audio. Review composition and following the NOSE rule.

Quiz on Camera Tutorial and manual.

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**Week 5**  
**September 27**

**Bring to class – 1 Class 6 or 10, 8 Gig or larger - SD card, AA batteries, tape.**

**Pick-up equipment from OWL LAB. Learn the equipment – In-class lecture and presentations. Take equipment outside to get familiar with it.**

Video Assignment #1 – LAST PHOTO Assignment – Interviews and still photos.

Lecture on incorporating video and audio to tell a story.

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**Week 6  
October 4**

**Begin edit in class - Assignment #1 Last Photo footage and hard drive. Learn how to ingest footage during class time. Edit Video Assignment #1 into a sequence on the timeline.**

**Assign Video Assignment #2 Neighborhood/Cemetery/Business Profile**

**Introduce Loyola Music Library**

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**Week 7  
October 11**

**DUE - Assignment #1 Last Photo**

**Mid-Semester Break:** No Monday or Tuesday Classes

**Begin Edit in Class - Video Assignment #2  
Neighborhood/Cemetery/Business.**

**Assign - Video Assignment #3 - Shooting into Frame /  
Matched Action / Cut-a-ways**

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**Week 8  
October 18**

**DUE - Fully Edited - Video Assignment #2 Neighborhood /  
Cemetery / Business – Add title and credits**

Instruct how to add TEXT/Credits

**Assign - 3 fully developed ideas for Final Project**

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**Week 9  
October 25**

**Begin edit in class - Video Assignment #3 - Shooting into Frame /**

**Matched Action / Cut-a-ways**

**Assign - Assignment #4 - Two Person Conversation**

**or**

**Napoleon Dynamite**

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**Week 10  
November 1**

**DUE - Fully Edited - Video Assignment #3 - Shooting into Frame / Matched Action / Cut-a-ways**

**Present Final Project Ideas in front of class**

**Assign Final Project Instructions**

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**Week 11  
November 8**

**Begin edit - Two Person Conversation footage ingested on individual hard drive...begin edit in class**

**OR**

**Napoleon Dynamite**

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**Week 12  
November 15**

**DUE - Assignment #4 - Two Person Conversation**

**OR**

**Napoleon Dynamite**

**Begin working on Final Project if you are prepared to begin the edit**

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**Week 13  
November 22**

**Thanksgiving Holliday**

**NO CLASS this week**

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**Week 14**  
**November 29**

**DUE – Rough/Fine-cut Final Project - *This is a graded assignment***

***This is the only assignment where the edit does not start in class***

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**Week 15**  
**December 6**

**LAST DAY CLASS MEETS**

**Due - Final Project - *This is a graded assignment***

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**Week 16**  
**December 11-16 Finals Week - **We do not meet****

### **Fieldwork - considerations:**

Under normal circumstances, there would be an expectation that you would be able to easily interact with anyone in the community, allowing you to interview others or document a scene without giving much thought as to how you go about this.

Different working conditions may require different approaches as to how best to complete an assignment (i.e., interviewing people, capturing video and/or audio, taking photos, etc.). Various health concerns may dictate a different approach as to how best to go about working in the field. You should always be attentive to the public health environment with a heightened sense of awareness. This should factor into every assignment.

We will regularly focus on how to conduct production in the field during this course. For example, wearing a mask during fieldwork/interviews, even outdoors, may be encouraged or prudent, depending on each situation.

At the minimum, you must conduct all fieldwork in a thoughtful and reasonable fashion with the intent of meeting deadlines while respecting the people you are working with.

Should a student have an issue with how to complete an assignment, they should reach out to Professor Goheen to discuss a course of action that will allow them to fulfill the assignment.

## **O. SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS**

Do the work

Pay attention  
Communicate  
Be resourceful  
Take good notes  
Show up on time  
Make no excuses  
Come to class prepared  
Stay for the entire class  
Treat the class like a job  
Be fully engaged in class  
Don't be afraid to ask for help  
Take the initiative to learn and succeed  
Don't wait until the last minute to do the assignment

## **P. INSTRUCTOR BIO**

**John C.P. Goheen** is an award-winning filmmaker, storyteller and documentary filmmaker with over 35 years of experience. He has traveled the world documenting major news events and sharing stories with all the major American television networks and international clients. He continues to shoot and produce for various domestic and international organizations.

He has received over 300 local, national and international awards with work he has produced for a variety of U.S. television networks, local TV stations and international broadcasters. He has received virtually every major broadcast award there is, to include over a dozen Emmys, as well as being honored three times with the most prestigious award a television photojournalist can receive, the National Press Photographer's Association Television News Photographer of the Year.

He is extremely knowledgeable in the area of video/film production and storytelling.