

NEWS 397

FALL 2001 SYLLABUS

TRANSMEDIA INDIANA

A Ball State University immersive learning course

Class time: T/R, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Professors: Brad King, AJ 389

jbking@bsu.edu

5-8692

Office Hours:

TR: 12:20-1:45

& by appt.

(+ online, off-campus)

Jennifer George-Palilonis, AJ 352 & 300E

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5-8216

Office Hours:

MW: 8-10 a.m.

& by appt.

(+ online, off-campus)

Course Description

Transmedia Indiana is an interdisciplinary immersive learning course and one of the first of its kind in the country. In this class, we will develop of a multi-layered transmedia narrative focused on artifacts from the Indiana State Museum. Transmedia narratives are an emergent storytelling form that takes a single cohesive story, breaks it up into pieces and then tells that story in a non-linear way across multiple mediums. Our narrative will have several components

- A fictional story that stands alone as a single book, e.g., *The DaVinci Code* or *National Treasure*;
- A series of non-fiction websites built around historical artifacts from the museum that relate to the fictional storyline;
- An interactive mobile app for e-Readers (e.g. Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iPad) through which audiences can read -- and experience -- the story;
- A live event that completes the story, which will culminate at the museum and showcase the artifacts that the story revolves around.

The audience will be invited into the story through a series of "rabbit holes," opening puzzles, videos and blog posts that act as teasers. These teasers help both attract an audience and set up the narrative. The story is then slowly revealed to the community through emails, videos, audio, text messages, blog posts and other media. As the story progresses, the participants are asked "help" with the narrative by solving more complicated puzzles and creating small pieces of media. That interaction is then built into the narrative, creating an immersive experience for both reader and storyteller.

Course Objectives

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

Course Topics

- Transmedia storytelling
- Alternate reality games
- Multimedia story forms
- The hero's journey
- Information graphics reporting
- Working across platforms
- Writing for transmedia stories
- Creative Commons
- Building audiences
- The history of transmedia
- Collaborating among interdisciplinary teams
- Narrative arc
- Developing characters
- Planning transmedia stories
- Distributing transmedia content
- Designing transmedia stories
- Copyright & the Digital Millennium Copyright Act
- Planning live events for transmedia stories

Course Policies

Attendance: This course starts at 9:30 a.m. Be on time for the start of class. Attendance will be taken daily. The instructor's grade book is the official record. All students are entitled to two excused absences. These absences will be permitted regardless of their reason. More than two class absences results in automatic, one-letter-grade reduction for the course per absence. All absences beyond the first two are considered equally and will be unexcused regardless of their reason. Three tardies (10 minutes or more late for class) are considered equal to one class absence. Six absences result in failure of the course. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to contact the instructor prior to the absence and be up-to-date for the next class. It is not the responsibility of the instructor to make sure students who have been absent are "caught up," although students may request handouts that were missed in class. PowerPoint presentations will not be shared with students. Students must take notes. If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to get class notes from a classmate.

It should be understood that there is no equating the quantity of one's work with the quality of one's work. The amount of information covered in this course is vast; the assignment schedule can be intense; however, superior work, average work, poor work, and unacceptable work remain the same regardless of the number of assignments completed or the amount of time spent on the project. Throughout the semester, please make it a habit to integrate in all of your work the concepts you are introduced to. This is a developmental course. Students are responsible for learning AND integrating the information and technical skills presented in this course throughout all of their assignments and projects. Always follow directions for any assignments and projects. Make sure you fully understand any project/assignment procedures. Any coursework submitted that does not conform to prescribed guidelines will not be

accepted. Please read the attached copy of Ball State's Academic Ethics Policy from the University Handbook.

No late work will be accepted. Assignments will be turned in to the instructor when called for unless directed otherwise by the instructor. DO NOT place assignments on doors, mailboxes, etc., unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Neatness is mandatory and will be a factor in grading all projects. All assigned reports or stories should be typed. The instructor reserves the right to lower a final grade by one letter on the basis of disciplinary problems, demonstrations of rude or poor attitude, or failure to comply with foregoing guidelines. No food or beverages in the computer lab. No makeup exams or quizzes will be given. A student may arrange to take an announced quiz early if the student knows of an upcoming need to be absent, but only if prior notice is given to the instructor, and only if the student has fewer than two recorded absences. The grade of "incomplete" will not be issued in this course. While reworks of assignments may be issued often, there is no form of extra credit in this course unless otherwise specified.

