

**M-Pro Visual Journalism: J-380V 08075**

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**Lectures:** Mondays, 9-11, CMA 6.174

**Labs:** Wednesdays 4-8pm BMC 3.208

**Mary's Office Hours:**  
Mon 2-3:30 & Weds. 1:30-3

**Pinar's Office Hours:**  
TBA

**Why take this course?** Today's journalists are expected to be able to speak the language of words and images. Images can persuade us at an emotional and visceral level in ways that words do not. In combination with words, images can be even more powerful. For all these reasons, it is essential for journalists to know how to use images in their storytelling, how to critique and interpret images, and how to use them responsibly. Or because, based on the preceding reasons, it's required. The skills you learn here will help you get and keep your next job.

**Description:** This course is designed to present you with the “what” and the “why” of visual communication. We will go over the basic skills for digital visual journalism and design as well as the theory behind how it conveys meaning. We will explore the principles of photography, design, typography and color theory. Along the way, you'll learn some basic skills with *Photoshop*, *Final Cut*, *Illustrator*, and web page design.

And yet: this is not a course in *Final Cut*, *Illustrator* or *Photoshop*. The digital world is moving too fast to try to master any particular program at this stage of your career. Our focus will be on the principles of good design and communication, not advanced proficiencies with any particular software.

You will be expected to work as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century internet citizen, which means doing a certain amount of self-education. Learn how to practice your skills in the lab, read the support materials for your programs, consult online tutorials and watch educational videos. Take advantage of the College Fresh-Up courses and Lynda.com. You will need to devote a significant amount of time in lab EVERY WEEK —practicing with the software will be the best way to learn.

**This course explores three broad questions:**

1. How do human beings interpret and respond to visual communication?
2. How can journalists use visual communication to enhance their storytelling?
3. What ethical principles can guide journalists in their visual communication?

**By the end of this course, you should be able to:**

1. Consider, plan, and execute a visual strategy for any story.
2. Analyze and critique images in the language of art criticism, rhetoric and ideology
3. demonstrate knowledge of the history of photojournalism and the relationship between technology and visual journalism
4. demonstrate knowledge of the ethical considerations in the processes of image creation and media production
5. apply the concepts of design, narrative and aesthetics to the creation of visual media projects

**Required Materials**

- Kobre, K. (2013). *Photojournalism: The professionals' approach*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Burlington, MA: Focal Press. (*available at the Coop – feel free to use the 5<sup>th</sup> edition*)

*This book is available as an e-book through PCL (we will read two chapters):*

- Barry, A. (1997). *Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image and Manipulation in Visual Communication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

*Other required readings will be available online.*

**Also Required:**

- Start reading BagNewsNotes, Lens (with the New York Times) and InSight (Washington Post)
- Please join the UTNPPA group on Facebook
- Sign on the UT's Lynda.Com account and become a user. Today's multi-media journalists must be autodidactic; it's the only way to keep up.
- Website:** You will be required to create, update and maintain a Website for this class. You may already have your own URL and domain – that is fine, as long as you can create pages and adjust them for class projects. You may use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace – or any other service that you like. Make sure you can customize your site and that the URL is appropriate for your professional goals.
- Instagram, Vimeo & a Smart Phone Video Editor:** Create accounts with these services for your assignments.

**Learning Management System:** In this class I will be using *Canvas* — a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday-Thursday 8am-10pm, Friday 8am-6pm, and Sat-Sun 12pm-5pm.

**Note:** because we will coordinate deadlines with J380-W, the schedule on this document is tentative and subject to change. All official deadlines will be on *Canvas*.

**Grading:** Grades are distributed according to a point system. Students will be assessed according to their ability to demonstrate a mastery of the material (knowledge) and their ability to demonstrate thoughtful synthesis of the material (critical thinking skills). Letter grades will be based on percentages.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93% & above	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	61-62	61% & below

**Take note: students must earn a 61% to pass.**

**Failure to complete ALL assignments risks an F, no matter what the percentage earned.**

Use the assignment chart on page 10 provided to keep track of your grades.

**Visual Assignment Grading:**

- 1. The visual artifact fits the assignment and enhances the story. 

