

# Advanced Online Media Production

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MMC 4341L | Spring 2010 | Section 8743 | Lab meets Monday 3–6 p.m. in Weimer 3024  
Lecture meets Tuesday & Thursday 11:45 a.m.–12:35 p.m. in Matherly 0251

Instructor: Mindy McAdams, Professor, Department of Journalism  
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Online: <http://www.macloo.com/syllabi/advancedonline/>

## Course Objectives

It's impossible to fit *everything* a Web designer needs to know into a single semester. So, realistically, this course aims to:

- Put you on solid footing with today's best practices for page design using CSS and XHTML.
- Introduce you to professional standards in accessibility and usable design.
- Provide sufficient instruction and practical work in Adobe Flash so that you can produce good multimedia journalism packages.
- Familiarize you with the types of interactive online projects produced at news organizations today.

You will work hard in this course, and you will be expected to spend *as much as nine hours outside class* working on assignments each week. (Some students will need less.)

## Attendance and Attitude

Students are expected to show respect for one another and for the instructor. Attendance and *arriving on time* for each class are necessary. There are no excused absences. If you have been absent, you are responsible for finding out about any missed material by going to the instructor's office hours. These matters will not be handled via e-mail.

Students who leave lab early without showing completed work to the instructor cannot expect special consideration outside of class.

You must not use online media and/or mobile phones during class when the instructor is teaching, or when another student is speaking, or when you are supposed to be working on coursework. Such lack of attention constitutes *rudeness* and will result in disciplinary action.

## Course Deadlines

Late assignments are not accepted. Assignments are not accepted via e-mail unless requested by the instructor. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation are required.

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. It will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, and it will result in a failing grade for the course.

## Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for any students with disabilities. If you have a disability, the Dean of Students Office will give you official documentation, which you will give to your instructor.

## Required Readings

Students are required to read online articles, tutorials and blog posts pertinent to their work in this course. These will be linked on the online syllabus.

In addition, two books are **required**:

- Cederholm, Dan (2008). *Bulletproof Web Design* (2nd edition), New Riders. (Make sure you have the SECOND edition.)
- Chun, Russell (2009). *Adobe Flash CS4 Professional Classroom in a Book*, Adobe Press.

## Course Requirements

Please make sure to check the online syllabus *at least once a week*. If you rely only on a printed copy, you may miss a change in the schedule.

Online syllabus: <http://www.macloo.com/syllabi/advancedonline/>

Each week has **its own page** in the online syllabus, e.g.—

<http://www.macloo.com/syllabi/advancedonline/weeks/week1.htm>

It is essential for you to look at these pages **one week in advance** of each class.

The descriptions of all assignments are linked to this page (Required Work):

<http://www.macloo.com/syllabi/advancedonline/reqwork.htm>

## Grading

3 Written Critiques	15 points
5 XHTML/CSS Exercises	10 points
4 Flash Exercises	20 points
Flash Project	15 points
Portfolio	30 points
Attendance	10 points
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TOTAL	100 points

All assigned work must be handed in, or the student will receive an “I” (incomplete) for the course.

92–100 points	A	72–77 points	C
90–91 points	A–	70–71 points	C–
88–89 points	B+	68–69 points	D+
82–87 points	B	62–67 points	D
80–81 points	B–	60–61 points	D–
78–79 points	C+	59 points or fewer	E

## Course Schedule

Please note that links and many important details are supplied on the course Web site (<http://www.macloo.com/syllabi/advancedonline/>) and do not appear herein.

### Week 1 | Jan. 4

Introduction to the course: What you will learn

**Lab: Does not meet**

Lecture 1: About the course requirements, etc.

Lecture 2: Examples of online portfolios

### Week 2 | Jan. 11

Typography for the Web

*Due: CSS Exercise 1 (due Monday at 9 a.m.)*

Lab: CSS practice exercise with fonts and divs (bring Cederholm book to lab!)