Academic honesty statement

The Department of Journalism takes academic dishonesty very seriously. You will be asked to sign the journalism department's "Student Academic Ethics Policy." If you are found in violation of the department's "Student Academic Ethics Policy," you run the risk of receiving a failing grade on an assignment or for a class overall. You also might jeopardize your good standing with the university, which could include expulsion from the university. As of the fall 2007, the Department of Journalism will keep a list of names of students who are caught plagiarizing or fabricating information. For more information, go to Ball State's "Student Academic Ethics Policy," <http://www.bsu.edu/sa/article/0,1375,13330-2935-12311,00.html>. The first paragraph of Ball State's "Student Academic Ethics Policy" reads as follows: "Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the University community. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated, for it threatens the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity."

Department Writing Statement

The Department of Journalism regards writing proficiency as essential to the satisfactory completion of all journalism courses. Therefore, department instructors must monitor writing performance and language usage proficiency in all journalism courses. Student grades must reflect both criteria. This means you will be graded on your spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

Competency Examination Statement

As part of its assessment procedures the Department of Journalism requires all students

to take entry and exit competency exams. Failure to complete exams will result at best in an incomplete grade for the respective course in which the exam is administered. Course instructors will specify time and location of the exams.

Disabled Student Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. My office location and hours are M/W, 8-10 a.m. and by appointment.

Diversity Statement

The Department of Journalism is committed to creating an awareness of diversity issues as they relate to the society, to the workplace and to the classroom.

Journalism Writing Center

The Journalism Writing Center (JWC), AJ 337 (285-7412), provides free one-on-one coaching for undergraduate and graduate students, including assistance with grammar and language usage, style, structure, editing and revising, clarity and creativity. Coaching is also available for students attempting the Language Usage Proficiency Exam (LUPE). The JWC Web site has a variety of online resources, including interactive quizzes. Visit the site at: <http://jdwritingctr.iweb.bsu.edu>

Portfolio Statement

Students are encouraged to keep both digital files and copies of all of their classroom projects / assignments and published work for their professional portfolio. Your professional portfolio is a collection of your best work and will be used to help you land internships and to begin your career after college graduation.

Copyright and computer lab policy

All software loaded in the computers labs is the property of the Department of Journalism. Do not remove or alter any program on these computers. It is illegal to copy any of this software.

Behavior statement for P in R's

When you attend a P in R, please observe the following:

- Choose a P in R presentation that is of interest to you. Avoid attending one just because you have to.
- Turn off your cell phone and leave your laptop computer at home. Please give your full attention to the guest lecturer(s). Notes should be taken on paper, not a laptop. Tape recorders are welcome.
- Arrive at least five minutes before the start of the program. Arriving at start time might be too late, and you might be denied entrance.
- Attendance cards are not available once the program begins.

–You cannot gain entrance to the lecture hall after the program begins. Most P in R’s are Webcast and recorded so late arrivals cause problems with the coverage of these events.

–Attendance cards are collected only after the conclusion of the program, which means after the question-and-answer period. Do not plan to leave once questions and answers start. The Q-and-A period is an important part of the presentation.

–Please be courteous to lecturer(s), which means no talking to your neighbor.

–Do research on P in R’s so you are prepared to ask a good question.

Your professional conduct at P-in-Rs will be greatly appreciated. When you attend a P-in-R, you are representing yourself, the Department of Journalism and Ball State University. **You are expected to attend one P-in-R for credit in the class. Failure to attend one P-in-R will result in a 5% reduction of your final grade.**

GRADE SCALE

A	96-100%	C	72-75%
A-	92-95%	C-	68-71%
B+	88-91%	D+	64-67%
B	84-87%	D	60-63%
B-	80-83%	D-	56-59%
C+	76-79%	F	55%

Students must attain a C or repeat the course.

Assignments

Not every student will work on every aspect of this project. It's not feasible for anyone to do that. We've included all the rubrics for content creation, though, and as we assign groups and distribute work, we will assign rubrics to you.

In the syllabus, you will also see DISCUSSION days. We expect you to be prepared for class so that we can engage in high-level talk about the story. These should be fun, but they should focus on moving our project forward.

On days you see nothing listed, you are free to work on production. Setting up meetings is difficult, so you will have time in class to make decisions about work. We recommend using out of class time to create content and critique each other, and use those in-class days to discuss the work you've done. That's the most efficient way to handle this project.

