ENG 2740 Writing and Community Engagement

Spring 2019
Dr. Sarah Finn Email: s.finn@northeastern.edu
Course Hours: MR Course Location: TBA
My Office: 431 Holmes Hall Office Hours: TBA

Required Texts and Materials:

- Your writing, research, and contributions to the class along with anything provided by community partners create the foundation for our course content. The course will use a variety of software packages that will be available through the library and ITS, including Office, Adobe, and Blackboard. Our engagement with each other and our community partners will also be an important “text” in this course.
- All other course readings can be found on Blackboard, under “Course Material.”
- You should bring your computer, a notebook, and a folder to class.

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore and tell the stories of the complexities of activism and social change on our campus and in the larger world through writing and work with different kinds of digital media. We will study models and best methods used to create relationships with classroom team members and the campus community. You will take part in one of two Projects with community partners: a social change-oriented student group or a social justice-oriented student Center. Throughout our course, we will research, write, and digitally compose to ethically tell their stories.

We will inquire into issues of intersectionality and social justice, and examine what it means to join and become a member of a new community. Our course is designed to look through the lens of digital storytelling to ask crucial questions related to campus activism, social justice, and the history of campus social change-oriented groups and organizations. Over the semester, our classroom teams will create digital materials to tell the stories of our community partners and foster their goals. Our course will culminate with an event to circulate our digital stories to our community partners, our campus community, and beyond. You do not need to be an activist to take this course – you just need to be curious about storytelling and working to make a difference!

Course goals include:

- To understand and practice how to tell the stories of activists, their organizations, and how they interact with our larger campus community and Boston community
- To contribute to student group and Center’s sustainability through the use of stories
- To learn to work thoughtfully and constructively as a team member and as a member of your student group, and to identify methods to foster collaboration and satisfaction
- To research and present the stories of student activists, their activism, their groups, and their past campaigns, with attention to multiple audiences, such as the group and students that the group hopes to recruit; to present the stories of a Center, its work with the campus, and its
activist history with attention to multiple audiences, such as the campus and the administration

- To work with multiple forms of digital media to express and share stories and to learn technologies that will be useful in the future
- To enhance your leadership, teamwork, and organizational skills

As this is a service-learning course, you will also contribute to your student activist group or Center in the following ways:

- Commit to civic, campus engagement through work with a student group or Center to make a difference in our world
- Explore entering different communities, such as your student group community or Center
- Identify the skills you bring to your service-learning experience over the course of the semester and identify the skills that you learn
- Enhance organizing, writing, rhetoric, technical, teamwork, and leadership skills as part of the student group, and in the classroom, as an organic process
- Contribute to and meet the needs identified by your student group or Center in general, such as organizing and attending events
- Examine civic responsibility and inquire into the diverse aspects of your student group or a Center and its work
- Investigate root causes for the issues your student group or Center interacts with and explore different strategies for action

Project Descriptions:
You may choose from two Projects: one with a student social change-oriented group or one with a social justice-oriented Center on campus. You will work with your group or Center over the semester to produce helpful digital projects for each of our four units. Each unit has a Milestone due at the end, and this Milestone will be created with the input of your student team and its collaboration with community members. Each Milestone is a helpful deliverable to your group or Center, and builds to our final Milestone.

**Project 1: Hidden Commitments; Hidden Histories: Campus Social Change-Oriented Student Groups**

**Goal:** To create a video that tells the story of student activists and the oral history of their student social change-oriented groups. Students will choose a student group from a provided list that is also open to suggestion.

**Audience:** Student groups, Northeastern Campus Community, larger Boston Community

**Purpose:** Create an archive to document the work of student activists and their social change-oriented groups. Tell the oral histories of these groups to promote sustainability of the groups. Show how these groups have impacted our campus and beyond, and learn from the experiences of individual, activist students.
Deliverables:

Milestone 1: Learning About Ourselves and Our Community Partners: Joining a Student Social Change-Oriented Group: Understand an asset-based model of your student group; talk with group members at meetings; help with event planning and events; learn about your group and its campaigns. Reflect on entering a new community.

Milestone 2: Bringing Life to Story: Activists, Activism, and Campus Campaigns: Interviews: Identify key student activists to interview. Start filming images, events, photos, and documents, and use the oral history materials in the NEU digital collections as needed. Collect B roll digital film in group meetings and events. Create questions and videotape interviews.

Milestone 3: Digital Stories: Combine all collected footage, voiceovers, and photos into a rough cut of a 3-4 minute video to be reviewed by student groups. Revise video.

