



School of Mass Communications

Advertising | Public Relations | Journalism

MASC 491-004 SPECIAL TOPICS: VIDEO MENTORING

DR. TIM BAJKIEWICZ FALL 2013 3 CREDITS

TUESDAYS 12:30 – 3:50 P.M. TEMPLE 2222 AND UMFS



Welcome to Video Mentoring! As you know, this is a special topics class in conjunction with UMFS, a Richmond-based, Commonwealth-wide social service agency. You'll work with special needs youth to help them learn interviewing, camera use and video editing. We're going to try and make a difference in some young lives and learn things about ourselves along the way.

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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Tim Bajkiewicz, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Broadcast Journalism

Office Temple 1149D, Monroe Park Campus

Office hours Thursdays 2-4 p.m. and by appointment

Contact tbajkiewicz@vcu.edu (email preferred if not urgent)

Cell: (xxx) xxx-xxxx (please no calls 9 p.m. – 9 a.m, sign texts)

Office: (804) 828-4203

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This special topics course is a joint effort between VCU and UMFS, a Richmond-based, Commonwealth-wide social service agency. You, the VCU students, will help special needs youth learn about some of the concepts and practices you've learned in other Mass Communications classes. These include tangible skills like interviewing, using a camera and editing video; they also include intangible ideas you demonstrate every day in pursuing your college degree, like determination, prioritizing and perseverance. I will be there with you for every class.

Course objectives include:

1. Learning about special needs youth, especially best practices about working with them.
2. Considering the best ways to teach young people about interviewing, using a camera and editing video.
3. Spending time at UMFS with these youth helping them to learn these skills and techniques with the goal of the student completing a supervised interview with a resident of Guardian Place, UMFS' on-campus apartments for older adults.
4. Reflecting on this experience through discussion and writing.

VCU STATEMENT OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning at VCU is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets community-identified needs. Students reflect on the service activity to increase understanding and application of course content and to enhance a sense of civic responsibility.

TEXTBOOK, READINGS AND OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

There is no assigned text for this class. Readings will be made available on our Blackboard site.

ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING

Knowledge is important, but the true test comes in its use. I'll provide detailed instructions and expectations for all assessments, which are:

1. **Interactions with UMFS students:** This is the most important part of this course, where you will be communicating and sharing with special needs youth. As outlined in the Course Calendar, we will spend many weeks at UMFS working with these youth. This will be worth 60% of your final grade.
2. **Journaling about the experience:** Several times during the semester you will be asked to comment on specific aspects of your experience, such as how student comments

and reactions changed your approach or what this experience means to your future. These entries will be worth 40% of your final grade.

Evaluating this type of work is difficult. I will use academic quality standards to determine the earned grade. See the grading rubrics for each assignment. Here are the general standards for specific letter grades:



- A = Compelling and substantially error-free
- B = Solid effort; minor errors
- C = Average work; needs reorganization and rewrite
- D = Major problems
- F = Not submitted by final deadline

%	Points	Final Grade
90.0 – 100.0%	900 - 1000	A
80.0 – 89.9%	800 - 899	B
70.0 – 79.9%	700 - 799	C
60.0 – 69.9%	600 – 699	D
< 59.9%	< 599	F

To be eligible for a class grade of A you must submit ALL assignments, regardless of the numerical total of your earned points at the end of the semester.

All work must be completed by the end of the semester. An incomplete or “I” will *only* be considered if:

1. Reasons beyond the student’s control make it impossible for him or her to complete the course on schedule;
2. The student has completed the majority of the work for the term; and
3. The student is otherwise earning a passing grade.



Low grades are not a justification for requesting an “I” in this course.

DEADLINES, ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

For media professionals an essential skill is the ability to work against a deadline. In this course you must turn in work on time. Plan ahead, organize your time and do not procrastinate.

I don’t accept late work except in the most extreme circumstances. Missing a deadline means your grade for that assignment is a zero. Ouch.

I’ll take attendance every class. Be in class and be on time—media are all about time. We only meet once a week, so we really need you in class.

You’re allowed ONE “no excuse” **absence** with no documentation needed. (A heads-up email or phone call would be nice.) If you miss a second class and have no supporting documentation for an allowed and/or unforeseen absence (such as illness, emergency or bereavement), *your final class grade will be reduced by one full letter grade*, except in extreme circumstances. Ouch. Each *additional absence* will be another full letter grade reduction of your final class grade. Ouch again. A job, other class conflict, parking issues, etc. are not reasons for a valid absence. Please ask Dr. B. about what constitutes an allowed absence, preferably in advance.

It’s rude and inconsiderate to your **on-time** classmates to endure your interruption of coming into class late. You may come in late, *up to 10 minutes*, twice, without deduction. The third time being late will be considered your “no excuse” absence, as will every tardy thereafter. (So, if

you're late three times you've used up your "no excuse" absence.) Leaving class early (including moving/re-parking your car) is considered a tardy, unless previously discussed with and approved by Dr. B.