0	1	2	3	4
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- 2. The visual artifact is well-produced *technically*. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 3. The visual artifact is well-crafted *aesthetically*. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 4. The visual artifact reflects a creative use of resources. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 5. The visual artifact makes good use of available technology. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 6. The visual artifact was produced within ethical guidelines 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 7. The visual artifact is used according to ethical guidelines 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 8. The production report is complete and clearly written. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 9. The production report uses appropriate grammar & spelling. 

0	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---
- 10. The entire assignment was submitted properly and on time. 

0	1	2	3	4
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### Classroom Policies

I am dedicated to your success – but it remains your success, not mine. If something in your life is interfering with your studies, if you are ill, if you are having trouble with the material or if you are somehow encountering anything else that is getting in the way of your learning, please let me know as early as possible so that I can help.

**Deadlines:** Without *prior* arrangements, work can be submitted up to one week later for 50% credit. For example, if it's a 100-point assignment and you turn it in up to a week late, the most you can receive is 50-points. ***After a week, the work is not accepted and is graded as a zero.*** It is your responsibility to work on your assignments in a timely manner and to avoid last-minute problems. It is your responsibility to take care of your computer, your flash drive, and know where the printers are on campus. It is your responsibility to back up your work.

**Cell phones & Computers:** I love my phone too, but there is great value in our face-to-face interaction. For our lecture sessions, turn off your cell phone, your iPod, your Kindle and your laptop. The distractions of the computer outweigh the advantages. I know what you're doing when you look at your own lap during class. Turn it off.

**E-Mail policy:** E-mail is the best way to reach me. I check it at least every 24 hours. I will always try to answer e-mails quickly, *but not necessarily immediately.* At the very most a response might take 48 hours (weekends, etc. may slow me down.) During the work week, YOU are expected to check your e-mail every 24 hours.

**Attendance:** I make note of your attendance for every class, and this is folded into your participation grade. While I do not wish to know about day-to-day attendance issues, I DO require documented excused in the cases of exams or assignment deadlines. As in the professional world, it is better to make arrangements for an absence BEFORE a test or deadline – keep track of your obligations in a planner. But emergencies do happen. Legitimate reasons for missing a test or deadline might include:

- Medical care (written documentation required – not an elective appointment!).
- Absence due to participation in an authorized University activity (written documentation required).
- Absence due to attendance at legal proceedings requiring your presence (advance notification and written documentation required).
- Absence due to the death or serious illness of an immediate family member (written documentation required).

An excused absence involves something that's *not under your control*. Appointments you make, such as a routine dental or medical appointment, are under your control and are **\*NOT\*** legitimate.

**Make-Up Work:** You must make arrangements with me in advance to make up work, and you must provide me with a documented, legitimate excuse to do so. If you are ill, or facing an emergency, you must notify me (just as you would a boss at work). In the case of a missed exam or presentation, we can re-schedule once you provide me with a document that explains your legitimate excuse.

**Grade Discussions:** I do not discuss grades via e-mail. I post your grades to Canvas and expect you to monitor your grades and make sure my records match yours. Please hang on to all graded materials until the end of the semester. If you want to discuss a grade, you may visit during office hours or make an appointment to do so face to face.

**Food:** Food is not allowed in the lab, for obvious reasons. During lecture, please use common sense and courtesy; that is, nothing smelly or messy.

## UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS POLICIES AND INFORMATION

**University of Texas Honor Code:** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

**Scholastic Dishonesty:** The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

**Special note on plagiarism:** It bears repeating: using material that is not yours without proper attribution is *plagiarism*. For clarification, the library has a module that you'll need to complete as part of the course: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/>

**Use of Class Materials:** The materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, exams, quizzes, and homework assignments are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized copying of the class materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary actions being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of class materials without the specific, express approval of the instructor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of sharing those materials with other current or future students.

### Course Evaluation:

During this course I will be asking you to give me feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. It's very important for me to know your reaction to what we're doing in class, so I encourage you to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

At the end of the semester, there will be a formal survey as well. These course instructor surveys are required by school policy and reviewed by senior faculty administrators as an important component in annual faculty evaluations. These surveys are strictly confidential, and I have no access to the results until I get a summary after the semester is completed. I also encourage you to take time to write your open-ended feedback in the space provided, as these comments are often the most informative.

**Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students:** All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. (I recommend daily during the work-week). A complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564>.

**Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Q drop Policy:** The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231: “Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

**Student Veteran Services:** If you’re a vet – thank you for your service! Here are some UT resources: Office of the Dean of Students: <http://utstudentveteranservices.org>  
Academic Support Resources: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/veterans/academicupport.php>

**Documented Disability Statement:** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

Please notify me *as quickly as possible* if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.). Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD’s website for more disability-related information:  
[http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for\\_cstudents.php](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php)

#### **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**Emergency Evacuation Policy:** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
- Questions about emergency evacuations? More information on routes and procedures can be found at this link: [www.utexas.edu/emergency](http://www.utexas.edu/emergency)
- And as a reminder: the Behavior Concerns Advice Line, BCAL: 512-232-5050

### Copyright and Fair Use: For Production Classes Only

You may find the need to use copyrighted material this semester: music, photographs, movie clips, or any other expression. For many of your uses, you need to find the copyright holder and negotiate a license. You own the copyright to the work you produce in this class. As a copyright holder yourself, you understand the importance of copyright ownership. It is your responsibility to secure music and archival footage licenses as well as artwork, location and personal releases. You will find release templates on the RTF website.

For some uses, however, neither you nor anyone else needs to license copyrighted material. This is because copyright law exists to encourage and support creativity. Copyright law recognizes that creativity doesn't arise in a vacuum. As creators, we all stand on the shoulders of giants. New works of art (such as films, books, poems, paintings) all make use of what has gone before. Thus, copyright law not only protects authors with a copyright that lets them decide who can use their works, but also offers exemptions from the author's control.

For filmmakers, the most important exemption is the doctrine of fair use. You can rely on fair use, where appropriate, in the film and video projects you undertake for this course. If you are making a documentary film, consult the influential [Documentary Filmmakers Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use \(PDF\)](#) which was created by a group of national filmmaker organizations, has been endorsed by the University Film and Video Association, and is now relied on by film festivals, insurers, cablecasters, distributors and public broadcasters. Fair use also applies in the fiction film environment, but not necessarily to the same extent or in the same way. As always, the central question is whether the new use is "transformative" -- i.e., whether it adds significant value by modifying or re-contextualizing the original.

For more information, visit <http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/>

### Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin:

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning. You are particularly encouraged to use the Learning Skills Center on campus for help on writing assignments. Also, the PCL reference librarians can assist you with online news retrieval and other information finding tasks.

- The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>
- Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
- Oral presentation: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/sig/propose/requirements/communication>
- Writing (generally):  
<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/sig/faculty/writing>  
<http://www46.homepage.villanova.edu/john.immerwahr/UTAustin.htm>
- Newswriting:  
<http://ddce.utexas.edu/academiccenter/2013/11/01/lcae-opens-new-journalism-writing-center/>
- Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>
- Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>
- Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>
- Safety issues: <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/terms/>

## Tentative Schedule

**Note: Deadlines will be coordinated with J-380W assignments and are subject to change. Consult Canvas for the official assignment deadlines.**

