RTA 102: Creative Processes
Fall 2014

Lecture:	**Lab:**
Mondays, 3-4PM	Tuesdays, 8-10 am
Library Building 072	ILC 120
Professor:	**Instructor:**
Ramona Pringle	Jennifer Cowan
email: jennifercowan@ryerson.ca	**office hours**: by appointment

About the Course

Course Description from the Ryerson University Undergraduate Calendar:

This introductory course focuses on principles, theories and practices of content development for a variety of media genres, formats and distribution platforms. Students explore the development of creative and fact-based content by using processes such as rapid prototyping, iterative design, story-chasing and script writing. Students emerge from the course with an understanding of how to take their creative ideas from inception to the creation of compelling content.

Academic Focus, Scope and Teaching Methods:

The creative environment of the 21st century requires collaborative, dynamic participants who can use a range of skills, processes, technologies and practices to conduct their work. Students will gain practical experience in topics such as brainstorming, collaboration, prototyping, iteration, presentation/communication, idea generation/refinement, experimentation, estimation, and group dynamics, at the same time as being introduced to the basics of media practices and platforms including script writing, social media, news and chase producing, gamification and experience design.

The course format will utilize both a weekly common lecture hour and smaller 2 hour workshop sections, or "labs".

Labs will include:
- Group interaction, discussion and exercises;
- Review of assignments and critique where applicable.
- In class workshopping, production, and brainstorming exercises.

All group work will be gathered in a shared class folder on Google docs.

Workshops, online content, exercises, and projects will incorporate a large variety of learning approaches. Students will work as individuals and in small groups, developing creative solutions to problems as a way of gaining skills and exemplar experiences through weekly challenges, or "pivots"; each week, a new production or design constraint will be given to students, and they will need to adapt their project for the new platform or requirements.

The class will use a range of techniques for disseminating content, from in-person presentations, online guest lectures, web-based discussions, remote collaboration, in-person presentations and peer-learning

designed to give students a practical experience of modern work strategies. These techniques also allow the course to fulfill a goal of maximizing faculty/student interaction around projects and productions.

Course Goals (Learning Outcomes):

Students will gain practical experience in and be able to :
1. Apply collaborative creative methodologies both synchronous and asynchronous, in person and technologically mediated;
2. Incorporate Ideation, iteration, documentation, presentation and evaluation as part of a cycle of creative/functional production;
3. Think critically about approaches to problem solving both personally and as a code of practice within organizations;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of linear, transmedia and multiplatform content and content strategies, how multiple platforms can be used to maximize the narrative and/or experience, and an awareness of how content morphs as it moves from one platform to the next;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of media practices and strategies and the capacity to make informed strategic and production choices based on the benefits and challenges of various media platforms; and
6. Critically reflect upon, analyze and debate production work from specific demographical perspectives.

Weekly Outline

\# refers to the Week of study
   a. Lecture: lectures, demos, presentations by faculty
   b. Lab: small group activity and presentations of previous week's work (some weeks this will be before the lecture, some weeks it will be after)
   c. Lab workshop: content exploration to prep for this week's homework activity

Week	Topic/Activities:	Assignment Due:
1 Lecture No lecture Lab Sept 2	**Intro to Collaborative Work and the Creative Process** **a. NO LECTURE – LABOUR DAY** b. Intro to Creative Processes Syllabus Review Faculty led group discussion and brainstorming: What are the different platforms we interact with, and how does behaviour, experience, and expectation change from one to the next? How do different audiences and demographics interpret content? How to use Google Docs for collaborative work c. Learning group formation & assigning of demographics. 30 circles, mindmap, 5 why's In-class brainstorming exercise Assignment 1: In groups, create a collaborative Google doc, placed in a shared class folder, and labeled with your group name. Based on the class discussion, establish what your goals are as a "production team", keeping in mind your demographic, what kind of content you want to create, and why. This should be presented in a one-sheet pitch document. Homework: Do field observations. See the world with fresh eyes. Look for platforms, places where we engage with content, and adapt your one-sheet accordingly.	
2 Lecture Sept 8 Lab Sept 9	**The 21st century media landscape** A. Lecture: Learning the rules… and breaking the rules Audience, demographics and diversity Human centered design and designing with empathy Story is everything b. Review collaborative process, post mortems of group work experience Collaborative brainstorm: "what is a story?" c. Create a Google folder for your group, with group name. Put week one assignment inside of it, and re-label it "Week One". - Create a new document for this week's exercise: Assignment 2: Identify 3 different stories that are aligned with your group's goals and perspective, and write a one paragraph summary of what the story is, why it is a story, and how the story is told on that platform; Criteria: stories have to be from 3 different platforms and be stories that your audience or demographic would say reflect their values or interests. Think like a traveler, or field researcher: take risks in identifying stories.	MINI PROJECT 1: TEAM ONE SHEET Due Sept 8 at 5pm

