

Columbia University - Brave Old World: America Ages
Faculty: Span and Tu

Tentative Syllabus

Week One

Content overview with Professor Span— demographic statistics and sources for information on aging, health care and long-term care for the elderly, ramifications (economic, cultural and sociological) of an aging society

Guest speaker – gerontologist Karl Pillemer, director of the Institute of Translational Research on Aging at Cornell University, professor of gerontology in medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College, New York City.

Week Two

Lecture/discussion on turning big subjects into compelling, manageable storytelling: plotting coverage, matching format to subject, locating sherpas, blue-skying and focusing. Mapping out areas of interest, forming teams.

Introduction to digital storytelling by Professor Tu.

Reading/viewing assignments.

Week Three

Field trip to New York institutions and communities (may have to be on a different day than usual): an assisted living facility, a nursing home, a NORC. To include tours and brief interviews with administrators, staff and residents, a dry run.

Interviews due week 3.5

Week Four

Talk on health economics, rethinking how a society supports its elders. Tentative speaker: Professor Michael Sparer, chair of health policy and management, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University. Probably to take place at Mailman.

Initial proposals for digital and print projects due.

Week Five

Discussions of proposals and their viability with Tu and Span. Sharpening focus, considering sources, determining formats.

Talk on psychological issues and implications for family caregivers: Professor Ilze Earner LCSW, Hunter College School of Social Work and Debbie Drelich GCM, president, New York Geriatric Care Managers

Week Six

Revised proposals due

Professor Duy on:

Intro to video. View samples from Travis Fox ("Hard Times"), etc.

Elements of video. Interviews, B-roll, audio, photos, music, etc.

A-Roll/B-Roll/Scenes (breathers) defined.

Review of Camera: Controls, Menu options, what settings mean, SD/HD, codecs defined/timecode/aperture/gain/white balance

EXERCISE: The Importance of Process / Peanut Butter

Shooting techniques

- Focus

- Framing

- Posture

- Counting to 10

- Everything in 3s - 3 angles and 3 distances

- Audio

EXERCISE: Shoot a "real world" process.

Week Seven

Continuing digital training and assignments

Three-point Lighting: Key, Fill, Back

Pre-scripting

Audio

- Channel 1/2

- Using a wireless lav

- Using two channels

Framing an interview

EXERCISE: In teams of three or four, set up a one-on-one sit-down interview. Each team member should be camera person, interviewer, lighting person, etc.

Review interview footage as a class.

Avoid shooting in direct sunlight, avoid backlighting (backlighting does not just come from windows), avoid mixed lighting

Handling dark areas (bars, etc), with a sun gun

Scripting/Prescripting: A camera is only used to tell a story, not to report. How to prescript the story, create shot lists, etc.

EXERCISE: Interview and process. Using wireless lav interview a senior, family member and professional in aging about eldercare transitions (health, living arrangements, help with IADLs or ADLs) and decisions. Also, shoot b-roll to illustrate their point. Shoot breathers. Interview at least three sources.

Review of footage as a class. Bring footage to next class.

Week Eight

Newsroom meeting, defining projects continues. Reading lists, source lists and outlines due

Introduction to FCP: basics, interface, file management

EXERCISE: Kenan Walks. Basic editing. In/Out points. Creating a "radio cut." Overlaying b-roll. Mixing audio (-6 is the key).

Capturing footage. Basics of Log and Capture.

EXERCISE: Capture footage from eldercare transitions exercise and cut a 2 minute piece.

Week Nine

Individual conferences with faculty on projects – what works, what doesn't, what needs refocusing or further reporting.

Digital skills training continues:

Breathers. Pacing. Video grammar.

EXERCISE: Classroom Video breather.

Polishing your pieces: Lower thirds.

Importing images and audio. Producing an audio slideshow. View some audio slideshow examples.

EXERCISE: Dave walks.

Week Ten

Digital training wraps up:

Created Graphic / Manipulating Photos in Photoshop

Image sizes for video

Photoshop Interface, Layers, Various tools.

Brightness/Contrast, Dodge/Burn, Crop/Resize images

Designing with Photoshop

EXERCISE: Creating a custom Lower-Third

Exporting videos for the Web and other applications

Editorial meeting, travel plans.

Group lunch