If Dr. B. is late, up to 10 minutes, more than twice, his lateness is your gain: It means if you have any tardies he'll erase one. If you don't have any tardies, you get an extra.

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a major religious observance should provide written notice of the date(s) and event(s) to the instructor *by the second class meeting*.

RULES AND POLICIES

1. **Professional guidelines of content** will be applied to all materials submitted as part of this course. Materials may not contain anything considered to be, by our community standards, discriminatory in any way, such as by ethnicity or gender. I reserve the right to refuse any assignment that does not conform to these guidelines, with the assigned grade for that associated assignment as zero.



2. **Our classroom is a personal media device free zone.** All personal media devices must be turned off and out of sight during class time. These include cell phones, media players, PDAs, pagers and watches. **If you use personal media (including text messaging) during class you will be asked to leave the room for the remainder of that class period. This counts as an absence.** (If you have a temporary, personal situation that requires you be available by cell phone, please see Dr B.)

3. **Don't use the lab computers during lecture and discussion unless directed.** No Facebook, email, etc. You may be asked to leave class, which counts as an absence.



4. **All submitted materials** must be typed. You'll be graded on grammatical and spelling.
5. **Use common sense about bringing any food or drink** into the classroom. Please clean up any mess you make, and please make sure not to leave trash.

CLASS WEB SITE AND EMAIL POLICY



Our class Web site is at <http://blackboard.vcu.edu>, part of the Blackboard course management system. Use your VCU eID and password. See <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/kb/eID.html> for eID assistance.

Electronic mail or "e-mail" is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost effective and environmentally aware manner. Students are expected to check their official VCU e-mail on a frequent and consistent basis in order to remain informed of university-related communications. The university recommends checking e-mail daily. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official VCU

student e-mail account. This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the university as needed. Mail sent to the VCU e-mail address may include notification of university-related actions, including disciplinary action. Please read the policy in its entirety: <http://www.ts.vcu.edu/kb/3407.html>

VCU HONOR SYSTEM: PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity." In addition, "All members of the VCU community are presumed to have an understanding of the VCU Honor System and are required to:

- ✓ Agree to be bound by the Honor System policy and its procedures;
- ✓ Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System;
- ✓ Support an environment that reflects a commitment to academic integrity;
- ✓ Answer truthfully when called upon to do so regarding Honor System cases, and,
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality regarding specific information in Honor System cases."

[View the Honor System](#) in its entirety. More information can also be found on the [Division of Student Affairs](#) website.

In this class, because coursework will be collaborative at times, particular issues of integrity arise. You should not copy or print another student's work without permission. Any material (this includes *ideas* and *language*) from another source must be credited, whether that material is quoted directly, summarized or paraphrased. In other words, you should respect the work of others and in no way present it as your own.

While completing the work for this class you'll interact with other people. Please act in a professional manner at all times: in interviewing people, talking to them on the phone and communicating with them by email. This means being respectful, polite and non-argumentative – in short, acting as a professional and ethical journalist. It also means dressing appropriately for interviews and other meetings. Your behavior and appearance reflect not only on you but also on VCU and the School of Mass Communications. If you act unprofessionally I will lower your grade accordingly.

We will adhere to the [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#) from the Radio Television Digital News Association and the [Code of Ethics](#) from the Society of Professional Journalists.

STUDENT CONDUCT IN THE CLASSROOM

According to the [Faculty Guide to Student Conduct in Instructional Settings](#), "The university is a community of learners. Students, as well as faculty, have a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that supports effective instruction. In order for faculty members

(including graduate teaching assistants) to provide and students to receive effective instruction in classrooms, laboratories, studios, online courses, and other learning areas, the university expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner." Among other things, cell phones and beepers should be turned off while in the classroom. Also, the university Rules and Procedures prohibit anyone from having "in his possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive, regardless of whether a license to possess the same has been issued, without the written authorization of the President of the university..." For more information, visit the [VCU Insider online](#).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

SECTION 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended require that VCU provides "academic adjustments" or "reasonable accommodations" to any student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. To receive accommodations, students must request them by contacting the Disability Support Services Office on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or the Division for Academic Success on the MCV campus (828-9782). More information is available at [Disability Support Services](#) or the [Division for Academic Success](#).

Any student who has a disability that requires an academic accommodation should schedule a meeting with the instructor at the student's earliest convenience. Additionally, if coursework requires the student to work in a lab environment, the student should advise the instructor or a department chairperson of any concerns that the student may have regarding safety issues related to a disability. Students should follow this procedure for all courses in the academic semester.

STATEMENT ON MILITARY SHORT-TERM TRAINING OR DEPLOYMENT

If military students receive orders for short-term training or deployment, they should inform and present their orders to Military Student Services and to their professor(s). For further information on policies and procedures contact Military Services at 828-5993 or access the [corresponding policies](#).

EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY

Students who represent the university (athletes and others) do not choose their schedules. Student athletes are required to attend games and/or meets. All student athletes should provide their schedule to the instructor at the beginning of the semester. The Intercollegiate Athletic Council strongly encourages faculty to treat missed classes or exams (because of a scheduling conflict) as excused absences and urges faculty to work with the students to make up the work or exam.

WHAT TO KNOW AND DO TO BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES AT VCU

- ✓ Sign up to receive [VCU text messaging alerts](#). Keep your information up-to-date. Within the classroom, the professor will keep his or her phone on to receive any emergency transmissions.
- ✓ Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
- ✓ Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities. Within the classroom, follow your professor's instructions.
- ✓ Know where to go for [additional emergency information](#).
- ✓ Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.
- ✓ Keep your permanent address and emergency contact information current in eServices.

IMPORTANT DATES

[View important dates](#) for the Fall 2013 semester.

VCU MOBILE

The VCU Mobile application is a valuable tool to get the latest VCU information on the go. The application contains helpful information including the VCU directory, events, course schedules, campus maps, athletics and general VCU news, emergency information, library resources, Blackboard and more. To download the application on your smartphone or for more information, please visit <http://m.vcu.edu>.

CLASS REGISTRATION REQUIRED FOR ATTENDANCE

Students may attend only those classes for which they have registered. Faculty may not add students to class rosters. Therefore, if students are attending a class for which they have not registered, they must stop attending.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASSES

Before withdrawing from classes, students should consult their instructor as well as other appropriate university offices. Withdrawing from classes may negatively impact a student's financial aid award and his or her semester charges. To discuss financial aid and the student bill, visit the Student Services Center at 1015 Harris Hall or contact a financial aid counselor at <http://www.enrollment.vcu.edu/finaid/contact.html>

STUDENT FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Students assume the responsibility of full payment of tuition and fees generated from their registration and all charges for housing and dining services, and other applicable miscellaneous charges.

DIVERSITY



It is vital that students in this course broaden their journalism/mass communications experiences, with guidance from the instructors, by including in their course work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and religious minorities, the disabled and disadvantaged; gay men and lesbians, and other similar groups. This includes, but is not limited to developing a sensitivity to language and images that may create an appearance of bias. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community, and that students are exposed to diverse ideas and perspectives. In this class, it is the responsibility of the instructor and students to foster an environment that supports free expression.

The VCU School of Mass Communications is committed to diversity in all aspects of its program, including providing a climate of inclusion, as well as addressing student and faculty hiring and retention, curriculum, research and scholarship; and outreach and service. Students are encouraged to review the School's Diversity Plan posted on the School's website.

FINAL THOUGHTS FROM DR. B

I am not trying to make you into a journalist—or into anything else, for that matter. I want you to have a satisfying life while trying to make a positive contribution to the world, in media or anything else. You're smart and the world needs you working on the big problems of our time.



As your professor I care about you as a student and about your work, and I am dedicated to your success, but I can't do it alone. Care about what you do for this class and be dedicated to your own success. Two big words in my vocabulary are "fair" and "reasonable." These will guide my interactions with you and the class, and how I approach almost any issue. I strongly believe in creating a "level playing field" for everyone, especially with assignments and expectations.

Life is about choices and priorities, so make choices that match your priorities. Haven't chosen priorities yet? You should or others will choose them for you. Don't feel like you're making choices? You do, every day, whether you realize it or not. In the words of the rock group Rush, "If you choose not to decide, you still have make a choice." Or from Professor Dumbledore in the movie *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, "It is not our *abilities* that show what we truly are. It is our *choices*."

Having a satisfying life includes making *smart choices* guided by *worthwhile priorities* that have *constructive outcomes*. Your choices about this class strongly influence your final grade. I hope you choose to earn a high grade, which translates to making smart choices about attending, participating, managing your time outside of class and producing quality work you'll be proud to call your own. It's your choice.

COURSE CALENDAR

Subject to change with advance notice. When at UMFS we'll meet from 1-3 p.m. Dr. B is happy to drive up to three students to and from UMFS. A few times during the semester we will speak with UMFS officials for opportunities to hear and provide feedback on the class and process.

Week	Date (Tuesdays)	Topics (Location VCU or UMFS)	Assessment
1	8/27	VCU: Introductions	
2	9/3	VCU: Working with special needs children/teens; Teaching camera and video skills	
3	9/10	UMFS: Tour Meet the students	Journal entry #1
4	9/17	UMFS: Intro to camera and editing	
5	9/24	UMFS: Interviewing	Journal entry #2
6	10/1	UMFS: Interviewing	
7	10/8	UMFS: Camera use	Journal entry #3
8	10/15	UMFS: Camera use	
9	10/22	UMFS: Camera use	Journal entry #4
10	10/29	UMFS: Interviews with Guardian Place residents	Journal entry #5
11	11/5	UMFS: Editing	
12	11/12	UMFS: Editing	Journal entry #6
13	11/19	UMFS: Editing	
14	11/26	UMFS: Editing	Journal entry #7
15	12/3	Final class Viewing party	