Milestone 4: Celebration: Put digital story videos on a website. Organize a showing of the digital stories. Celebrate together with the student groups.

Creating Community and Social Justice: Social Change Oriented-Northeastern Centers

Goal: To create video that tells the oral history and current work of a student Center in order to spread awareness of the Center and its historical and current work on campus. To document the social justice work which led to and sustains the Center. To recruit more students to become involved with the Center.

Audience: Students, Student Groups, Northeastern Campus Community, larger Boston Community

Purpose: Create an archive to document the work of students, faculty, and the Boston community to create and sustain campus social change-oriented Centers. Tell the oral histories of the Center to promote the sustainability of the Center. Show how the Center has impacted our campus and learn from the experiences of the people who run and use the Center. Foster awareness of a Center that the wider campus should learn more about.

Deliverables:

Milestone 1: Learning About Ourselves and Our Community Partners: Working with a Northeastern Social Change-Oriented Center: Understand an asset-based model of your Center; talk with group members at meetings and during service work; help with event planning and events; learn about your Center and its activities. Reflect on entering a new community.

Milestone 2: Bringing Life to Story: History, Community Work, and Current Goals: Identify key individuals to interview. Start filming images, events, photos, and documents, and use the oral history materials in the NEU digital collections as needed. Collect B roll digital film in group meetings and events. Create questions and videotape interviews.

Milestone 3: Digital Stories: Combine all collected footage, voiceovers, and photos into a rough cut of a 3-4 minute video to be reviewed by student groups. Revise video.
**Milestone 4: Celebration:** Put digital story videos on a website. Organize a showing of the digital stories. Celebrate together with the Centers.

**Course Policies Overview:**

**Participation:** For all of us to be successful in this class, we should see ourselves as part of a community of writers, researchers, and storytellers. Successful community building cannot exist without respect—respect for everyone in the community at all times. Building trust is also key to making our classroom a comfortable environment for everyone. We will do community building activities to form a classroom where everyone feels free to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions. In this context, you should participate in the class discussions, group work, writing, and digital work.

We will have a strong focus on teamwork and engagement throughout the course. You will be working in teams to achieve each of our four Milestones. To that effect, we will create team charters that outline each person’s role and responsibilities for the team. We will also need to make strong connections to our groups and Center to make sure their voices are heard and that we discuss each method of our storytelling with them. Our course involves deep listening to each other and to our groups. This course is complex, and problem-solving and flexibility will be key terms for our endeavors.

This course will also be discussion and project-based, rather than lecture-based. Here at NU, you can plan to spend three hours outside of class for every hour in class. In a service-learning classroom, you should spend **two or more hours with your student groups each week.** You will learn with your community partners, and listen, record, and represent stories, thus creating content for the units. You will also work with your team outside of class, as well as research, read, write, and digitally compose on your own.

Everyone starts at a B for participation. To raise your grade, you should talk and listen during class discussions, work constructively with your team, pass in homework on time, be on time for class, and have your Milestones ready on time. Your grade will drop if you are missing homework assignments, are late to class (1 point off for each late), are missing Milestones or other work, do not participate in discussions or teams, and have a third or fourth absence. You must come to class on time and be an active member. We will be using many types of technology in our work, but please make sure to focus on work for our class projects. **Please do not check your computer, text messages, email, facebook, etc., during class time.** If you are using electronic devices unrelated to class more than once, your participation grade will drop by 2 points each time.

Here are guidelines for our classroom participation:

- Listen carefully to each other and respond to each other with respect. Talk with each other about the topics, issues in workflow, and seek solutions to problems together.
- Agree not to blame ourselves or others for misinformation we have learned, but accept responsibility for not repeating this information after we have learned otherwise.
- Assume that people are always doing their best, want to be treated with respect, and want to learn.
- Actively try to get to know each other, ourselves, and community members.
• Share information about topics related to the work with other members of the class.
• We will never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences.
• Agree to actively combat the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain.
• Be patient as people try to integrate what they are learning – it may take several tries to learn new ways, habits of thought, and routines.
• Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. If members of the class wish to make comments that they do not want repeated outside the classroom, they can preface their remarks to keep the comment private within the class.
• Additional ground rules you will suggest and as need arises.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance and preparation for class are basic expectations for the course. This course is a writing and digital workshop, and these workshops cannot function unless every writer is present, on time, and prepared. Still, **you are allowed one week’s worth of class absences during the semester. This is two classes, total.** If you need to be absent for a required athletic event, field trip, military obligation, or court appearance; if there is a death or serious illness in your family; if you experience an accident or serious illness; or if you are absent because of religious observance; you will most likely be excused from class. But note that, in such cases, **you are responsible for prior notification and/or subsequent documentation and for making up all missed work. Please email me and I can bring you up to date.**

If you miss a third or fourth class, your participation grade will drop by four points each. If you miss a fifth class or more, each absence will lower your final grade by four points each. A student who misses more than eight classes will receive a failing grade for the class.