3 Lecture Sept 15 Lab Sept 16	**Intro to Script Writing** a. Persuasive Writing Guest lecture – Michael Coutanche What is the nature, purpose and function of a script? Structure, style and substance of Public Service Announcements for radio b. Script form and format; Writing a PSA How to decipher a build a creative brief Innovation exercise: reframing the problem, audience/customer journey map c. MINI PROJECT 3: In your group, create a creative brief and a synopsis. Synopsis is due by the end of class, and lab instructor will sign off on whether or not it is a story before you start the script; script is due by next week. All work should be saved to Google docs.	GROUP GOOGLE DRIVE FOLDER SHOULD BE SET UP MINI PROJECT 2: IDENTIFY THREE STORIES Due Sept 15 at 5 pm In – class: MINI PROJECT 3 (part one): PSA SYNOPSIS Due Sept 16, in class
4 Lecture Sept 22 Lab Sept 23	**Script Writing Part 2** a. Politics, power and perspective. How do audiences listen; who tells the story How framing the story can change its meaning b. Writing for the ear; how to listen and provide constructive feedback; authenticity, persuasion not coercion. Constructive critique: "I like/I wish" c. Table reads of PSA scripts: "listen" – are scripts natural to the ear? Incorporate feedback and polish the script for next week.	MINI PROJECT 3 (part 2): PSA SCRIPT DRAFT Due Sept 22 at 5pm
5 Lecture Sept 29 Lab Sept 30	**Twitter** a. Short stories: How to use micro storytelling and still make it a story. b. Crash course in Twitter How can you find a story on twitter? Dealing with fragmentation and the feed, strategies for storytelling Group think: each group should research and contribute a story they find and include an explanation of how the story was told, why it works, how it works and how people find it. c. Pivot! MINI PROJECT 4: Take your story and tell it on twitter; minimum 15 entries, including two interactions and one tie-in to a current event, timed out strategically Write a pitch synopsis explaining your strategy and plan, with a schedule for publication and any relevant contextual details, in addition to the 15 tweets: How does this telling of the story interplay with what's going on in the world?	MINI PROJECT 3 (part 3): FINAL PSA SCRIPT Due Sept 29 at 5pm

6 Lecture Oct 6 Lab Oct 7	**Blogging and Vlogging** a. Lecture: Influence and Authenticity, Person versus Persona b. Mastering first person storytelling and creating, finding, or crafting a voice Review examples of strong, moderated, well-defined "voices" in the blogosphere. What works? How do you create a character through text? Keyword search strategies c. MINI PROJECT 5: Create a first person advocate promo blog with multiple posts (6 x 250 words each) OR a vlog (minimum 30 – 60 sec each x 6). By end of class your group should have a one-line synopsis for each of the 6 installments that incorporates the researched keywords; blogs/vlogs due after study week.	MINI PROJECT 4: TWITTER STORY/PITCH DOCUMENT Due Oct 6 at 5pm
7	**October 12 – 17 Study Week – SWITCH GROUPS**	
8 Lecture Oct 20 Lab Oct 21	**Non Fiction and Chase Producing** a. Lecture: How do you define and measure "success" - platforms, audiences and culture/context/client, virality and visibility, reach, press, accessibility. Diversity and gender, the new audience: niche versus Nielsen. b. Finding a "real person" to tell your story. What kind of person are you looking for? How do you find them, how do you verify who they are, how do you reach them? Track down a person; Break apart a Wikipedia page, back track its sources. c. MINI PROJECT 6: Find a real person who personifies your project but is "authentic", pay special attention to diversity and gender. Create a pitch document: Who is this person? Why have you chosen him/her? How does this person sell your story in a compelling way? Why is it beneficial to have a real person? Due next week.	MINI PROJECT 5: BLOG OR VLOG 1st PERSON NARRATIVES Due Oct 20 at 5pm
9 Lecture Oct 27 Lab Oct 28	**Mobile, Real world, Site specific experience and events** a. Stories are everywhere. From 2 inches to 20,000 feet, putting it in your pocket and taking it out into the world. Examples of innovative projects on a variety of scales. b. How to critique; giving feedback, etc.; how to offer constructive criticism. "I like/I wish", post it notes. c. Each group presents their "real" character; class offers comments and critique.	MINI PROJECT 6: NEWS AND DOCU CHASE Due Oct 27 at 5pm

