

**Loyola University Chicago
Spring Semester Class Syllabus**

**COMM 333
VR: from concepts to practices**

Professor: Jamason Chen, M.A. in Mass Communication

E-mail: Jchen4@LUC.edu

Office: 312-915-6936

Office hours: 1pm-3pm on Monday, or by appointment

Course overview:

- Building a foundation of understanding the historical, technical and aesthetic development of virtual reality media
- Discovering and using key components of visual storytelling i.e.:
 - Conceptualizing and planning a story based on the special features of 360 VR media
 - Formulating strategies to gain access to elements for the story content
 - Demonstrating consideration for the structure and presentation of visual narratives
- Being aware of legal, ethical and moral aspects of 360 VR production and presentation
- Developing digital 360 VR camera skills necessary to practice the craft of 360 VR content production
- Learning digital image processing and editing techniques through using Adobe Photoshop and Premiere CC, Autopano Video and Giga application programs and other software to optimize and enhance visual presentation for online media
- Creating a group project to best present a visual storytelling concept which any single medium would not be able to present comprehensively, by executing visual production assignments, receiving critiques and ultimately assembling a portfolio in an online version

A significant portion of the class will be used for critiques, discussions and editing. By the end of the semester students should be proficient at using 360 VR cameras and all the tools and techniques needed to produce powerful content.

Learning Outcome Statement:

Students in this course will accomplish a variety of outcomes, including learning to distinguish what constitutes quality of a 360 VR presentation; understanding how 360 VR visuals are used to communicate in different media; understanding how media ethics

apply to 360 VR production and the special ethical issues that arise in the 360 VR world; and learning how to produce a compelling and solid visual storytelling multimedia project.

Detailed Learning Outcomes:

- Learn the scientific concepts for the natural vision (unclear what this means)
- Learn visual concepts for emulating human vision
- Learn how 360 VR communicates different ideas through comparing conventional visual presentation forms
- Learn how to optimize 360 VR content presentation with other media forms
- Learn how media ethics apply to 360 VR and the specific ethical issues that arise in 360 VR, especially in documentary visual storytelling
- Learn how to produce a compelling and visual 360 VR storytelling project

Course Format

The class will meet once per week for 2.5 hours on Wednesday evening. One half of the class time will be devoted to lecture and discussion, and the other half will be spent for assignment critiques, visual editing, and technical discussion and practice.

The class will also feature special 360 VR guest speakers and several unique 360 VR assignments.

Textbooks

Recommended:

The VR Book: Human-Centered Design for Virtual Reality by Jason Jerald, Ph.D.
(Purchase a print copy or Kindle version on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/VR-Book-Human-Centered-Virtual-Reality/dp/1970001127>)
ISBN: 978-1970001129 Morgan & Claypool Publishers (October 16, 2015)

Suggested reference:

Storytelling For Virtual Reality – Methods and principles for crafting immersive narrative by John Bucher
(Purchase a print copy or Kindle version on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Storytelling-Virtual-Reality-Principles-Narratives/dp/1138629669>)

ISBN-10: 1138629669, ISBN-13: 978-1138629660 Focal Press; 1st Ed (July 14, 2017)

Some reading materials will be distributed in class to assist in comprehending the textbook.

Use of technology and student responsibilities

The School of Communication owns four Ricoh Theta S, one Theta V and one GoPro Omni camera for the class. The camera check-out has a time limit and is based on the first-reserved-first-served policy.

Students must care for and preserve the camera equipment and accessories issued by the School. Students will sign an agreement holding them responsible for any damage to the equipment through misuse or carelessness. Students will be provided with an instruction manual and other items associated with the camera, all of which must be returned in good condition.

Pick up cameras from Jillian Musielak at the Loyola in the School of Communication building on the Water Tower campus, in room 004 (The Owl Lab) in the basement. The phone number is 312-915-8830, email: jmusielak@luc.edu.

Course requirements

- All practice assignments must be completed with a brief note.
- Students are required to complete a group project.
- All students must attend in-class lectures, critiques and editing trainings.
- Each student will be required to participate in a final group project in a comprehensive online media form
- Graduate students will have extra course work, including leading class discussions and critiques

Professionalism

Treat this course as if it were your job. Show up for class on time and ready to work. If you are going to be absent, call or email the professor before class, not after. Demonstrate an interest in learning. Participate: listen to the lectures, take notes, and answer questions. During the class surfing the internet, exchanging emails or sending SMS or IM are discouraged. This is especially important and respectful should there be a guest speaker. You will not be able to make up in-class exercises and exams without an excused absence.

Attendance

Because this class only meets once a week, any student missing more than TWO sessions (unexcused absences) will receive a lower grade by one letter.

Class Assignments

- The class will be grouped by 4; each group will cover any one of the subjects of film, advertising and public relations, or journalism

•
Some individual practice assignments should be completed before starting a group project assignment

- *The FINAL project (Subject TBA) and presentation should be done by the group*

GENERALIZED GRADING SCALE

Grading in this course is on a scale of A-F.

A - Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

B - Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C - Achievement that meets course requirements in every respect.

D - Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.

F - Represents failure and signifies that the work was either completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or was not completed.