You must also log your time with your group. **You may miss two student group meetings or two Center meetings.** After that, the next two absences subtract from your participation grade (4 points each), and any more will subtract from your final grade (2 points each). As you cannot “make up” the time you missed, you must go to every meeting and help with projects that your group is working on.

Late Milestones will be penalized by four points for each class that they are late.

**Grading Distribution and Due Dates:**

- Milestone 1 20% Due 1/28
- Milestone 2 20% Due 2/25
- Milestone 3 20% Due 4/1
- Milestone 4 20% Due 4/17
- Participation 20%
Point Conversions:

A = 94-100
A/A- = 93
A- = 91
A-/B+ = 89
B+ = 87
B+/B = 85
B = 84
B/B- = 82
B- = 80
B-/C+ = 79
C+ = 77
C+/C = 75
C = 74
C/C- = 73
C- = 72

*This grading scale will help you to be successful in our course*

Emailing Assignments Policy:

- Do feel free to email me with any questions. I enjoy working with students over email.

Student Support Services:

- **The Northeastern University Writing Center** The Northeastern University Writing Center offers free and friendly tutoring and for any level of writer, including help with conceptualizing writing projects, the writing process (i.e., planning, researching, organizing, drafting, and revising), and using sources effectively. The Writing Center has two locations: 412 Holmes Hall (617-373-4549) for advance appointments and 136 Snell Library (617-373-2086) for walk-in appointments. Online appointments are also available. Hours vary by location. To make an appointment or learn more about the Writing Center visit our website at [https://www.northeastern.edu/writingcenter](https://www.northeastern.edu/writingcenter). For writing tips and updates about the Writing Center, follow us on FaceBook at [NEUWritingCenter](https://www.facebook.com/NEUWritingCenter) and Twitter @NEU Writes. Questions about the Writing Center can be directed to Kyle Oddis, Assistant Director, at [neuwritingcenter@gmail.com](mailto:neuwritingcenter@gmail.com) or Neal Lerner, Writing Center Director, at [n.lerner@northeastern.edu](mailto:n.lerner@northeastern.edu).

- **Peer Tutoring** is a terrific collaboration that offers a wide range of tutoring services. The Peer Tutoring Program is located in Lake Hall and its services are FREE. Email them at [NUpeertutoring@gmail.com](mailto:NUpeertutoring@gmail.com).

- **Snell Library**: [http://www.lib.neu.edu](http://www.lib.neu.edu). In addition to providing research resources, the library coordinates with writing courses to support students’ information literacy.
• **Disability Resource Center**: [http://www.drc.neu.edu](http://www.drc.neu.edu). The Center works with students and faculty. Those who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act receive accommodations that allow people to participate fully in the activities at the University. Students have a right to disclose or not disclose their disabilities to the instructor.

• **WeCare** is a program operated through the Office for Student Affairs. The mission is to assist students experiencing unexpected challenges to maintain their academic progress. WeCare works with the student to coordinate among university offices and to offer appropriate on and off campus referrals to support successfully resolving the issue. It is located in the Student Affairs Office in 104 Ell Hall. Call 617.373.4384 or email wecare@neu.edu.

• **TRACE (Teacher Rating and Course Evaluation)** allows you to evaluate the instructor at the end of the semester. Please fill out this evaluation at the end of the semester.

• **Digital Media Commons**: Snell Library also houses the Digital Media Commons, which offers a variety of resources for instructors and students regarding multimedia projects: [http://library.northeastern.edu/digital-media-commons](http://library.northeastern.edu/digital-media-commons)

• **NU Writing** is an online journal that publishes compositions made in First-Year Writing and Advanced Writing in the Disciplines -- courses that are part of Northeastern University’s Writing Program. NU Writing helps students to find a wider audience for their compositions and to experience publishing, both by learning about the submission and review process and by participating on the journal’s board. Compositions published in NU Writing are alphabetic and multimodal—written in verse or prose, or composed in multiple modalities, such as image and sound. NU Writing welcomes traditional essays as well as texts from alternate genres: for example, poems, photo-essays, digital narratives, and films. All currently matriculated students who have taken, or are taking, courses in the Writing Program are encouraged to participate, by submitting a composition or serving on the journal’s board or both.