10 Lecture Nov 3 Lab Nov 4	**Gamification/ARG** a. Games are everywhere This is the era of play b. Discussion of gamification strategies; overview of techniques and successful campaigns Group discussion: Can you turn something serious into a game? Why? Why not? How? b. MINI PROJECT 7: Using game design tools, pivot your story so that the audience is now inside of the experience, with levels, puzzles and challenges woven into the narrative. Present a game-concept.	
11 Lecture Nov 10 Lab Nov 11	**Accessible design** a. What is accessibility? Why is it important in your design? Designing for many. b. User testing for accessibility; how will others experience your iterations? Review empathic design principles, design with the user in mind. Observational field research. Empathize, don't assume. c. MINI PROJECT 8: Re-imagine one of your iterations to work for a deaf or blind audience. Create a one-sheet pitch document detailing how and why it would work, what the experience would be like for different audience members.	MINI PROJECT 7: GAME DESIGN Due Nov 10 at 5pm
12 Lecture Nov 17 Lab Nov 18	**Transmedia** a. What is transmedia? How do you bring multiple platforms together to create a cohesive whole that is greater than its parts, as opposed to repetitive? b. "Deck 101" – A good sensory pitch will sell a story. How to create a compelling slide deck. Talking to your audience. c. Choose from the semester's mini projects to assemble a transmedia pitch using documentation accumulated throughout the semester. Assess how platforms and strategies work together to be a cohesive experience that is more than the sum of its parts using minimum 3 platforms; MINI PROJECT 9: create a pitch for your transmedia property. All decks must be 10 slides. No more than 30 words can be used throughout the ENTIRE DECK. At least one slide must be time based (incorporate audio/video).	MINI PROJECT 8: ACCESIBILITY MODIFICATION Due Nov 17 at 5pm
13 Lecture Nov 24 Lab Nov 25	**Final presentations** a. Staying nimble: Keeping the creative processes in mind over the next 4 years and beyond. b. & c. presentations	MINI PROJECT 9: SLIDE DECK/FINAL PITCH Due Nov 25, in class

Evaluation

MINI PROJECT 1: Team One Sheet 5%
MINI PROJECT 2: Identify Three Stories 10%
MINI PROJECT 3: PSA Script...10%
MINI PROJECT 4: Twitter Story and Pitch 10%
MINI PROJECT 5: 1st Person Narratives – Blog and Vlog 10%
MINI PROJECT 6: News and Docu Chase Character Research 10%
MINI PROJECT 7: Game Design 10%
MINI PROJECT 8: Accessibility Modification 10%
MINI PROJECT 9: Transmedia Deck 10%
Lecture Attendance & Participation 5%
Lab Participation & Group Discussion 10%
     TOTAL AVAILABLE GRADE: 100%

Resources

IDEO Brainstorming Cards – available as cards or as a mobile app

Google Drive tutorials *–*

Creating and renaming a document: https://support.google.com/docs/answer/49114?hl=en

Sharing a document or folder: https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2494822?hl=en

Books

Kelley, Tom, and Kelly, David. *Creative Confidence: Unleashing the Creative Potential within us all*. New York: Crown Publishing, 2013. Print.

Phillips, Andrea. "A Creator's Guide to Transmedia Storytelling." McGraw-Hill, 2012. Print.

Rushkoff, Douglas. *Get Back in the Box: Innovation from the Inside Out*. New York: Collins, 2005. Print.

Salen, Katie, and Zimmerman, Eric. *The Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004. Print.

Warfel, Todd Z. *Prototyping: A Practioner's Guide*. New York: Rosenfeld Media, 2009. Print.

Zimmerman, Eric. "Play as Research: The Iterative Design Process." In *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives*. Edited by Brenda Laurel. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003, p. 176. ISBN: 9780262122634.

Appendix (General information for all RTA students)

Student Codes of Conduct
All students are required to adhere to all relevant University policies, such as the Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct (see http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol61.pdf) and the Student Code of Academic Conduct (see http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol60.pdf).

The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course Calendar
This is your resource for all information relating to academics, including curriculum, course descriptions, significant dates (including last date to drop a course without academic penalty), academic standings, The Student Code of Academic & Non-Academic Conduct, etc. The Ryerson University Undergraduate Course Calendar is available online at http://www.ryerson.ca/undergraduate/calendars/.

RTA Website
At www.ryersonrta.com you will find information about the curriculum, course outlines, scholarships, student groups, staff & faculty, studios & facilities, etc.

Blackboard Course Website
Blackboard is an online course tool which may include an online discussion board, course documents such as the syllabus and lecture notes, announcements, an area where your grades are posted, etc. If your professor has set up a Blackboard site for this course, you'll find it at http://my.ryerson.ca.

RTA Online
RTA Online is an Organization on Blackboard that contains templates for storyboards, production paperwork, etc., as well as online tutorials for software and equipment used in classes and labs. Find it under 'Organizations' on your my.ryerson.ca homepage.

