

Syllabus for the course: Transmedia Storytelling: Narrative worlds, emerging technologies, and global audiences

A course for the undergraduate students of educational program “Journalism”

Course type: elective (blended)

The part of course: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/transmedia-storytelling>

Course description

Transmedia storytelling is the practice of designing, sharing, and participating in a cohesive story experience across multiple traditional and digital delivery platforms - for entertainment, advertising and marketing, or social change. Have you ever read a book, seen a movie, watched a television show, or played a game that centred around different aspects of a larger story or universe? You may be familiar with popular examples of such universes like Star Wars, Marvel, and The Walking Dead (to name a few). How do the professionals develop such expansive narratives? How do they ensure that each element stays true to the original story? How do they innovatively use different technologies to share the stories, grow audiences and create an active and involved community of fans? More and more, we are also engaging with elements or franchises of larger and more complex stories across a much more diverse range of platforms like interactive web experiences, social media communities, mobile devices, theme parks, and even augmented and virtual reality. A major challenge that current and future storytellers face is being able to engage different audiences in a story that is seamlessly told across all of these different platforms.

Course plan

What is Transmedia Storytelling?

This module will introduce you to the instructors of this course, and give you an understanding of how the course works and what you will learn. We will also introduce you to what Transmedia Storytelling is and how it is important to the way we interact and communicate. We'll explain the anatomy of story and the importance of developing a narrative, and show you some examples of contemporary transmedia storytelling. The information in this module will form the backbone of your own transmedia strategy that you will develop over the duration of the course.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the design and intent of the course, and how it is structured
- Explain the term ‘transmedia storytelling’, and be able to identify examples in popular culture
- Describe how a story is typically structured, and understand how one story can expand to become a larger storyworld that will become the basis for an entire transmedia story

Creative Ideas Generation - Building a Storyworld

This module introduces you to creative thinking techniques that you can use to help you develop a cohesive and rich story narrative. You'll explore important models of creative thinking, along with different tools and techniques that can help you expand your narrative into a storyworld that will become the basis of an effective transmedia strategy.

Learning Objectives

- Define key creative thinking techniques and tools that can be used to develop ideas

- Apply the creative principles learned in the module to the generation of an idea for your own storyworld

Understanding a Transmedia Audience

Understanding the different audiences that engage with elements of a transmedia experience can help develop and improve the reach and impact of your storyworld. This module explores the concepts of ethnography and participatory design as a means of identifying, engaging, and learning from your audience, to help you to focus your strategy to better meet their needs.

Learning Objectives

- Describe ethnographic research practices for identifying and understanding audiences
- Explain how to engage an audience in idea development and testing using participatory design processes
- Apply the principles learned in the module to identify potential audiences and their specific needs for your own transmedia strategy

The Transmedia User Experience

The success of your project is ultimately determined by the quality of the audience's experience. Will your transmedia strategy capture people's imagination and continue to engage them in multiple facets of the larger storyworld over time? In this module you will be asked to think about how the convergence of narrative, audience, and technology affects the design of a transmedia strategy. You will also explore theories and frameworks that will help you better understand how to design and evaluate engaging, persuasive and enjoyable transmedia user experiences.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the meaning of 'user experience' in the context of transmedia storytelling
- Demonstrate an awareness of key technological, social, and cultural considerations that will inform the design of a range of audience experiences across different platforms and contexts
- Apply the principles learned in the module to bring together narrative, audience and technology as you plan the overarching transmedia user journey for audiences of your transmedia story

Using Creative Technologies

Working in a transmedia context means taking a flexible and inclusive approach to technologies - old and new. Within this module, you will be exposed to evaluation and design strategies for different technologies in a transmedia storytelling context. It showcases several examples of creative uses of technology in storytelling, and explores how emerging digital technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are creating new possibilities for narrative personalisation and audience immersion in a story.

Learning Objectives

- Describe how changes in technology impact the process of storytelling
- Explain how affordances and constraints of different technologies should inform if, when, and how they are used
- Analyze how the context in which a technology is used can impact the scale and social nature of the audience experience
- Apply the principles learned in the module to evaluate and select potential technologies for inclusion in your own transmedia storytelling strategy

Stories from Industry - Professionals' Career Journeys and Advice

Meet the instructors who will be guiding you through the course, and benefit from the stories of personal career journeys of some of the biggest names in transmedia storytelling from the USA

(Hollywood), Canada, and Australia. Hear their advice about getting started in the industry, and examine examples of their work in movies, digital entertainment, virtual reality and more.

Reading list

a. Required

1. Hassler-Forest, Dan. Star Wars and the History of Transmedia Storytelling. Amsterdam University Press, 2017 – URL: <https://ru.scribd.com/document/361702391/Star-Wars-and-History-of-Transmedia-Story-Telling>
2. Laura A. Wankel, Patrick Blessinger, and Charles Wankel. Increasing Student Engagement and Retention Using Multimedia Technologies: Video Annotation, Multimedia Applications, Videoconferencing and Transmedia Storytelling. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2013 - URL: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hselibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1157671&query=Transmedia+Storytelling>

b. Optional

1. Andrea Phillips. A Creator's Guide To Transmedia Storytelling: How to Captivate and Engage Audiences across Multiple Platforms. The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2012 - URL: <https://www.oreilly.com/library/view/a-creators-guide/9780071791526/>

Grading system

Cumulative grade according to 10-point system includes all the for required assignments. The cumulative grade will be determined in advance of the final exam. It includes percentages for the various activities as follows:

Assignment 1: What is your story?

Submit your assignment and review 3 peers' assignments to get your grade - 25%

Assignment 2: Who are you telling your story to?

Submit your assignment and review 2 peers' assignments to get your grade - 25%

Assignment 3: How is your story experienced?

Submit your assignment and review 1 peer's assignments to get your grade - 25%

Assignment 4: How will you use technology to tell your story?

Submit your assignment and review 1 peer's assignments to get your grade - 25%

When converting the grade into a 10-point grading system to determine the final result, the following formula will be applied.

Final grade is formed as follows:

- Cumulative grade – 80%;
- Final exam – 20 %.

The final exam contains questions studied during online course.

Special Equipment and Software Support

Special equipment is not required.