I (Incomplete) - assigned at the discretion of the instructor. An incomplete grade will be considered only when documented extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control or ability to anticipate will prohibit timely completion of the course requirements. Incomplete grades are rare and require a written agreement between instructor and student.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade Pts.</u>	<u>Standard</u>
<i>A</i>	<i>4.00</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>A-</i>	<i>3.67</i>	
<i>B+</i>	<i>3.33</i>	
<i>B</i>	<i>3.00</i>	<i>Significantly above required level</i>
<i>B-</i>	<i>2.67</i>	
<i>C+</i>	<i>2.33</i>	

<i>C</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>Meets course requirements</i>
<i>C-</i>	<i>1.67</i>	
<i>F</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>Failing</i>

On the next two pages are rubrics specific to this course. They articulate the standards by which this semester’s photojournalistic assignments and learning exercises are evaluated.

(Note: The grade level suggested is only applied to photojournalistic work. Final grades may reflect other factors, such as class attendance, participation, effort and improvement.)

COMM 333 – 360 VR PRODUCTION GRADING SCALE

COMM 333	D or F	B or C	A
Objective	Below expectations	Meets expectations	Above expectations
<u>Production Assignments:</u>	<p>D - Unpresentable. A combination of flaws in subject selection, conceptualization, shooting, digital processing and finalizing render the visual unsatisfactory. Perhaps this work with greater effort could have been presentable.</p> <p>F - Unpresentable and clearly unprofessional. Weak critical thinking, visual technique and/or unprofessional behavior can result in failure of an assignment.</p>	<p>B - Competent, functional storytelling 360 VR. Clean, simple visuals make significant points efficiently and support the story. Technique is of a high order: visual is properly exposed and framed, processing above average.</p> <p>C - Average, run-of-the-mill visual making. A “record shot” of a person, event or scene which fits the story but with little insight. Presentable but undistinguished. Composition may be cluttered or subject poorly lit. Camera technique and digital processing are just adequate.</p>	<p>A - <i>Professional quality work. Insightful, relevant visuals of storyworthy subjects. Visuals involve the reader with drama, humor or pictorial beauty; distinctions between objects in foreground, middle ground and background are interacted and the composition is effective. Technique is flawless: visual is properly exposed and sharp. Digital processing of color balance renders neutrals clean and tonality accurately. Comprehensive multimedia presentations explore different levels of the story.</i></p>

COMM 333	D or lower	B or C	A
Objective	Below expectations	Meets expectations	Above expectations
<u>Research and critique:</u>	<p>D – Poorly prepared, poor presentation and barely adequate data, no errors of fact.</p> <p>F – Little evidence of preparation, insufficient data, and significant errors of fact or simply fail to make a report.</p>	<p>B – Well-presented and researched information, useful data, no errors of fact.</p> <p>C – Just sufficient presentation, some useful information, no errors of fact.</p>	<p>A – <i>Outstanding presentation, research reveals fascinating, useful and even rare, information. No errors of fact.</i></p>

ALL LATE SINGLE ASSIGNMENTS WILL RECEIVE POINT DEDUCTIONS.

All assignments must be received by the deadline date. There will be no make-ups for any in-class assignments (such as special projects for the class and/or quizzes).

INCOMPLETE

Appropriate reasons for granting an incomplete (usually within the last two weeks of the semester) include unforeseeable, unavoidable delays in completing work or other disastrous events over which a student has no control. The instructor may require verifiable supporting evidence to grant the request, such as doctor's notes, obituaries or police reports.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS & EXTRA CREDIT

Students are responsible for all information disseminated in class and all course requirements, including deadlines and/or examinations. The instructor will specify whether an extra class attendance is required or counted in the grade for a class. A student is not permitted to submit extra work in an attempt to raise his or her grade, unless the instructor has specified at the outset of the class such opportunities will be afforded to all students.

Extra credit will be offered only when it advances the course objectives and can be afforded to all students. Extra credit work will not disadvantage students electing not to participate in extra credit opportunities.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

1. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest (e.g. failing to properly credit a source or using someone else's ideas without clarifying that they are not yours). This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing your sources.

2. It is dishonest to:

- Turn in the same work for two classes;
- Turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or
- Copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam.

Special Needs

If you have a special circumstance that may impact your course work and for which you may require accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so arrangements can be made with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). We will accommodate your needs in the best way possible. Loyola's policy is that it is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates. Additional information about the services available at Loyola, including eligibility for services, is on the SAC website: <http://www.luc.edu/sac>.

Weekly Class Schedule

Week 1: Introductions, procedure for checking out equipment, organizing project groups

Week 2: “You press the button, we do the rest”: basic technology and techniques for 360 VR production with Ricoh Theta S/V and their application software

Week 3: Before Google Cardboard: brief history of VR

Week 4: Everything can be measured: the science behind 360 VR

Week 5: The more mediums, the more comprehensive content: potential applications of 360 VR in media industry

Week 6: A long journey starts from the first step: developing a mini individual mid-term project

Week 7: Time to review and move on: mini individual project presentation and critique

*****Week 8/March 4 Spring Break No class*****

Week 9: Be sophisticated, be professional: advanced technology and techniques for 360 VR production with GoPro Omni 360 VR camera gear and application software

Week10: Enrich a story with editing: Adobe Premiere CC and editing a 360 VR video, Pano2VR and editing 360 VR images

Week 11: Storytelling is the key issue: developing ideas for a 360 VR project

Week 12: Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality: the future of 360 VR

Week 13: “Three cobblers combined makes a genius mind”: Group final project discussion

Week 14: Time is ticking: Work on finalizing the group project

Week 15: Final project presentation

***** Week16: Get the feedback for the final project by the end of the final week *****