Week	Date:	Material	Read this ahead:	Assignment Due
1	LAB Aug 26 <sup>th</sup>	Welcome, Syllabus, Lab Rules	The Syllabus	Plagiarism Tutorial, Contract
2	Aug. 31 <sup>st</sup>	How does Vision Work? Equipment Checkout Briefing	Barry CH 1	
	LAB Sept. 2	Set up your Website	Kobre 1-3	<i>Five Story ideas</i> <i>By end of lab: your URL</i>
3	Sept. 7	☺ Labor Day Holiday Off ☺		
	LAB Sep 9	Photoshop & Using your DSLR	Kobre 8	<i>*Check out a DSLR</i>
4	Sept. 14	Vocabulary of the Visual	Barry CH 2	P1: Object Photos & Production Report
	LAB Sept. 16	Photoshop Basics	Kobre Digital Darkroom	
5	Sept. 21	Visual Stereotypes <b>Portraits &amp; Freelancing SPKR</b>	Kobre 4, 5, 6	
	LAB Sept. 23	Elements of a photo story Lighting	Kobre 9	<i>*Check out a DSLR</i>
6	Sept 28	History of Photojournalism	Kobre 17	P2: Portrait & Production Report
	Sept. 30	Creating a photo story	Kobre 7 & 11	
7	Oct. 5	Visual/Photo Ethics	Kobre 15, 16 PLUS Canvas Readings	
	LAB Oct. 7	Mobile Video Editing		
8	Oct. 12	Design History, Propaganda <b>Newspaper VJ (SPKR)</b>	Kobre 13	P3: Photo Story Page & Production Report
	LAB Oct. 14	Video: Using the Camera, Lights and Tripod	CJR Video Article	<i>Check out a video kit</i>



Week	Date	Material	Read this ahead:	Assignment Due
9	Oct. 19	History of Film & TV, Filmic Narrative	Film Editing (on Canvas)	
	LAB Oct. 21	Video Editing Basics		
10	Oct. 26	Fonts & Text Design	TBA	P4: Mobile Video & Production Report
	LAB Oct. 28	Video Editing: Titles & Sound		
11	Nov. 2	Maps, Cartoons, Graphs Ethics of Representation	Kobre 14	
	LAB Nov. 4	Illustrator Basics		
12	Nov. 9	Contexts & Inter-Textuality	TBA	P5: Video Story & Production Report
	LAB Nov. 11	Helvetica		
13	Nov. 16	(Catching Up)	Kobre 12	
	Nov. 18	Advanced Web Design		
14	Nov. 23	Pitching Stories	Kobre 18	P6: Advanced Skill & Production Report
	☺ Thanksgiving Eve: No Lab ☺			
15	Nov. 30	The future is here: Interactivity, Games, Virtual Reality SPKR: RB!	TBA	Pitch Letter
	LAB: Dec. 2	Creating a Story Page		

**P7 (Full Story Page with Graphic & Production Report) due Dec. 9th, 5pm**

### Assignments, Exercises & Assessment

**Participation in lecture and in lab** will be assessed according to your attendance and preparedness.

**Office Visits:** You are required to visit me in my office, during office hours or by mutually convenient appointment, to discuss your goals and progress twice during the semester.

**Newsroom Meeting Contributions:** A good part of our meetings in lecture and lab will be like story meetings. Come prepared with ideas for your own story, thoughts on the visual coverage of current events, and with thoughtful critiques for your colleagues. “Thoughtful” means constructive and informed in terms of visual theory and journalistic values.

**Instagram:** Open an Instagram account and tell me your ID so I can follow you. Post at least ten images with captions – use the account to reflect what we’re discussing in class. You’ll receive a checklist for this assignment.

**College Show & Tell:** Three times during the semester you’ll be expected to discuss an image from the news. We’ll be developing skills and vocabulary for doing this over the course of the semester. We’ll work out a schedule in during the semester’s start.

**Visual Projects:** You will create seven projects during the semester: a photo-shopped image, a portrait, a videolicious clip, a video, an infographic and a web page. You will have the option to go further with any one of these skills for an advanced project of your choice.

**Professional Submission:** At the end of the semester, you will a) research an appropriate venue for your work b) craft a professional submission letter and c) submit your work for consideration in a professional publication . It does not have to be accepted for you to receive credit for this assignment; the task is designed to get you thinking about researching venues and writing a pitch.

	Assignment	Points Possible	Points Earned
Professionalism	Lecture Participation	25	
	Lab Attendance	15	
	College “Show & Tell” (three)	15	
	Newsroom Meeting Contributions	25	
	Visits 1 & 2	5 & 5	
	Professional Submission	10	
Instagram	Ten Photos & Captions	50	
Projects	Object	50	
	Portrait	50	
	Videolicious	50	
	Video	50	
	Infographic	50	
	Web Page	50	
	Your Choice: Advanced Skill	50	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	

\*The point system is designed to give you one “free” day off if needed