

Transmedia Storytelling - CM225
Monday 12:30 PM - 3:40 PM
GCU / Jeffries Hall / MAC LAB

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"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder; fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man." - Joseph Campbell

Course Description

Transmedia storytelling uses multiple media platforms to tell a narrative across time to engage specific audiences. This course considers essential elements of storytelling; how to design and actively participate across media platforms; essential elements of meta-narratives; and how to create an immersive and inter-active experience for audiences using digital communication tools. Students actively engage and create visual and written content for on-line digital communities.

What is transmedia storytelling? A transmedia story represents the integration of entertainment experiences across a range of media platforms. Each media piece—whether it’s a comic, novels, video games, mobile apps, or a film—functions as a standalone story experience—complete and satisfying. Like a giant puzzle, each piece also contributes to a larger narrative. The process is cumulative and each piece adds richness and detail to the story. Transmedia storytelling is used by organizations to promote and market brands and media franchises. You participate in the transmedia landscape every day - you just don’t realize it!

Course Objectives

Communication technologies have enabled new forms of storytelling. Transmedia storytelling continues to become a more common practice in journalism, entertainment, marketing, advertising and public relations. Digital Communication professionals must be knowledgeable of the core concepts and principles of transmedia storytelling in order to effectively create and participate in contemporary media culture texts

Detailed Course Goals:

- To explore the role of transmedia storytelling in today's media landscape
- To develop an original transmedia story, with multimedia, cross-platform integrated content
- To learn and apply transmedia storytelling techniques
- To learn how to work across media platforms and apply transmedia storytelling techniques.

Instructional methods: Class lecture & studio work in Mac Lab. Students will also be required to use Black Board Learn (we have a new LMS). Additional and required readings and videos will be posted in Blackboard.

Required Textbook:

Storytelling Across Worlds: Transmedia for Creatives and Producers by T. Dowd, M. Fry, M. Neiderman, J. Steiff. Focal Press. (2013).

ISBN-13: 978-0240824116

Additional Reading

Hayes, Gary. (July 2011). How to Write a Transmedia Production Bible: A platform for multi platform producers. Screen Australia. <http://videoturundus.ee/bible.pdf>

Readings and multimedia content is regularly shared using Twitter. You are responsible for reading / viewing content shared on the course hashtag #CM225

Social Media Requirements

All students are expected to have and use a Twitter account as part of the course. (you can use your personal or create another). As a community of learners, we use to Twitter to interact with producers and franchises using Twitter. Our course hashtag #CM225 - this is an easy way to encourage your classmates to see content you share.

Policies

Attendance, lateness & leaving early: Since we meet once a week, you are expected to attend class regularly. Additionally, you are expected to stay until the end of class unless the professor has approved leaving before the designated

time. You will work as a member of creative group in this class, and if you are missing class time you will place a heavy burden on your team. You have a responsibility to make up work you miss in class, if you are absent or late. More than three absences will impact your final grade.

Class participation – Class participation is an important element of this course. You are expected to share your thoughts and ideas on a regular basis. This means coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings.

Exams: There are no exams in this course

Academic Honesty - Georgian Court strives to be a moral community with ethical convictions. Academic integrity is essential to collegial pursuit of truth and knowledge and gives the Georgian Court community credibility. The principles of academic integrity demand the commitment of all persons at Georgian Court. Academic dishonesty is viewed at Georgian Court as a serious offense and cannot be tolerated.

Dishonesty in any work is regarded as a serious offense and may result in failure in the course and dismissal from Georgian Court. Anyone who willfully assists another in the breach of integrity is held equally responsible and subject to the same penalty. (for details see page 30 of the 2014-2015 Undergraduate Catalogue).

Grading – Grades are awarded using a rubric system based. Letter grades are assigned to all work (A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.). Students will be provided an appropriate rubric before assignments are due. Please note: late assignments will not receive full-credit.

Students requiring accommodations – If you require special accommodations, please notify the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Support Services - The Student Success Center is located in the Lower Level of the Library and provides peer group tutoring, testing services, and accommodations for students with disabilities and early warning interventions. Confidential peer tutoring is available in most undergraduate academic areas Monday through Saturday. Appointments are not required; students are encouraged to “drop-in”. (See page 48 of the Student Handbook 2014-2015)

Assignments

1. Autobiographical Response (20%)

For the first assignment, you are asked to write a 3-5 page autobiographical essay describing your relationship to a media franchise that you have found to be personally meaningful. You should use this essay to identify the cultural **attractors** (what encouraged you want to watch/read) that drew you to this franchise, to discuss which variants (video games, books, movies, etc.) of the franchise you experienced, and to describe any cultural **activators** (youtube videos, comic con) that encouraged you to more actively contribute to the fan community surrounding this franchise. If you have not contributed, please explain what prevents you from interacting with other fans and/or the creators/producers of the franchise.

Be as specific as possible in discussing moments in the transmedia story that were especially important in shaping your engagement with the property. This assignment is intended to get to know you as a transmedia participant. (10 Percent)

Seven Core Concepts of Transmedia Storytelling

Source: *Revenge of the Oragami Unicorn: Seven Core Concepts of Transmedia Storytelling*, Henry Jenkins

Spreadability vs. Drillability

The ability and degree to which content is shareable and the motivating factors for a person to share that content VS the ability for a person to explore, in-depth, a deep well of narrative extensions when they stumble upon a fiction that truly captures their attention.