- **Production Journal (12):** Each week, students will write a 1-2 page reflection journal, which focuses on their perception of the work/reading before they began, their conception of information as they worked/read, and their execution of creation/understanding when they applied the information they received.
- **Benchmark presentations (3):** Students will create 5-minute screencast videos

demonstrating the work they have completed the week before. These will be submitted no later than 24 hours before the class in which they are due. Each group is required to watch all of the videos, and prepare for a discussion on the due date.

- **Pre-Report (5):** Students will create a roadmap for production, delivered in 5 components
- **Post-Mortem (1):** Students will turn in final versions of all their work, make a screencast of their relevant contributions, and deliver a presentation of the project.
- **Trailer/Live Event (3):** Students are required to develop at least 1 live recruitment event, and two recruitment video/digital trailers.
- **Book(5):** Students will deliver the text/images for the Part 1 of Transmedia Indiana along with 5 drafts
- **Story Production Materials (TBD):** Students will create an assignment list in the Pre-Report outlining the production assets they will deliver for this project.

Deliverables:

Fiction:

- **Pre-Report:** This report, done in phases throughout the first part of the semester, is the road map for production.
- **Book Draft:** The tent pole for the class, this story will tell the main story.
- **All ancillary websites, puzzles, mechanics:** Building from the Book Draft, these materials will be created from the elements within the main story. This will be what turns the book into a living environment online.
- **Live Event/Trailer (Recruitment):** Students will need to development recruitment materials and plan at least one on-campus event to gather names to promote the project; they will develop two trailers as well (one for the first semester, and one to play just before the second semester).
- **Post-Mortem:** Students will deliver a final report, screencast, and presentation. This should evolve organically from the previous assignments

Non-Fiction:

- **About Videos/Bios:** A set of videos and team bios will be developed to be included in the main assets for the story we will develop. Each team member is required to write a personal bio of 300 words.
- **Information Graphics:** In collaboration with writers and other team members, graphics students will develop a number of interactive information graphics to accompany the story.
- **Website:** In collaboration with writers and other team members, graphics students will develop one full non-fiction website. Topic TBD.

History and Perspectives

Week 1: August 22

	Lectures/Discussions	Assignments/Readings
Tuesday	Course overview Introduction Assignments	
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History and Application of Transmedia Storytelling 	<i>Making Transmedia (1-3)</i>

Week 2: August 29

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning, Creating, and Writing Transmedia 	<i>Making Transmedia (4-9)</i> DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Journal #1
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Media Design, Copyright, and Visual Elements of Transmedia Storytelling 	<i>Making Transmedia (10-12)</i>

Week 3: September 5

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live Events, Audience, and Interactivity in Transmedia Storytelling 	<i>Making Transmedia (13-16)</i> DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Journal #2
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transmedia Book 	<i>Cathy's Book</i>

Week 4: September 12

Tuesday	Group Breakouts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign Teams Pick Leaders Brainstorming 	DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production Journal #3
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment, Character Arcs, World Map 	
Friday	NEW HARMONY TRIP (assigned team)	

Week 5: September 19

Tuesday		DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production Journal #4
Thursday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report #1: Treatment, Character Arcs, World Map
	INDIANA STATE MUSEUM (assigned team)	

Pre-Planning

Week 6: September 26

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report Breakdown	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production Journal #5
Thursday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report #2: Audience Development Plan, Live Event Plan

Week 7: October 3

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report Breakdown	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production Journal #6
Thursday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report #3: Scripts, Story Map

Week 8: October 10

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report Breakdown	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production Journal #7
Thursday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report #4: Ancillary Stories

Week 9: October 17

Tuesday	Fall Break, No Classes	
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report Breakdown	DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-Report #5: Media Asset List Production Calendar

Week 10: October 24

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Tuesday		DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Journal #8
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Discussions 	DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark #1 • Book Draft #1

Week 11: October 31

Tuesday	StoryWorld Conference	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Journal #9
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft #2

Week 12: November 7

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft 	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Journal #10
Thursday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Discussions 	DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark #2 • Book Draft #3

Week 13: November 14

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft 	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Journal #11
Thursday		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft #4

Week 14: November 21

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft • Regrouping + Final Push 	DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production Journal #12
Thursday	Thanksgiving, No Classes	

Week 15: November 28

Tuesday	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark Discussions 	Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark #3
Thursday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Draft #5

Week 16: December 5

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Tuesday		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trailer #1
Thursday		

Week 17: December 12, Exam Week

Friday 915- 1115		DUE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Presentations • Final Packets Due • Screencasts • Book • All Materials/Websites • Trailer #2