Lecture 1: Examples of online design: fonts and typography

Lecture 2: Web constraints for font families; best practices in CSS

### Week 3 | Jan. 18

Photoshop and the Web

*Due: CSS Exercise 2*

**Lab: Does not meet (MLK Jr. Holiday)**

Lecture 1: Use of Photoshop for Web typography

Lecture 2: Layout and composition; examples

### Week 4 | Jan. 25

Site navigation and CSS

*Due: CSS Exercise 3*

Lab: In-class exercise using Photoshop (graded)

Lecture 1: Usability in Web site navigation

Lecture 2: Use of color; Web constraints, examples

### Week 5 | Feb. 1

Layout and positioning in CSS: the Box Model

*Due: CSS Exercise 4*

Lab: CSS practice with absolute positioning; margins, padding (bring Cederholm book!)

Lecture 1: Web site planning; use of wireframes

Lecture 2: Examples of recent news packages that use Flash

### Week 6 | Feb. 8

Introduction to working with Adobe Flash CS4

*Due: CSS Exercise 5*

Lab: Work on Flash Lessons 1 and 2 (in the book); bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Symbols (these are covered in Lesson 3, but we are *skipping* that)

Lecture 2: Simple animation (leading up to Lesson 4); examples

### Week 7 | Feb. 15

Flash fundamentals: Timeline, frames, symbols, the Motion Editor

*Due: Flash 1 (basic animation)*

Lab: Work on Lesson 4 up to p. 125 (in the book); bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Examples of motion in news packages, *especially maps* (instructions for Critique 1, due next week)

Lecture 2: Controlling symbols; importance of the Library; Timeline concepts

### Week 8 | Feb. 22

Buttons, controlling the Timeline in Flash (frame labels); introduction to ActionScript 3

*Due: Critique 1*

Lab: Work on Lesson 6 (in the book); bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Examples of navigation (and buttons) in news packages

Lecture 2: Making ActionScript do what you want it to do (see book pp. 213–215)

### Week 9 | March 1

Movie clip symbols in Flash

*Due: Flash 2 (buttons and interactivity)*

Lab: Portfolio workshop

Lecture 1: How to build and control movie clip symbols

Lecture 2: Examples of movie clip symbols used in news packages

SPRING BREAK March 8–12

### Week 10 | March 15

Creating a multi-part package

*Due: Critique 2*

Lab: Movie clip symbol exercises; build a sliding panel; build a pop-up data panel; bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Planning a news package; working with maps (relative to Flash 3 assignment)

**Lecture 2: Canceled (professor will be out of town)**

### Week 11 | March 22

Working with sound and video in Flash

*Due: Flash 3 (simple multi-part package)*

Lab: Exercise with imported MP3 files (not covered in the book); controlling sound.

Video in Flash (Lesson 7 in book); bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Examples of video and sound controls in online journalism packages

Lecture 2: Essential concepts for incorporating video and/or sound in a story package:

When does it make good sense to use audio or video?

### Week 12 | March 29

Week 12: Working with dynamic text, components, and XML in Flash

*Due: Critique 3*

Lab: Work on Lesson 8 (in the book); bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Examples of dynamic data in online journalism packages

Lecture 2: XML schemas and database design

### Week 13 | April 5

Scripting and problem solving: How to get a Flash package to do what you want it to do

*Due: Flash 4 (loaded)*

Lab: : Work on Lesson 9, loaded SWFs; also work on Flash project. Bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: Examples of complex Flash sites and packages

Lecture 2: Storyboards: How to save time before scripting

**Week 14 | April 12**

Positioning Flash movies with CSS; Flash version detection; SWFObject 2.0; the Bandwidth Profiler

*Due: Flash Project*

Lab: Work on Lesson 10; bring book and CD to class!

Lecture 1: The good and bad about Flash (detractors' claims vs. *New York Times's* frequent use of Flash in large-scale interactives)

Lecture 2: SEO and usability for Flash

**Week 15 | April 19**

Career directions in the changing world of journalism

*Due: Nothing!*

Lab: Portfolio workshop

Lecture 1: Career directions for you now; programmer journalists, designers, freelance opportunities, etc.

**Lecture 2: NONE. Last day of classes is Wednesday.**

**April 26 (Monday) | Finals Week**

*Due: Portfolio*

There is no final exam.