Continuity vs. Multiplicity

Some transmedia franchises foster an ongoing coherence to a canon in order to ensure maximum plausibility among all extensions. Others routinely use alternate versions of characters or parallel universe version of their stories to reward mastery over the source material.

Immersion vs. Extractability

In immersion, the consumer enters into the world of the story (e.g. theme parks), while in extractability, the fan takes aspects of the story away with them as resources they deploy in the spaces of their everyday life (e.g. items from the gift shop).

Worldbuilding

Transmedia extensions, often not central to the core narrative, that give a richer depiction of the world in which the narrative plays out. Franchises can exploit both real-world and digital experiences. These extensions often lead to fan behaviors of capturing and cataloging the many disparate elements.



HENRY JENKINS

Seriality

Transmedia storytelling has taken the notion of breaking up a narrative arc into multiple discrete chunks or installments within a single medium and instead has spread those disparate ideas or story chunks across multiple media systems.

Subjectivity

Transmedia extensions often explore the central narrative through new eyes, such as secondary characters or third parties. This diversity of perspective often leads fans to more greatly consider who is speaking and who they are speaking for.

Performance

The ability of transmedia extensions to lead to fan produced performances that can become part of the transmedia narrative itself. Some performances are invited by the creator while others are not; fans actively search for sites of potential performance.

2. Chapter Presentation & Twitter (15%): You are responsible for leading group discussion for one chapter. My expectation is you will highlight key points, ideas, and any extensions (media) you can provide to help illustrate and discuss the chapter in class. You are also expected to share a minimum of [two articles, videos, or multimedia](#) related to the chapter using the course Twitter hashtag. Please do not wait until the last minute to read and identify appropriate media to share with the class (use the [Twitter hashtag #CM225 and link to the content](#)). Please also send directly to me [@njgina](#). If the link is very long, please shorten it using bitly [www.bitly.com](#).

example of Tweet: “This never gets old! [#CM225](#) - my students create awesome content! Former student P. Nelson's Transmedia Analysis of The Walking Dead https://youtu.be/W_Y5Kht1tIU [@njgina](#)”

3. Short Documentary Film on Your Franchise: You will present the media franchise you identified in your first essay or another you enjoy. You will research the fandom. The fandom is the community of individuals who interact with the franchise - the producers, writers, distributors and actors. Your research will require you to search the internet for places where fans of the franchise interact and gather - look on Twitter, Facebook, Reddit and Youtube to start. Comic Con pages are another place to look for like minded individuals. We will discuss examples in class.

I expect you will create a two-three minute short film about the franchise and the fans. How do they interact with the fandom? Why do they interact? Where do they gather? Are there extensions? You must include images, video, and audio to to explain how transmedia storytelling techniques are used to engage the audiences (fans).

You will be graded on your ability to construct a coherent presentation using all of the tools available to you and to your franchise – Twitter, Facebook, word press, images, audio, video, printed word. In essence you will become an expert in your franchise. (25%)

4. In class assignments – You are responsible for a series of in-class / take home assignments over the course of the semester which will revolve around content creation, sharing of information and participation in your team. **Assignments will be given in class** and will be due at the beginning of the next class (10%).

5. Final Project - Transmedia Franchise Development & Pitch

Students will be organized into teams of two which. You should select a media property (a film, television series, comic book, novel, etc.) that you feel has the potential to become a successful transmedia franchise.

In most cases, you will be looking for a property that has not yet added media extensions, though you could also look at a property that you feel has been mishandled in the past. You should have identified and agreed on a property no later than February 22. By the end of the term, your team will be “pitching” this property. The pitch should include a briefing book that describes:

1. The defining properties of the media property
2. A description of the intended audience(s) and what we know of its potential interests
3. A discussion of the specific plans for each media platform you are going to deploy
4. An overall description for how you will seek to integrate the different media platforms to create a coherent world
5. Parallel examples of other properties which have deployed the strategies being described

Deliverables:

1. Written Transmedia Intellectual Property Bible
2. Multimedia Presentation

To help you complete this assignment, please read.

Hayes, Gary. (July 2011). How to Write a Transmedia Production Bible: A platform for multi platform producers. Screen Australia. <http://videoturundus.ee/bible.pdf>

Total Grade: 30%

More details to be provided in class. Please note there will be a group grade and an individual grade assigned.

Transmedia Storytelling Calendar
SUBJECT TO CHANGES

January 24th
January 31st

Introductions

(no class - work on Autobiographical Response)

February 7th -

Chapter 1 One Story

Autobiographical Response due

February 14th

Chapter 2 World Building 7 Key Story Elements

Students:_____

Chapter 3 Storytelling and Narrative Community

Students:_____

February 21

Chapter 4 Motion Pictures and Visual Storytelling

Students:_____

Chapter 5 Television and Serialized Storytelling

Students:_____

February 28

Chapter 6 Video Games & Interactive Storytelling

Students:_____

March 7th

SPRING BREAK

March 14th

Chapter 7 Other Forms of Storytelling

Students:_____

March 21st

Chapter 8 Choosing Properties & Forms

Students:_____

March 28th

Fan Documentary Due (Franchise of Choice)

April 4th

Chapter 9 Managing the Transmedia Property

Students: _____

**Begin Research & Planing on Transmedia Intellectual
Property Bible**

April 11th

Chapter 10 The Transmedia Bible

Students: _____

April 18th

Group Work

April 25th

Group Work

May 2

Group Work

May 9th

Final Transmedia Property Presentations