

## Syllabus

Jan. 5, 2016

### Immersive Journalism MA Seminar/COMM 291

Winter Quarter 2016

Wednesday 12-1:15 p.m.

Classroom: Building 120/452

Instructors: Janine Zacharia ([zacharia@stanford.edu](mailto:zacharia@stanford.edu)) and Geri Migielicz ([gerim@stanford.edu](mailto:gerim@stanford.edu))

Lab assistant: Elisa Desiree Lupin-Jiminez ([elisalj@stanford.edu](mailto:elisalj@stanford.edu)) Elisa will hold lab hours in the immersive journalism workspace (McClatchy 020 B). Hours TBA. Appointments by sign-up on Google calendar.

Course goal: *To establish best practices and ideal scenarios for using virtual reality technology in immersive journalism.*

Possible outcomes: Students learn about virtual reality and use of immersive technologies in journalism and documentary film. Practice in the field, completing a storyboard, and possibly producing an immersive component to augment a written or data story. The project may also be turned into a part of a senior thesis or be part of a publishable review of best practices. Main goal is to gain some hands-on experience in this medium, examine its potential, and think critically about its uses.

#### Assignments before class 1:

Readings: How big is the potential of VR? <http://nyti.ms/1kGXbCW>; Virtual reality: The Future of Narrative Journalism? <http://mediashift.org/idealab/2015/06/virtual-reality-the-future-of-narrative-journalism/> Nieman Lab's roundup of immersive news coverage: <http://bit.ly/1QpmOUH>

**Jan 6 -- Week 1 – Shawnee Baughman/Jeremy Bailenson overview/VHIL lab tour/3D modeling vs. spherical video.** Look at examples. Learn the difference. Google Cardboards distributed.

**Assignments:** You'll need to download the NYT VR, Vrse, Jaunt Player and Ryot VR apps to complete viewings with your Google Cardboard viewer.

Watch the *New York Times*' *The Displaced and Paris Vigils* on the NYT VR app with Google Cardboard <http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2015/nytvr/> and The Wall Street Journal's virtual reality tour of NASDAQ data <http://graphics.wsj.com/3d-nasdaq/> on Google Cardboard or desktop and a food-industry package containing 360 video, article, data and photos: <http://on.wsj.com/21BMKBo>

Watch *Kiya*, a CGI documentary <http://bit.ly/1UI49DV> on Samsung Gear (phone permitting) and *Clouds over Sidra* [on Vrse](http://on.vrse.com). Watch Polar360 <http://polarsea360.arte.tv/> without viewer. Bring headphones and your cardboard and phone to class.

**Jan 13 -- Week 2 -- Hands-on demo of viewers and discussion --** Come prepared to discuss various experiences -- what worked and what didn't. In-class exercise: chart out advantages and disadvantages of different viewers. Discuss sound, monoscopic vs. stereoscopic, phone availability, PC dependent, overall quality.

**Assignments:** view *Nepal Quake Project* <http://www.ryot.org/nepal-vr-disaster-virtual-reality/933476>; *ABC News Inside North Korea* on Jaunt app and *Waves of Grace* on Vrse app with Google Cardboard. Prepare close reading of *Waves of Grace*. (Note: *How to prepare a close viewing* in Coursework.)

**Jan 20 -- Week 3 –** Discuss *Waves of Grace* close viewings, *Nepal Quake Project*, *ABC News Inside North Korea*. Start drafting preliminary best practices. **Guest speaker Re/Code/Vox's Eric Johnson (MA 2012)** -- Overview of VR industry/trends; has viewed over 100 VR pieces.

**Assignments:** Watch tutorials in coursework for Ricoh Theta S and GoPro 360 and stitching. Read Quick Tips for filming 360 video.

**Jan 27 -- Week 4 -- GoPro and Ricoh Theta S hands-on work outside** -- experimenting with GoPro 360 and Ricoh Theta S. Students have a how-to checklist to complete. Elisa from VHIL and Vignesh assisting.

Assignments: Meet with your assigned group and come up with two pitches and storyboards. Max film length: 3 minutes. Turn in your outline and storyboard/screenshots before next class. **Begin sign ups for stitching and cutting help sessions with Elisa from VHIL.**

**Feb. 3 -- Week 5 -- Initial pitch meetings.** (Invited: Zena Barakat, Ideo.com, former senior multimedia editor New York Times; Prof. Jeremy Bailenson)

**Assignments:** Read The New York Times public editor on ethics of immersive video: <http://nyti.ms/1PI2qgT>; Knight Foundation funds vr documentaries and best practices: <http://nyti.ms/1PI2qgT>

Come prepared to discuss questions: how do you apply traditional journalism ethics to this new technology? what are the challenges?

**Feb. 10 -- Week 6 -- Ethics of a new journalism tool** - discuss the collision of old media ethics and new platforms and styles of non-fiction storytelling in the immersive journalism space.

**Assignments:** – read MIT Press *Immersive Journalism: Immersive Virtual Reality for the First-Person Experience* (in Coursework); watch Nonny de la Pena examples including *Hunger in LA on Oculus Rift PC* or <https://share.oculus.com/app/hunger-in-la>, *Project Syria TK*; <http://www.immersivejournalism.com/>; Nonny's video talk on history of virtual reality <https://vimeo.com/112433265>

**Feb. 17 -- Week 7 -- Guest lecture: Nonny de la Pena**

**Assignments: Complete sign up for stitching and cutting help with Elisa from VHIL.** Review Recipe for Famine blog: <http://recipeforfamine.com/>; and watch BuzzFeed Lab's Valley Fire on Facebook 360: <http://bzfd.it/1UzSVkT>

**Feb. 24 -- Week 8 -- Guest lecture: Ben Kreimer, BuzzFeed Fellow [ben.kreimer@buzzfeed.com](mailto:ben.kreimer@buzzfeed.com)** to talk about immersive audio/viral valley fire VR piece and how to get millions of views. **Workshop projects, time permitting.**

**Assignments:** Finalize preliminary deliverable with group -- video/text/etc

**March 2 -- Week 9 -- Preliminary deliverable/showing** + short outline of written accompaniment/discussion of technical challenges.

**Assignments:** Keep working on project and send in list of do's and don'ts for best practices summation essay.

**March 9 -- Week 10 -- Screenings** of those who have completed something or final conceptual storyboards or **finalize Tip List for best practices/summation of course.**