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) and Geri Migielicz (gerim@stanford.edu)
Lab assistant: Elisa Desiree Lupin-Jiminez (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 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:

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.

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: 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.


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.


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 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.