Any undergraduate may submit a composition made in First-Year Writing or Advanced Writing in the Disciplines if she or he is enrolled at Northeastern University at the time of submission. For more information visit [http://www.northeastern.edu/writing/nu-writing-journal/](http://www.northeastern.edu/writing/nu-writing-journal/). Any questions may be emailed to the Assistant Director to the Writing Program, Rachel Lewis ([r.lewis@neu.edu](mailto:r.lewis@neu.edu)).

**Title IX**: I am a mandated reporter under Title IX. This means that I must report any disclosure of sexual misconduct to the Northeastern Title IX Coordinator. The Coordinator will then speak with you and provide support in different ways. You can learn more at: [http://www.northeastern.edu/titleix/](http://www.northeastern.edu/titleix/).

**Important Computer Advice**: always save your documents in at least 2 places!

**Academic Integrity:**

Northeastern University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity: the NU Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy is found at:

The Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution web site (http://www.osccr.neu.edu/) provides extensive information on student conduct, the disciplinary process, and the range of available sanctions. All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work in tests and assignments. In English classes, this definition of plagiarism applies not only to borrowing whole documents, but also to borrowing parts of another’s work without proper acknowledgment and proper paraphrasing or quotation. You cannot hand in your own finished essays more than once; handing in your own essay twice (or more) to different classes is a form of plagiarism. We will discuss effective and responsible use of sources throughout the semester.
Schedule

Milestone 1: Learning About Ourselves and Our Community Partners: Joining a Student Social Change-Oriented Group or Center

As we join our community partner’s group, how do we understand ourselves as learners and writers? How do our intersectionalities speak to our engagement with the student groups and Center? How can we look through an asset-based lens and how does this affect our storytelling? Where do you “fit” in the historical and current context of student activism and social justice on campus? In what ways can you contribute to your student group or Center and in what ways can we learn from them?

1/7: Introduction to the class and campus partners
1/10: Read Boren, Chapter 1; Activity: Discuss teams and charters

1/14: Activity: Introduction to the Archives Tour; Read Smith, Work on charters
1/17: Read MacDonald, Read Cushman, Work on charters; Introduction to the Archives

1/21: No Class
1/24: Group Charters Due; Introduction to the Digital Studios

1/28: Milestone 1 Due Sarah Sweeney?

Milestone 2: Bringing Life to Story: Interviews

How can we do ethical research to understand the lives of student group members and the histories of the student groups? Likewise, how do we represent the work of a Center and its members? How do our community partners connect to activism in our larger communities? How can we contribute to the sustainability of these groups through digital media and archives? How can we examine the events, campaigns, and projects of our groups in relation to the campus community and beyond? How can we write interview questions that will create compelling stories?

1/31: Read Goncalves, Chapter 1; Read Lambert 99-100; Create interview questions
2/4: Read Rhoads; Create interview questions and review with participants
2/7: Read Ngu; Activity: discuss oral history toolkit; Introduction to the Video Studios

2/11: Videotape Interviews
2/14: Videotape Interviews

2/18: No Class
2/21: Read Lambert, Chapter 1-2,4; Analyze interviews; Group Reports; Introduction to Adobe Premiere

2/25: Activity: Presentations and Workshopping; Milestone 2 Due
Milestone 3: Digital Stories

In what ways can a short film tell a story – through content and technique? What film techniques can we use to ethically bring each activist and group to life? Who are our audiences, and how do we engage them? How can we forward our group’s activist goals? What can we learn from our community partners’ feedback in this process? What can we learn about ourselves in this process?

2/28: Read Lambert, Chapter 10; Create a Storyboard
3/2-3/11 Spring Break

3/11: Read Lambert, Chapter 5, 7, 11; Gather materials for digital story and start composing
3/14: Teams create your digital story; Activity: workshop in groups
3/18: Teams create your digital story; Activity: event planning and the story of the class
3/21: Teams create your digital story
3/25: Present a rough cut to class and student group partners; evaluation and revision
3/28: Revise rough cuts; event planning; Activity: workshops

4/1: Finish revision and upload digital stories to websites; event planning; **Milestone 3 Due**

Milestone 4: Celebration

What are effective ways to celebrate and share our digital stories with our classroom, our community partners, and the larger community? What are different ways of sharing our digital stories? How can we make this type of storytelling sustainable in our learning and work?

4/4: Launch website; digital story of our class
4/8: Rough cut digital story of our class
4/11: Course presentations of digital stories

4/15: No Class
4/17: Final digital story of our class; event planning

Celebration: TBA