Your Ryerson Email Account:
The RTA School of Media will often send you important information by email (e.g. scholarship information, reminders of important dates, notification of meetings and/or events, internship opportunities and job postings, etc.). Correspondence from RTA and from your professors will be sent ONLY to your Ryerson email account. It is your obligation to ensure that you activate your account and check it regularly, or have it forwarded to an account you check regularly. Please use only your Ryerson account for sending emails to staff & faculty. See below for accessing your Ryerson email account.

Activating Your Ryerson Online Identity
To access many of Ryerson's online resources, you must first activate your Ryerson online identity by completing a series of web forms available via http://www.ryerson.ca/accounts/. During the activation process, you will obtain a username and create your initial password. Once activated, your Ryerson online identity provides you with access to:

>   Google Apps
>   Ryerson email
>   The Central Computer Labs including the Library and KHW71
>   The my.ryerson portal and learning system
>   RAMSS (via https://my.ryerson.ca)
>   Other servers and applications needed

Notice to Students with Disabilities:
Students with any disability (e.g. learning, medical, physical, sensory), illness, or condition that requires academic adaptations should discuss the situation with the professor and/or contact the Access Centre (http://www.ryerson.ca/accesscentre).

Written Assignments:
All written assignments are expected to be properly formatted and cited using **MLA style** (unless otherwise indicated by your professor). Guides and references for using MLA style can be found through the Ryerson University Library as well as the Writing Centre. See
http://writingcentre.blog.ryerson.ca/files/2012/05/MLA.pdf

English as a Second Language:
Ryerson University offers support to students who may require improvement in their overall English language communication skills. Please visit **English Language Support** at
www.ryerson.ca/studentservices/els/

Accommodation of Student Religious Observance:
At the start of the term, students who have religious observance obligations which will lead to absences from campus or academic activities during the semester should download the "Student Declaration of Religious Observance" form from http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/relobservforminstr.pdf. Present a copy of the form to the professor **within the first two weeks of classes**. The professor and student will then consult to reach an agreement on a reasonable means to address the situation.

Learning Success
Learning Success (http://www.ryerson.ca/learningsuccess) helps students make the transition to university learning, develop sound learning strategies through tutoring options and course-based study groups, and achieve their academic potential by providing services in both traditional and virtual learning environments. Learning Success offers free workshops for students such as: Note-taking, Managing Tasks and Time, Ways of Learning, Critical Reading, Test Preparation and Test Anxiety, etc.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is defined by the University as "claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own." (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2). According to the Code, plagiarism includes:
> i. copying another person's work (including information found on the Internet and unpublished materials) without appropriate referencing;
> ii. presenting someone else's work, opinions or theories as if they are your own;
> iii. presenting another's substantial compositional changes to an assignment as your own;
> iv. working collaboratively without permission of the instructor on an assignment, and then submitting it as if it was created solely by you; or
> v. submitting the same work, for credit, in two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructor(s). (Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2.)

Usually one associates plagiarism with written works but it can include any work such as photographs/artwork, Internet materials, video, audio, and digital media. **The University penalties for plagiarism can be severe, ranging from getting zero on the assignment up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion.** Please note that you may be required to submit some or all of your written assignments to www.turnitin.com. Students who do not want their work submitted to this plagiarism detection service must, by the end of the second week of class, consult with the instructor to make alternate arrangements.

Useful links to help you understand and avoid plagiarism:
Ryerson's Academic Integrity web site: http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/
Student Code of Academic Conduct policy: http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf

Cheating:
Cheating is defined by Ryerson University as:
> i. using materials or aids not expressly allowed by the instructor in an examination or test;
> ii. copying another person's answer(s) to an examination or test question; copying another person's answers to individually assigned projects;

iii. consulting with another person or unauthorized materials outside of an examination room during the examination period (e.g. discussing an exam or consulting materials during an emergency evacuation or when permitted to use a washroom);
iv. improperly submitting an answer to a test or examination question completed, in whole or part, outside the examination room unless specifically permitted by the examination format;
v. resubmitting altered test or examination work after it has already been evaluated;
vi. presenting falsified or fabricated material, including research results; or
vii. improperly obtaining, through deceit, theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, access to examination paper(s) or set of questions, or other confidential information.
(Student Code of Academic Conduct, Ryerson University, 2006, p. 2)

The University penalties for cheating can be severe, ranging from getting zero on the assignment or test up to, in cases of prior academic dishonesty, suspension or expulsion.

Use of Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Mobile Electronic Devices in the Classroom
Students are advised that because various learning & teaching activities may be enhanced or diminished by use of mobile devices, it is up to each professor to determine when & how such devices can or should be used by students during any given class.
Students may not take pictures, video recordings, or sound recordings in class without express permission from the professor.